



# Shiloh Messenger

February 2018

## *Relationships: How We Treat Others, Pt.5*

In the process of growth in community, we continually come face-to-face with the fact that we have not yet arrived. God works through our circumstances and relationships to expose where He wants us to bring us to maturity next. The way we view the process will either cause us to work with or against the maturing process that Father God has ordained for our lives.

There are two chief obstacles towards participating with the growth process. The first is pride. The extent to which we harbor pride within our heart is the extent to which we will feel hurt when God exposes something immature within us. As we let go of our pride, we drop any need to keep a pretense that we've got everything worked out. We can embrace the joy of living in reality: we are all on a journey and each person needs to grow in different places.

The second obstacle is that a skewed view of God can cause us to approach the process of growth from the wrong starting point. In the process of pointing us towards our next phase of growth, we can begin to feel that God is unsatisfied with our current place of maturity. We can believe that God is upset because of issues that we feel we should have overcome by now.

The reality is that this kind of thinking projects an inaccurate picture of Father God. God is love, and love is always patient and kind, full of goodness and mercy and bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things (1Cor. 13). When the work of The Holy Spirit in our lives brings not-yet-redeemed sinful habits or other immaturities to the surface in our lives, this does not mean God is upset with us. It does not mean that God is on the verge of coming against us. It does not mean that God is removing favor from our lives; it means the Holy Spirit is allowing you to participate in the process of your growth.

As believers, we carry a wonderful amount of permission on our lives; when the Spirit of God starts to work in a specific area, permission to upgrade is implicit. The very nature of God's activity points to the next area of freedom. When God works to expose immaturity in our lives, we are always faced with a choice: we can come down on ourselves for having another area in our lives that needs attention, or we can view it as a prophetic word of the freedom that God wants to bring us into.

I want to choose to believe that any character flaw that God exposes is a prophecy of freedom to me. God never starts a work that he has not planned to bring to completion:

*"And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."*  
**Philippians 1:6**

None of us have arrived, and we don't need to pretend that we have. God is at work in all of us; when God begins a process by exposing things in our lives, we can rejoice because we know the process of freedom has already begun. We can choose to agree with the upgrade and cooperate with our freedom, or we can choose to get upset and prolong the process.

When we learn to let go of our pride and really believe in the goodness of God, there is an incredible freedom. The process of growth is always in God's hands, whether we believe it is or not:

*What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 1 Corinthians 3:5-6*

I don't even want to spend too much time watching my own process of growth. Why would I want to focus on that when I can focus on The Lord instead? God is the One able to keep us from falling, not ourselves: *"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy."* **Jude 1:24**

So, let's give our Heavenly Father every stronghold and let our strength come from The Holy Spirit who gives Light and strengthens our inner man. *"When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:14-21.* (\*Some of the content in this newsletter is taken from Putty Putman's teaching on "The Kingdom of God and ministry.")

## **Update: New Dorm & Classroom**

When The Lord spoke to us about expansion of The Dormitory last year, He was also including a classroom inside the Dorm. We outgrew our old classroom structure and had to include a bigger classroom in our New Dorm Project. As we progressed from student rooms & bathrooms we are now focusing on some items that need to be purchased for The New Classroom. These items are: tables, chairs for students (32) & electronic equipment for teaching (sound system, screen & projector). The approximate cost of all of these much needed items are: \$8,200.00. Debbie & I are very thankful for having such awesome brothers & sisters in Christ, who see the fruit of what Jesus is doing at Shiloh and sow into it. Please pray about these much needed items for us. We are enriched, blessed & encourage by all of you as we co-labor together in discipleship.

Rocky & Debbie Fondren

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## **Graduates Testimony**

Hi, my name is Chase Smith and I am from Houston, TX. I first encountered The Lord when I was very young, but at 13 years old I turned to drugs. I had always told myself that drugs were stupid and that I would never try them, but when faced with the peer pressure from the "cool" crowd I put my convictions aside. I began smoking dope a few times a week and by the end of the year I was an everyday user. By the time I was fifteen years old I was a full blown drug addict, using anything and everything I could get my hands on. Nothing was off limits. Relationships with my friends and family began to deteriorate and any concern about my education practically vanished. Life was becoming increasingly unmanageable. It was also around that time that I became preoccupied with various dogmas and eastern philosophies, and I was led further away from God by the deceitfulness of intellectuality. I unknowingly embraced any system of belief that would allow me to escape accountability for my behaviors. With no moral absolutes to hinder me anything was permissible. At the age of 16 I got into trouble and was put in Texas Youth Commission (TYC) which is prison for juveniles. I did one year in TYC but was able to keep taking stimulant based prescription medications which I abused and so my addiction went uninterrupted. Life went on much as it had before after TYC and I soon got hooked on alcohol. I became highly addicted to alcohol, which made me violent and unpredictable. This led to further involvement with the authorities and at the age of 21 I was put in prison for aggravated assault. I wish I could say that that was enough to straighten me out but unfortunately there were many painful years ahead. Even though I had been an avid drug user, deep down I wanted very badly to get clean... I just didn't know how. I didn't know how to handle my emotions in a healthy way and I was enslaved to the passions of my own flesh. I was released from prison and from city to city, determined to start over. Yet I was still in a prison of my own mind from which I couldn't seem to escape. I continued to use drugs and alcohol and began using meth and heroin. My health began to noticeably worsen. I was in and out of jail, unable to hold down a job or sustain a relationship, and was faced with homelessness on more than one occasion. After a succession of over doses and hospitalizations, also a brush with death that opened my eyes to the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ. I suddenly found myself with a moral compass which pointed at an absolute good, and convictions about my manner of living, my thoughts and attitudes... I realized that I could not go on living as I had and that I needed to be discipled by someone. I found out about Shiloh Ministries thru a friend. I didn't even have to think about it – I knew in my heart that I had to go. It was there that I was baptized in the Holy Spirit, that I learned the Word of God and was freed from mental strongholds that had kept me imprisoned since childhood. I thank God every day that He never gave up on me, and that even when I was at my worst in life He believed in me. After struggling with drugs, and alcohol since I was 13, I am finally free to live a clean and healthy life that honors God. I am even equipped now to extend a helping hand and heart to others who are lost and suffering. Thank you to everyone who financially supports this ministry. I am a man who has been reconciled & being restored. Love all of you!!



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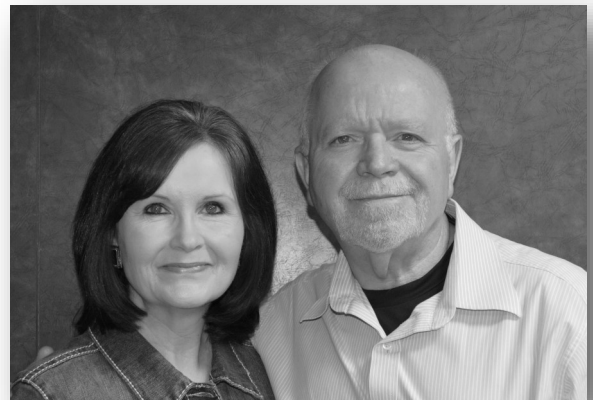
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**Rocky & Debbie Fondren  
Founders & Sr. Leaders, Shiloh Ministries**