



MEN'S RETREAT

REGIONAL FACILITY

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PROGRAM ITINERARY:

Day 1

6:00am Team Breakfast

6:45am Leave for Prison

7:00-7:30am Set-Up

7:30-8:00am Coffee and Greetings

8:00-8:30am Welcome & Intro (mini sermon)

8:30-9:00am POWER OF WORDS

9:00-9:30am Table Discussions

9:30-9:45am Break

9:45-10:00am Music

10:00-10:30am GREED

10:30-11:00am Table Discussions

11:00-11:30am SEX

11:30-12:00pm Table Discussions

12:00-12:15pm Music

12:15-1:15pm Lunch & Summation of Morning Testimonial Talks

SERVITUDE (mini sermon)

1:15-1:30pm Music

1:30-2:00pm DRUGS

2:00-2:30pm Table Discussions

2:30-3:00pm ALCOHOL

3:00-3:30pm Table Discussions

3:30-3:45pm Music

3:45-4:00pm Break

4:00-4:30pm ANGER & FORGIVENESS

4:30-5:00pm Table Discussion

5:00-5:30pm BETRAYAL

5:30-6:00pm Table Discussion

6:00-6:45pm Supper & Summation of Afternoon Testimonial Talks (mini sermon)

6:45-7:00pm Music

7:00-7:30pm Inmate Feedback & Testimonials

8:00pm Team Meeting

Day 2

6:00am Team Breakfast

6:45am Leave for Prison

7:00-7:30am Set-Up

7:30-8:00am Coffee and Greetings

8:00-8:30am Welcome Back (mini sermon) Reviewing Yesterday's Topics

8:30-8:45am Music

8:45-9:15am RACE

9:15-9:45am Table Discussion

9:45-10:00am Break

10:00-10:30am FEAR

10:30-11:00am Table Discussion

11:00-11:30am LOVE & FRIENDSHIP

11:30-12:00am Table Discussion

12:00am-12:30pm Final Message

12:30pm Lunch

1:00-1:45pm Implementation of LifeLink Small Group Study- Table Leaders

1:45-2:30pm CLOSING & BAPTISMS

TESTIMONIAL TALK PREPARATION AND MEDITATION

Revelation 12:10-11:

Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens,
“It has come at last—
salvation and power
and the Kingdom of our God,
and the authority of his Christ.
For the accuser of our brothers and sisters
has been thrown down to earth—
the one who accuses them
before our God day and night.
And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb
and by their testimony.
And they did not love their lives so much
that they were afraid to die.

As seen here in God’s word, because of the finished work of His chosen one, our King Jesus, bible prophecy clearly states that we have the right and weapons necessary to overcome the evil one and his destructive plan for our lives. In the above scripture it clearly states that the blood of the lamb alone does not overcome our enemy. It is a two part weapon. First is the blood of God’s Lamb, our King Jesus and second is the proclamation of what his blood did in our lives. When we proclaim what the authority of his blood says about us and show his blood to the enemy, the enemy has no choice but to flee. As you prepare your testimonial talk, take time to reflect on the first part of God’s perfect weapon against our enemy, the priceless and powerful blood of his one perfect son, our big brother & king! Remember it is the second part, the word of your testimony that makes you an overcomer.

As seen in Revelation 21:5-6, “And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life.” All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. “But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” These verses clearly state God’s promises to an overcomer and the fate of those who do not overcome. It also makes clear that the one providing the promise is the one who provided the blood. Before going any further in preparing your testimonial talk outline, please take time to reflect upon God’s two-part weapon against evil. The price that was paid was Jesus’ absolute sacrifice and its power is demonstrated to be absolute in your life only when the second part is applied, which is your proclamation or testimony. In other words because

of our King's ultimate sacrifice, he has clearly empowered us to make all the difference in this world. As he charged us in Matthew 28:18 we are to make disciples of all people.

Scripture Meditation: Sheep & Goat Judgment Matt 25:31-46

Prayer of Preparation:

Father- I hereby divest myself of every preconceived notion and submit myself to be used as you see fit. I am thankful for my trials and tribulations and for the blood of Jesus that is my power and peace. Please use my testimony to further your kingdom by setting those free who are held spiritual captives by our enemy, that our lives may glorify you in heaven. In Jesus Name-AMEN

Outline for Testimonial Talks:

When preparing an outline for your testimony, it may be helpful to use the following as a guide:

- Describe yourself in detail at the time your trial began.
- Detail your feelings in a step by step process as you arrived at your lowest point. Do not be afraid to share deeply enough to show your vulnerability.
- Describe how the remedy to your trial became apparent. Did you already know Christ at the time or did the Holy Spirit make Christ known to you during this time of trial.
- Detail your feelings and share your current state of mind & allow the joy of your overcoming victory to be expressed.
- Share how much you hope your personal experience will help those going through similar circumstances.

DO's and DON'TS

- DO stay attentive to our Father's Holy Spirit and his leading.
- DO NOT take this as an opportunity to teach religion or theology.
- DO NOT allow yourself to be condemning or condescending to anyone.

WELCOME

Hello, my name is _____ and I would like to welcome everyone to this Salt & Light men's retreat. We also want to thank the Warden and the rest of his staff for allowing us to be here and making this small group program available but most importantly, we want to thank you for your attendance.

Each one of you attending here today is hereby made candidates in an ongoing program, a journey if you will, to a destination that we believe will give you peace of mind and freedom that reaches far beyond the walls of this institution. This is not a journey that we ask you to take lightly or alone, we pledge to stay beside you and guide you every step of the way. However, you alone are responsible for the ultimate decision of taking the first step.

In this world we all have troubles but provision has been made for us to be overcomers and to have the peace of knowing that not only can our needs be met but that the desires of our heart can be achieved. Let me completely disclose to you right here and now that we are a group of Christian men with Christian values & beliefs, however no one here will try to preach to you or convert you from any belief you have. We're not here to sell you religion in any way. We are simply here to feed you some of the best food many of you have had in years and to openly confess to you that many of us have committed the very same crimes that you are here for. We are not in any way better than you. I do promise that in addition to the good food you will make some new friends and you may even learn to look at yourselves differently. We only ask that you relax, open your heart and receive all the good things that our Father has made available for us to share.

Throughout the day you will hear some of us share the stories of the ups and downs of our lives and you will see that our lives all share similarities. You will also notice that we all share a common enemy and a common victory if we choose. Before we get started, I need to tell you about a few rules that will help make our time together more productive.

Each of you has been assigned to a small group table. It is important for you to remain with your small group throughout the course of this program.

- All eating and drinking will be done at your assigned small group table.
- At the end of each life story, you will be given the opportunity to talk and share within your small group.
- We have several bathroom breaks throughout the day but should you need to excuse yourself, do so as is permissible.
- At the end of the day on Saturday, a representative from each small group will be given the opportunity to speak to the entire assembly.
- There can be no food removed from the table or carried back to the zone.
- If for any reason you disagree with something being said or don't want to participate in the small group discussions, we respect that right and ask that you sit quietly as the discussion plays out.

Thanks again for being here, let's get started!

POWER OF WORDS

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

God's word tells us in Proverbs 18:20-21 that the power of life and death is in our tongue and that we reap the benefits or suffer the misfortunes of what we say. This literally means that every word that comes from our mouth has power, amazingly, awesome, creative power. As you are made in the very image of God you have inherited his creative powers to use words to make things better or make them worse. We've all witnessed the difference one positive person can make when speaking loving words of encouragement and hope into the life of a hurting friend. Just as God used his creative words to speak creation into existence we have the ability to speak blessings or curses into the lives of others as well as our own. God's word tells us in Matthew 12:36-37 "And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you." How much more so for all the purposeful words we have proclaimed about ourselves or others. As I share my story about the power of words, please listen and make notes of any similarities in my life and yours.

Testimonial

Closing:

Remember that God's word tells us we have the power of life and death in the tongue. We've been given the authority to speak blessings or curses and he will hold us accountable for even the idle words we say.

Please take time now to discuss in your small group the similarities between your personal experiences with words and mine.

[illegible]

GREED

Give a brief intro of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

Greed seems to be part of us from the very beginning. Have you ever noticed when children play, even from the very earliest age, they hoard their toys and have to be taught to share. The evil one entices us with greed as a means to have but he has in fact designed it to rob God's children of their promised prosperity. In Luke 6:37 Jesus says to give and it will be given unto you, not take and it will be yours. Today more than ever before, we live in a society where the powers of darkness exploit every form of media to indoctrinate us with the enemy's form of religion which teaches us to be takers and not givers. How many times have you heard someone say or said yourself "I'm gonna get mine". That is lining up with exactly what the enemy wants you to have, absolute poverty!

1 Tim 6:9-10 says: "But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows."

I once worshipped at the feet of greed and the love of money, which is the root of all evil. Please listen and make notes on any parts of my life story that you find similar to yours as I share with you my personal experiences about the destructive power of GREED!

Testimonial

Closing:

God plans to take care of us himself. In Matthew 6:25-34 Jesus said that if we do things his way, all our needs will be given unto us. Colossians 3:5 "Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world."

Please take time now to discuss in your small group these things and the similarities between your personal life and mine.

[illegible]

SEX

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

God has given us many gifts and for every good gift given by our Father, the enemy often provides us with a counterfeit in order to prevent us from enjoying what the Father intended. One of the gifts is the gift of physical intimacy which God intended to be shared between one man and one woman united together under his sacred bond of marriage. In Genesis God says that man needed a helper. This sacred relationship was bound and joined by God for the purpose of allowing us to reach our full potential. God intended this relationship to be so sacred that he made it second only to our relationship with him. God tells us in Mark 10:6 “But ‘God made them male and female’ from the beginning of creation. ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.” He gave us a strong desire to renew our relationship by coming together in physical intimacy. In this we also have been given the creative right to reproduce sons and daughters. As God intended this form of intimacy to bring closeness & completeness, the devil uses it’s counterfeit to bring about just the opposite, separation, destruction & chaos through sex. Paul tells us that as we become one flesh (sexually active) we take on all of the sins of each other. He describes it in 1 Corinthians 6:18 as the only sin committed internally against ourselves. He says, “Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body.” Please listen as I share my personal experiences and the story of a friend who has fallen victim as many of us have into this deception of the enemy and how he uses sex to bring about his plans for destruction in your life.

Testimonial

Closing:

In Revelation 21:6- 8 Jesus says, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the **SEXUALLY IMMORAL**, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

Please take time now to discuss in your small group these things and the similarities between your personal life and that of my friend.

[illegible]

MORNING TESTIMONIAL TALK SUMMATION

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

As I mentioned this morning, our purpose for being here is to simply offer you love and friendship. There is no greater way to do that than to be what God says in Matthew 5:13-17, Salt and Light. In other words, being here loving you enough to share and encourage you so that you can see that you are not alone in the trials and temptations of life. In our first testimonial talk, you heard _____ share with you on how our Father God made us in his image and bestowed upon us the creative power of words. You also heard how Satan, the god of this world, has deceived us into turning that very power against ourselves and our friends. He shared how he personally was able to overcome this destructive force by someone sharing the power of positive words with him.

In our second testimonial talk, _____ shared how God planned for you to have an abundant life and how that abundant life was to be achieved through giving, not taking. He shared how our enemy uses the things of this world, greed and the love of money to cause us to be takers rather than givers and in doing so we rob ourselves of the inheritance our Father God intended for us.

In our third testimonial talk, you heard _____ explain about God's perfect plan of intimacy that leads to absolute oneness between a husband and wife and how this sacred relationship is second only to our relationship with the Father. He showed us how through the enemy's misdirection of this one gift alone will lead to division, strife, unwanted children, and even murder. Did you know that since 1995, current estimates show that over 100,000 abortions a month occurs in the U.S. alone? Please take time to review your notes on the testimonies shared this morning & reflect on how the enemy has used his counterfeits to rob you of the blessings God intended for your life..

Testimonial Optional

SERVITUDE

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

As you have noticed throughout the morning and even now at lunch, there is a person who is a candidate with you who has taken it upon himself to serve you in every way. He has been assisted by a non-candidate small group member. This act of servitude is a genuine act of love and kindness that all believers share as a family tradition. It was taught to us by Jesus, our Savior and King. A young friend of his named John tells the story best in John 13:1-17. I'll tell you in my own words. As the evening meal was being served, John watched as his friend and teacher Jesus stood up from the meal that was being served and look into the eyes of his friends. Jesus knew full well that he had come from the Father with great power and that his death was close at hand. He saw Jesus take off his outer garment and wrap a towel around his waste. He didn't understand as he watched the son of God and King of the Universe fill a bowl of water and kneel at the feet of his followers and begin to wash them. As he went to each person and washed & dried their feet, Jesus came to his friend Peter who declared "Lord, I can't let you wash my feet" to which Jesus responded, "Unless you allow me to wash you, you have no place with me". Jesus was saying to Peter that if you don't allow me to serve you, you won't be able to receive what I have to give you. Peter replied "Then wash and don't just wash my feet, wash my hands and head too". In doing so Peter was saying, what you have to offer Lord, I truly desire. When Jesus finished, he asked them if they knew why he had served them by washing their feet. "You call me teacher and Lord and you rightly do so for that is what and who I am. Now that I have shown that the greatest should be the least you to should serve one another." The true depth of Jesus' love and affection for everyone was not yet to be understood. It came later as his friends and followers realized that not only had our Lord and Savior washed their feet but he had also knowingly served and even washed the feet of Judas, the one who would betray him. We who now serve you confess ourselves to be members of God's royal family and followers of the teachings of his one perfect son, our King Jesus.

Testimonial Optional

Closing:

As members of God's family we should be in constant service to one another by following his golden rule as found in Luke 6:33 "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

DRUGS

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

In John 10:10 Jesus said that the thief came to steal, kill and destroy but he came to give us life to the fullest. Throughout the course of our lives here in this broken world, we are constantly looking for the things or stuff we think will give us satisfaction and happiness. God promises in the above scripture that he came to give us life to the fullest. In his word he says he even has a plan to give you peace and prosperity as it states in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." The enemy however has many counterfeits to keep you from receiving the abundant life that God has promised. One of these counterfeits is Drugs. They can be legal or illegal; our enemy is an equal opportunity exploiter! It can start off and seem almost innocent and experimental but inevitably it leads to devastation and loss. Remember as Jesus says in no uncertain terms, the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy. Please listen carefully as I share about my personal battle with drugs and how I am now living life with the peace and perfect joy God promised.

Testimonial

Closing:

In Isaiah 61:1 it says "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isn't it interesting to know that the Greek word for pharmacy is "witchcraft" which means the power to bind up and control!

Please take time now to discuss in your small group the similarities between your personal experiences with mine.

[illegible]

ALCOHOL

Give a brief intro of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

Just as _____ had mentioned to you about how the enemy uses drugs in order to accomplish his destructive purpose in our lives, we must also recognize that alcohol too is a drug. Just like legal drugs are very often misused, the misuse of alcohol allows the enemies plan for destruction in your life to take place. We know that fermentation was a gift from the creator in order for man to be able to store up drink without spoilage but the enemy has deceptively taught us to misuse this process and made its misuse an avenue of escape from reality and a source of false happiness. Please listen carefully as I share from my personal life how the enemy used what began with something as innocent as a can of beer to cause devastation, destruction and loss to my family and how the power of Jesus and the faithless of our Father has turned a devastating loss into a positive gain for my family and the kingdom of God.

Testimonial

Closing:

Just as other drugs are addictive and can be powerfully mind altering, alcohol too, when misused, has the same effect. God's word tells us clearly in 1 Corinthians 6:16 that whether it is drugs or alcohol, drunkards, meaning people who are willing to surrender their conscious mind to the enemy, will not receive the kingdom of God.

Please take time now to discuss in your small group the similarities between your personal experiences and mine.

[illegible]

ANGER & FORGIVENESS

Give a brief intro of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

Anger is one of many emotions that make up the feelings of a human being. It is a normal emotion and one that the enemy uses quiet often to bring about his destructive agenda in your life and the lives of those around you. God's word tells us in Proverbs 15:18 that we should be slow to anger. We all know the story of Moses and his leadership in taking God's chosen people out of Egypt into the Promised Land. In his anger he strikes the rock twice to get water because of the people's constant grumbling and complaining. As you know, they did so even after they had just seen God do some really amazing things like parting the Red Sea. The anger that Moses expressed prevented him from entering God's Promised Land. You see, when anger is allowed to run its course unchecked, it can be the fuel that the enemy uses to rob us of God's promised life. The end results will ultimately lead to destruction and death. Now that we've talked about anger, let's talk about forgiveness. Probably the most famous lesson of forgiveness is when Peter the fisherman and friend of Jesus asked him how many times he should forgive his friends when they wrong him. Peter suggested seven times. Jesus says not seven times but seventy times seven. Jesus explains to Peter that just as the Father is constantly willing to forgive us, we must be willing to forgive others. In Mark 11:25, Jesus tells us that we should forgive others so the Father may forgive us. Controlling ones anger and forgiving others are both sometimes difficult to do but with the help of our Father through the finished work of our King and the examples he set as he walked among us, this is possible for each of us by allowing him to rebuild our character in his image as Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun". Please listen carefully as I share my story of how my anger and God enabling me to forgive have brought me here today!

Testimonial

Closing:

Anger's destructive nature can lead to death but forgiveness will bring about the restorative power of God. Jesus taught us in Matthew 16:14 that if we forgive those who sin against us, our Heavenly Father will forgive us when we sin against him. Have you ever thought that your sin was too great or that you are not worthy of God's forgiveness? Have you ever stopped to think how the Roman soldiers that drove the nails in Jesus' hands and feet felt when they heard him ask his Father to forgive them as he died on the cross? Jesus settled this once and for all when he said in Luke 47:7 that whoever is forgiven much loves much.

Please take time now to discuss in your small group the similarities between your personal experiences and mine.

[illegible]

BETRAYAL

Give a brief intro of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

From our very beginning, we spend our life forming relationships- husband to wife, parent to child, brother to sister, friend to friend. It is the natural course of a human's life to form relationships. With these relationships comes trust and affection. We all know what it is like to have a friend betray our confidence or to have someone simply be bored with a relationship. The closer the relationship, the greater the trust, the greater the trust, the greater the hurt when betrayal occurs. In Judges 16:18-20, we have all heard the story of how Samson, the strong man of the Bible, defeated 1000 men with the jaw bone of an ass but his great strength was temporarily defeated by a woman named Delilah when she betrayed his trust. Please listen attentively and let me share my personal experience of betrayal and how God not only sustained me through it but enabled me to overcome my betrayal and even restore my life.

Testimonial

Closing:

The greatest betrayal of all time was when Judas sold out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. As you heard it mentioned earlier today, Jesus washed Judas' feet knowing full well that the betrayal was about to occur. In Joshua 1:5 the Lord told Joshua he would never leave us or forsake us. Our King Jesus is the only one physically, emotionally and spiritually able to make this promise. This is why our relationship with him must be placed above all relationships. In Proverbs 18:24 it tells us that he is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. His faithfulness is immeasurable.

Please take time now to discuss in your small group the similarities between your personal experiences with words and mine.

[illegible]

AFTERNOON TESTIMONIAL TALK SUMMATION

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Review:

This is the conclusion of our first day as you are now being served this evening's meal. Let's review the topics we heard about in the second half of the day. _____ shared with you from his heart how the enemy tried to use drugs to steal the abundant life that God had promised him and how surrendering to the Father and showing the blood of Jesus to our enemy led him to deliverance from drugs. He said God has given him his hearts desire, a beautiful family and the job of his dreams.

Benny opened up his life and told us about how alcohol was used by the enemy to cause a father to take the life of his beloved son and how this act that the devil meant to destroy an entire family was now being used by God to bring others closer to him.

Next Benny's nephew Marc told us about how his anger raged at his father, how he even questioned God's allowing the death of his brother to happen robbing him of a brother, a daughter of her father, a wife of her husband, and yes even a father of his son. You heard him share how his anger was consuming him until he was able, with the help of the finished work of Jesus, to find forgiveness for his father and how forgiveness is bringing stability and life to what the enemy meant for destruction.

Lastly, we heard Yogi tell us about how the enemy causes the sacred relationship of marriage to be torn apart by betrayal causing a family to be shattered. He taught us that in life we put our trust in many relationships, that we are all imperfect in these relationships and that it is inevitable that each of us will be let down or let someone down and that Jesus is the ONLY one who has the perfect faithfulness and unconditional love necessary to say I will never leave you or forsake you.

As you finish your meals and reflect on the day, please take time to consider how much these men have proved their love to you by sharing their personal stories, the stories of very painful trials & tribulations in their lives. Please take time to see that although the hurtful and frustrating trials of each life were different, the remedy for each of their problems and for your problems today was then and is now the finished work of our champion and king, Jesus. You see Jesus said in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."

Testimonial Optional

Closing:

Tonight as you go back to your beds and rest, try and take some time to reflect back over your life. Where would you be now if you had stood under the finished work of God's one perfect son who said he had overcome the world for you instead of looking to the world for solutions?

DAY 2 WELCOME and MINI SERMON

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Good morning and welcome back! I want to remind each of you that we, as followers of Christ, consider it a great honor and privilege to share the stories of how God's power, through the blood of Jesus, defeats the enemy in our lives. Yesterday you heard perfect strangers tell you that they loved you and they demonstrated this by becoming your servants along with your fellow candidate and table leader.

Today you have 3 other friends who will be sharing their stories of God's faithfulness and his demonstration of power in their lives. I welcome you to sit back, relax and enjoy the abundance of friendship and food that is offered you here today but I wouldn't be faithful to my King if I didn't remind you of this one thing. In John 6:44 it tells us that no one can come to the Father unless He (the Father) God draws him. This morning as you reflect on yesterday's stories, you may be feeling a tugging on your inner being that you can't explain. I want to encourage you to be attentive to this tugging; it is what we as believers know to be the drawing of Our Father through his Holy Spirit. In short, Our Father is calling you back to his family.

Testimonial Optional

Closing:

You see, our Father's spirit is continuously drawing those who are ready, ready to become his sons and daughters, a brother to Christ, and a joint heir to his throne. When this drawing occurs, you have the God given right to exercise your free will to follow, to become a member of our family and inherit the promises he made to you as his follower and live forever as the child of the King. I stand before you today confessing that I said yes when I felt the drawing of the Father's Holy Spirit. I reached up and took the hand of his son and champion Jesus and pledged my life to him which is why I am here today and I know in my heart he truly is the only way to the Father. Matthew 5:13-17 tells us, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." By the grace of my Father and his one perfect son Jesus, I am now and will be Salt & Light!

RACISM

Give a brief intro of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

In John 17 Jesus prays for himself, his disciples and all future believers. In doing so the theme of his prayer indicated a divine truth, the necessity of the unity of the one true God-Head as well as the unity of man. In verse 11 he says to the Father, “Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are”. In verses 21-23 he says, “I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe that you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.”

It is the unity of believers taught in Our Father’s word that keeps us strong enough to fight against the forces of darkness. Just as our enemy set Cain against Able, he is continually setting man against man using common differences to divide us to keep us off balance. The color of our skin is and will always be a point of attack for the enemy. Please listen carefully as I share with you my personal experiences of how the enemy used race against me and how given an opportunity to serve as I am today, allowed me to find God’s truth and complete deliverance. I know this is a sensitive issue and I ask you to please tolerate my honesty as I have nothing but love for all.

Testimonial:

Closing:

Remember in Genesis 1:26, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: And verse 31, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” Every man regardless of color shares a common beginning, being created by the Father in his very image and every man shares a common end. Some of us will be reunited with God and live forever as one with him. Some will remain divided and suffer the ultimate consequence of their actions. I leave you with these words which are the words that Jesus spoke to the religious leaders of the day when they asked what was the greatest commandment given by the Father to which Jesus replied, ‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22:37-39.

Please take time now to discuss in your small group the similarities between your personal experiences with mine.

[illegible]

FEAR

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

Fear is an emotion that every human being on the earth has dealt with since the beginning of time. Interestingly enough, our Father's word tells us clearly that the spirit of fear is not something that he put in us. In 2 Timothy 1:7, Paul tells us, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." It is clear then that fear comes from another source, our enemy, the god of this world. Our Father tells us in his word 365 times to not be afraid. That is one for every day of the year! As you've heard discussed by my brothers that have gone before me, our enemy offers many counterfeits to God's plan for our lives. In the scripture God clearly tells us he did not give us a spirit of fear. The enemy uses the spirit of fear to rob God's children of their promised inheritance. This inheritance that Jesus promised and purchased by his death, burial and resurrection is achieved only through faith as Paul teaches us in Philippians 4:19. Faith, although unseen, is the vehicle that delivers the promises of our Father. We are told in Hebrews 12:2 that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. In Matthew 17:20, Jesus tells us, "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible." Please listen carefully as I share with you how the enemy tried to use fear to rob me of my inheritance and how I was able to overcome by applying our Father's gift of faith.

Testimonial

Closing:

Jesus himself battled fear when he took on our guilt and shame in the garden. In Matthew he tells his friends that his soul is overwhelmed to death as he fell down on the ground asking the Father to take this task from him. In Luke it tells us that he was so stressed and afraid that his sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the ground as Jesus submitted to the Father's will and said not my way but your way be done. As we see Jesus dealing with the fear of having to accomplish the greatest task ever set before man and submit to his Father's wishes, we see him realize his destiny by becoming fearless. In John 18:4 as Jesus had just finished praying, a detachment of soldiers came carrying weapons looking to take him to his death on the cross but Jesus, now fearless, went out to them and said, "Who is it you want?", as they replied "Jesus of Nazareth", he simply said "I AM HE" and with these fearless words, the power manifest in him causing the soldiers to draw back and fall to the ground. He then, purpose driven and fearless, told them to take him and let the others go so that we all have the right to stand fearless and free.

Please take time now to discuss in your small group how Satan tried to use fear to hinder your life as he did mine.

[illegible]

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Give a brief into of yourself:

Name, Where From, What You Do, Brief Family Description

Opening:

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 “If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of the Father’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.” Beginning in verses 4-7 he tells us what love is, “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.”

Many of us have grown up never experiencing this love. In fact, many of us may have survived to this point only having experienced a form of toleration but the deepest part of our being craves true love and friendship. Because we were created out of love by the creator himself, love was an original part of our make-up and its true fullness has been stolen from us leaving us with a giant hole of emptiness. Satan takes advantage of our longing to be filled with God’s love by cleverly disguising his counterfeits to true love. He causes us to fill the bottomless pit within us with his lies, greed, sex, drugs, alcohol, unchecked anger, bad relationships and fear. He wants to keep us from finding the one thing that belongs there, the only thing that completes us, the true love that God created for us from the beginning. In fact, we must learn to love all over again and fortunately we have been given an incredible gift from our Father in the example and finished works of his son Jesus. It may be only a spark inside you now, so dim and cold that it can’t even be seen or felt but let me share with you from my personal life of how God took a tiny spark and kindled it into a powerful flame that consumed all of the counterfeits in my life, leaving only the Father’s refined true love that is now mine to share.

Testimonial

Closing:

Jesus tells us in John 15:13 that the ultimate expression of the love God put in us from the beginning was powerful enough to cause friends to lay down their lives, one for another which he proved by his very example on the cross.

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