



Shiloh Messenger

February 2009

My Response Determines My Future

“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.” I John 2:9

In addition to the rebuilding going on in each of our lives, we are in the midst of all sorts of building renovation projects at Shiloh. Brother Wesley is new on staff, and he supervises our afternoon work projects. He has an eye for detail and he is drawing excellence out of me. I am learning how to paint more efficiently, apply trim pieces, and lay carpet. Before coming here, I always worked with computers. I never painted, or did any type of building renovations. I am receiving revelation about this being God's house and I enjoy beautifying what belongs to God. The staff is very excited about a little old 100 year old farmhouse the Lord recently provided to Shiloh about a half mile from here, a major fixer upper with “miraculous potential” that we are going to be working on to make a place for Brother Wesley and Brother Jason to stay in. For now, they are living in closet tight spaces off the Shiloh dormitory and are working with Shiloh students practically 24/7. We have prayed for the Lord's provision for additional housing for these good men, and now we are rejoicing to witness God's miraculous provision. The house needs lots of work in order to transform it, but Shiloh will no doubt use the renovation project as a teaching time for the men sojourning here.

Part of our classroom curriculum at Shiloh is assigned reading projects followed by an oral book synopsis. This is my tenth month into Shiloh and I have worked through many book assignments. This practice is a new discipline that is good for me. The study and preparation for classes stretches my time management skills because our schedule is so full, but I glean something from every book. My Book assignment this month is [The Bait of Satan](#) by John Bevere. This book is opening up a new can of worms in my thinking, and I am challenged with some issues that I have harbored in my heart for years. I thought after being here at Shiloh for almost ten months that I had grown and was doing quite well. I did not realize how much junk that I still had buried in my soul.

I have one sibling, a brother named Rob, who is two years older than I am. We had a serious confrontation several years ago and I never healed from it. The Lord is revealing to me the offense that is rooted deep inside of me. As God has been restoring my relationships with my wife and children during the time I have been at Shiloh, I believe He desires that the relationship with my brother be restored as well. This one is very painful though. It hurts so badly, I really would rather not deal with it. Every time I think about Rob, I feel hurt and anger rise up. My memories are only of his demeaning and belittling me. My mind sees Rob as always being critical, obnoxious, and sarcastic towards me. Even though I am no dummy, Rob always impressed on me that he was superior to me in every way, and he was God's gift to society with his brilliant talents and intellect. When I began drinking and using drugs, he derided me all the more. Finally, he severed all contact with me and my family. I could possibly understand his disgust with me, but why did he have to hurt family. They do not deserve his disdain. I know I deserve consequences because of my foolish behavior. I make no excuse. However, even before I began such foolish acts, I felt he always looked down on me.

Nevertheless, I am sensing the Holy Spirit imploring me that I must forgive Rob if I want to move forward in my walk with God. Our forgiveness of others is a signal of our awareness of how much God has given us. How can we approach a God of mercy if we ourselves are full of bitterness and anger? **“If you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Matthew 6:14-15.** As I am working on this issue, in one of our recent classes, we were told to consider a quote by Booker T. Washington, **“I will not permit any man to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate him”**. I am learning to spot the pattern now. The Holy Spirit begins working on me, then the Word hits me, and the same message starts coming at me from all angles. This quote from a Booker T. Washington slapped me like a stinger missile. I have been permitting Rob to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate him. Knowing the Word, I am responsible. For the last several months I have been asking God where He wants me to serve Him. I desperately want to follow Him. I realize I must surrender my hurt feelings toward Rob to God as well, or it will not matter that I relinquish anything else to go where He wants. This walk with Christ is a full package deal. I may not choose and pick parts and pieces I will surrender. No sooner than I become aware of a stronghold in my life and fight through the surrender of it, the Holy Spirit begins to reveal the next barrier, and I begin the process all over again. It must be all, or it may as well be none. I have heard it said many times at Shiloh, **“We are not a half way house, but an all the way house. It is all or nothing.”** **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength” Matthew 22:37.** How can I hold on to unforgiveness, when He has been so good and forgiving to me? This book has brought things up that I had no intention of ever dealing with. I know by the Spirit of God that **forgiveness is a choice, but not an option.** Once I receive revelation, I am accountable. **“Oh God, help me to discipline this flesh and surrender. This is a huge test for me. Help me Lord. Help me to forgive Rob and love him Lord as I should. Father God, help me to see him through your eyes and even if he never ever accepts me, help me to accept him and clear up my own heart, I pray in Jesus Name. Thank you Lord for caring so much about me that You, Almighty God would not allow this to go unchecked and You brought it up before I go back to Oregon.”**

Shiloh Ministry Team. Earlier installments of this fictional story about Cecil Armstrong are on our website at www.shilohmensministries.com

A Graduate Testifies

Shiloh gives the training and teaching to men who need and are willing to change. Shiloh allows the work of the Word and the Holy Spirit to miraculously change men's lives. But what happens with life after Shiloh? What can we do with all that God gives us during our year there to go out and give back to a hurting and dying world? My name is Joe Burgess. I am from Burlington, Wisconsin, and I graduated on Nov 12th 2007, after 365 days of protection, covering, and renewing of my mind by the Holy Spirit. About three months before my graduation, God spoke to me and told me to come back to Texas after I graduated and to permanently leave behind my past and move to Texas for good. This message from God was hard to swallow, because I had no job, no money, and no place to live. Nevertheless, God said it, and so I knew what I had to do. I began to pray. I prayed for doors to be opened for my return to Texas. God told me that I would be the light. (Mathew 5-14 says, "You are the light of the world a city on a hill cannot be hidden.") I did nothing more than believe God. After my graduation, I went home for a while to see some family I had not seen in a long time, but I did not forget what God had told me. After being home for one month, I got a call from one of my friends in Texas. My friend told me to call this guy that is looking for help at his diesel shop. I sensed it a "God thing," and I made the call. After speaking with Shane a few times, he agreed to hire me. He told me he would give me a job and a trailer to live in. I was returning to Texas with a job and a place to live - just like that!! God is so good!

When I got back to Texas, I learned Shane is a Christian that had been through some hard times and does not go to church much, if at all. I got back into the home church that Shiloh had introduced me to, and after every sermon, God told me to buy my new boss a CD copy of the preaching. I did this for a few weeks and gave the CDs to Shane. Slowly, but surely, Shane and his family came back to church. The business began to prosper. Then, Shane and I were given the opportunity to pray with our welder for his first time salvation. Shane began to set aside a Morning Prayer time before work and made it mandatory for the shop. He also started handing out Bibles to our customers. Through all of this, Shane and I became best friends, and God began to use him to bless me. God gave me a truck through him and finances and anything else I could need. I never went without. God is always faithful and good to those who serve Him. It is amazing what God will do when you step out of the boat and trust Him. God took a bruised, battered, tarnished nothing and made something beautiful. Being on God's side gets me excited to get up in the morning and see what He has next for me and my family. He breaths His life into me every day and gives me opportunities unlimited and I just feel so blessed to know Him and to call Him my Lord and my Savior.

Now that I had my great job and great friends, it was time for the great girl. I remember meeting this girl Becky Kinard at Texas Bible Institute while I was still in Shiloh. Well low and behold she also went to the same church as me. She was beautiful, funny, smart, spirit filled. I started asking some of my friends about her and got the scoop. She was single. Well on New Years the guys and I were going to do fire works at a friend's house, and she came. So as you can see God continues to run me into this girl. A week or so later, we were all going to the batting cages. There she was again I thought by this time she was digging me. When it came time for me to bat, I was so nervous with her watching that I didn't hit one single ball. I was so embarrassed, and then she got up and hit them all. Even after that, she still came and talked to me. Shortly thereafter we decided to go on a date. - (Chick-Fil-A and a movie) - After the movie, we were going to go bowling. We were both nervous and shy not saying too much on the car ride. Then all of the sudden as if God wanted to break the silence - BAM - she runs over a bumper in the middle of the road. She looked over at me with her face all red so full of embarrassment. She looked so cute and innocent; I knew I would spend the rest of my life with her. I learned that her favorite color is green because it matches her eyes. Her birthday was three days after mine. She had a sister named Tonya and so did I, and her Dads name is Tom and so is mine. Wow, we are so much alike. When God comes through, He does it right. We dated for just less than one year and began to talk about marriage. On December 25th 2008 I asked the love of my life and best friend to marry me, and you guessed it, she said, "yes." It was Christmas morning, and she had to do a scavenger hunt to find her present which was the ring. I was so nervous I thought I was going to pass out. When she said, "yes," I felt my spirit doing flips inside of me. I know that this is the girl that God has given me to support me and help me. God is so good, true, and faithful to us. If we put our trust in Him, He will never lead us astray, and He will always give us the desires of our hearts.

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