

A Celebration of Thanksgiving – Friends of Reconciliation Ministries

In Celebration of the Thanksgiving season, we asked the men and women involved with Reconciliation Ministries to share some of their favorite recovery stories and recovery tips. We pray that they are a source of hope and encouragement to you as we share this journey together.

This favorite moment is shared by a member of our Living Waters leadership team.

I saw myself first in a picture as a dainty little girl. I was sitting on the porch with my brother and sister, leaning against the boy next door with the red hair. The next picture was first grade. I would fight the tears and emotion if I spent any time lingering there. I felt like Satan had stolen my life then, and I couldn't get it back. I lived with a deep sadness inside that never went away.

One day as I was waiting silently before the Lord, I saw in my mind's eye a park-like setting. I was sitting on a cement bench and Jesus came and sat next to me and handed me a wilted rose. As I took the rose, it came alive, straightened up and went into full bloom. Being a little slow I said, "If this is You, Lord, I don't understand," and I got up and went about the rest of my day. As I was shutting down to go to sleep for the night, I got to the end of my bed and Lord spoke to me. He said, "That rose is your life. I'm giving your life back to you." It arrested my heart, and I cried tears of joy for a very long time.



I was at a friend's home a few days later and shared my story with her. She told me to come with her. We went into her basement and she pulled out a picture someone had painted for her and she gave it to me. I stood speechless. It was three roses. The first one was wilted, the second one was beginning to come to life, and the third one was in full bloom. The Lord later told me, "I wanted you to have this so you wouldn't forget".

It has not been in one fell swoop, but He has been faithful since that day to heal my broken heart, take away my fears, and totally change my thinking. And as long as I allow Him do the work, no matter how much it hurts, He continues to set me free.

I spent the first part of my Christian walk running because I didn't want Him to rip off the bandage or look back at the pain I'd been through. But now... I'm running with my pain to the cross, knowing the freedom that comes after the healing.

This recovery technique was shared by a member of our Living Waters leadership team.

I was in trying to beat my addiction but felt powerless against it. God gave me the idea to mark a calendar every time I acted out. My goal was now easy to see; try to have a month without any marks on the page. This along with regularly scheduled meetings with my accountability partner helped me to gain more ground in my fight against addiction.



Here is a testimony from a Living Waters graduate.

My group leader was fearless and sweetly blunt. I am so grateful for her and the homework. But I wasn't at first, I really wrestled with naming anyone as a participant in my issues. It felt like blame and I just wanted someone to agree that I should be punished so I could go back to the cycle of chaos. But my small group leader wouldn't let up. Eventually in that session....and the one after....and the one after that... chaos was less of a friend. The homework made sense and I started to feel less enslaved and a little more fearless. I also learned that the people I react poorly to are usually there for a reason.

This favorite moment is shared by a member of our Living Waters leadership team.

I struggled with unforgiveness for several years after being mistreated by my employer who was a member of my church. My employer questioned my worth as an employee and as a single, childless woman. I also had unforgiveness in my heart toward my pastor. When I asked my pastor to speak to him, he told me I was not allowed to talk about it. Eventually I lost my job, and as a result, I lost my home. After agonizing through my “right” to be angry and learning through much counseling with Dan Hitz and the teachings at Living Waters, I laid my unforgiveness and my pain at the foot of the cross. I wrote a letter to my former employer, burned it and put the ashes in a baggie. I then tied the baggie to a balloon and released it. As it flew into the sky, I felt a wonderful release of the burden of hatred and anger as it departed from me. God later blessed me even further when I was able to reconcile with my former employer, my brother in the Lord.



This recovery technique was shared by a Living Waters graduate.

I've relied on Celebrate Recovery for most of my aftercare and we do sponsors and accountability partners. When temptation is there, I call right away. Hopefully before I've fallen. I also journal the things I've done well during the day AND the things I continue to work on. I attend meetings regularly and continue to work on my healing.



Some people find comfort and strength in journaling or writing poetry. Here is a poem written by leadership team member, Craig Coon, at a point in his life when he was going through a rough valley.

“Leper”

Staring through the dark portal, my eyes sting again
Exhaustion has invaded my mind and traveled my veins.
Dark thoughts assault my sanity stirring a cocktail of despair.
The shell that used to be me paces in circles unable to eat or think.
I am the leper on the street and alone in my stone cold bed.
As this dark winter embraces me my heart loses all hope.
Lips all around me speak of life, my ears are deaf to their bleating.
I am the leper waiting for crumbs to fall from hope's table.
Crashing and dying I spill my blood on this page.
If I had the strength, deep within lays a smoldering rage.
But I am the leper again and no ear hears this pain.
My body heaves with waves of grief pounding.
My head constantly throbs as anguish makes its home.
I am the leper again and this stain is on my shirt.
Pieces fall off of me out on the open road.
Dogs eat my rotten flesh in the gathering place.
What hope lies in this leper's fate?

It's only when the Incarnate One touches me again.