

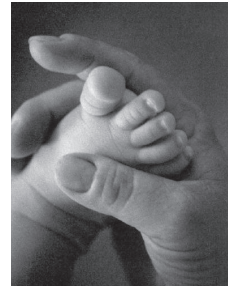
Celebrating 20 years

This year, The Lazarus Center celebrates 20 years since its founding in 1988! We are planning a gala celebration for what God has done through The Lazarus Center. We are inviting new friends and old friends to share in this event and to share testimonies of how God has ministered to them. Stay tuned – more information will be forthcoming!



What about my family?

When counseling or teaching classes at The Lazarus Center, people often ask why we have to look at their family of origin as well as present family situations. God has created each one of us as a unique person with our own character and personality temperaments. And those will not essentially change. But, our families and our environment impact us for good or for ill and alter who God created us to be. We become like a train that has been pulled off the main track to a side track. We may not be derailed, but we have gotten off the main track.



In the 1950's, Dr. Murray Bowen, a professor of Psychiatry at Georgetown University Medical Center, first recognized that a family is not just made up of autonomous individuals but that each family member impacts every member in the "system." Patterns of abuse or addiction may be many generations old and affects each person in the family even today. If you were abused by a family member, there are often other persons in the family that were abused. If your father was an alcoholic, your grandfather and great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather may have been alcoholics. And strange as it may seem, if your grandfather was an alcoholic, your mother may have married an alcoholic. And you may have married an alcoholic. Why? We say we will never marry an alcoholic but end up doing so because the pattern of the relationship is so familiar to us.

The "system" – the way a family works – has stability and the primary goal is to reduce tension. Each family member has a role to play and the "system" applies powerful pressure on each member to maintain that role to preserve the stability of the "system." If we try to change or break out of the "system," we often encounter resistance. Relating to the family becomes more difficult because we are upsetting the balance. We may feel a great deal of anxiety because our growth and change moves us out of the assigned role within the family system. It's amazing, too, that we often maintain that role even though we are no longer in the family system. We may also assume the role we have played in the family in other relationships and at work.

One way the family maintains stability and reduces tension is to pass that tension down the line. Even if the person has blocked the event or effects of an unhealthy family from the conscious mind, the unresolved feelings may remain causing similar or new difficulties. Anger might be suppressed and depression or physical illness may be manifested. We think we can keep the feelings under control or refuse to acknowledge them. But the longer we suppress them, the more tension builds in us, and like a volcano under pressure, we may explode or break down. When we recognize the unhealthy patterns in our family and try to change them it also helps to have strategies in place to deal with the family system, i.e., establishing appropriate boundaries.

What is God's perspective on our family systems? In Numbers 14, Moses speaks to the Lord and asks Him to forgive the people for turning away from Him: "The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people..." (vs. 18-19). *Continued on page 3 . . .*



Restoration Journey

We're so excited about the startup of Restoration Journey! Let us tell you about it's Past, First Try, Future and ways you can be a part of things.

How you can help:

1. Additional intercessors: general, and those who would take one day/month and pray for one hour (with updates).
2. RPTC trained listeners who could listen one hour per week to one lady (or more)
3. Teachers for Listening, Renewing the Mind, Freedom in Christ, Emotionally Free (Saturdays), and ACOA, plus help leading Bible studies and discipleship groups.
4. Provide jobs where they can begin in the work force again
5. Find participants, telling them and/or us about this opportunity
6. Financial support Please contact the center if you would like to be a part of this.

PAST: Restoration Journey has been a vision, prayer, and in the planning stages for 15 years or more. The vision is “to restore individuals to their original created purpose and help them to regain a healthy, interdependent place in society...helping people to “become all God created you to be.” The vision was to provide a multi-faceted, supportive Christian community and program for people in recovery from depression or life traumas, and addiction, following completion of their acute initial care, stabilization or beginning rehab programs.

The program begins with the point of knowing God, through Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but branches out to how that affects relationships, emotions, thinking, body, spirit, creativity, community and work. The vision includes a daily program encompassing all of these, with Lazarus Center resources, as well as partners to help with the other areas. Over the years the partnerships have been building and leaders becoming prepared (including us!!!). So you can imagine the excitement of seeing this begin this fall after all of these years.

FIRST TRY: We began our first 3-month program in mid-September and three ladies completed it in December! We ran it 6 days a week in our new office, which provided a wonderful space for teaching, small groups and individual appointments. A huge surprise was a house. God provided a 7 bedroom house a block away, plus a house manager, all the furnishings, and many people to help make it a home. It was absolutely amazing. We give great thanks to and for Jeannette Tagg who took on the immense task as house manager!! She really gave it her all. We also thank so many of you who gave furnishings, sweat, prayer support, money, time, and helped to teach. There were over 100 people who came together to make this all happen!!!! Praise God!!! We especially give thanks for the progress of Robinette, Amanda and Denise, who put up with our newness, and grew tremendously in the Lord. We were on a very high learning curve and holding tightly onto the Lord as we went through that intense first time—we have much to learn, and much to praise God for.

FUTURE: January was a planned time of rest and re-grouping. During that time, we took a good look at the housing piece and realized it was an even bigger challenge than we ever imagined. Therefore, when John Stanley of the Church Army (from the Café in Aliquippa) approached us suggesting a partnership, with them overseeing the housing, it seemed like a huge answer to prayer!! That plan also allows Jeannette to move on to other things. The Church Army has run rehab houses in Branson, Missouri, for six years and has learned much about how to do it well—so well that many from the area are court ordered into their program. So, we are continuing to “hammer out” a plan together with the Church Army. If all plans are approved, Sara Wilson will move into the house in April, with help from an experienced lady from Branson. They will help the women through all the “messy stuff” of the many appointments with welfare, mental health, rehab, etc. and hard beginning work. Restoration Journey will be part of the Church Army’s long term support (one to two years) of these women. The Lazarus Center program will run the 3-month program after an intense rehab program. We will partner in many new ways, splitting up the work, doing the parts each does best, together for God’s glory.

We hope to begin again at this Center in early May, but anyone interested should contact us as soon as possible as there are things to set in order beforehand. (Hopefully, the house will be open before that). The new plan is that one could enter Restoration Journey at the beginning of any month and will “catch” it all within three months. It is open to those living at the house as well as anyone from the community.

-By Cindy Vitunic

What about my Family continued . . . When we turn away from God and sin and are unrepentant, God allows us to remain in our sin and it affects not only us but our familie and the generations to follow. He sees our dysfunctional behaviors as sin and these behaviors or patterns remain in the family line. However, when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments He also said that He would show love to a thousand generations of those who love Him. (Exodus 20:6)

God desires to heal us and change us so that we can get back on track with Him. It is helpful then, to look at our families and the generations before us and receive insight from God about the dysfunctional family patterns, diseases, etc., so that we might bring them to God and ask Him to heal us and deliver us from the influences of those patterns.

A good way to understand our family dynamics is to explore our family tree, making a chart of the system. We are not looking for who we descended from as much as we are looking for patterns, sinful behaviors, illnesses, accidents, etc., that seem to follow the family line. We also look for environmental influences that have affected our families or ourselves that cause us pain. When we are aware of these patterns, we can then come before God and ask Him to heal us and the generations to follow; we can return to God, repent, and choose to walk with Him.

At The Lazarus Center, we often speak of or teach about the effects of sin and family patterns and needs that were met or unmet in our lives – Freedom in Christ Retreat, Adult Children of the Almighty class, Family Systems class, Emotionally Free Retreat. The Family Systems class will next be offered on Saturday, June 14, at The Lazarus Center. We will view a video presentation on Family Systems by Ginger Stage, a Christian family counselor, which will be followed with time for questions and discussion. We will learn about making a chart of our family noting family patterns and how they might affect us today. We will also look at the spiritual aspects of those family patterns. At the Emotionally Free Retreat in September, we will have an opportunity to receive prayer about one or more of those patterns that have touched our families and our lives. There are also people available through The Lazarus Center who would be willing to pray with you regarding the influences of family patterns. Plan to join us at one of the classes or retreats to learn more and receive God’s healing.

- By Judie Craycraft, MA

Will you give?

God has been so good to supply our needs at The Lazarus Center. Recently, He has blessed us with the donation of a copier and computer equipment. A laptop computer was among the donations and we are praying for a projector so that we can offer more classes on PowerPoint or other programs. We are also praying for comfortable arm chairs to make our Library and counseling rooms more comfortable and inviting.

God has also been good in the past in providing the financial means to continue this ministry. I am writing at this time, however, to say that giving has been down lately. Many reasons have been suggested for this dip, and they are good reasons. With Presidential elections this fall and the war in Iraq continuing, people often fear what is happening in our county and with our economy. I feel, too, that turmoil in the Church has caused support to decrease as many see their churches not following the orthodox faith. When we are unsettled we often draw in and do not reach out to help others – especially in our giving.

The Lazarus Center needs a minimum of \$7,000 per month to continue to provide classes and retreats and we have not met that goal for several months. We want to be good stewards and use the resources God provides wisely. But when we cannot meet our financial obligations, especially salaries for our staff, we grow increasingly concerned. . . .

Upcoming Classes:



Speaking the Truth in Love

Advanced communication skills (prerequisite: Listening for Heavnes Sake)

Dates: . . April 19 & May 3
Time: 9am-4pm
Tuition: \$65



Families as Systems

Understanding family of origin dynamics procids a key to improved relationships in the present.

Date: June 14
Time: 9am-4pm
Tuition: \$40



Relationships “101”

How to deal with anger and forgiveness.

Date: July 12
Time: 9am-4pm
Tuition: \$40



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We are indeed grateful for all of you who have given and continue to give to God's work in this place. We are most appreciative and pray that God continues to bless you in return. I am writing to ask you, however, to pray and ask God if He would have you dig deeper and give an extra gift. If you have not given, I ask you to pray and ask God what He would desire you to give to The Lazarus Center. Is He calling you to be a monthly financial partner with us? Or is He calling you to give a special gift at this time? Perhaps your church would be willing to contribute from their Outreach & Missions fund. Would you be willing to share how The Lazarus Center has touched your life and approach your church to contribute to The Lazarus Center?

We continue to pray and listen for God's direction for The Lazarus Center. God indeed supplies all our needs and we put our trust in Him! Please join us in prayer that God would continue to provide the resources that His work might continue through The Lazarus Center



L.C. Newsletter via Email

We would like to offer you the option of receiving The Lazarus Center newsletter via e-mail. We want to keep you better informed about happenings at the Lazarus Center. The money we save in postage and printing will go back into our programs so that we are able to help more people.



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Treasurer Needed

We give great thanks for Sue Roesler who has been our Treasurer for the past several years! It is with sadness that we say goodbye as she and her family move to their home state of Minnesota. Their move leaves a great gap that we need to fill. Would God be calling you to be our new Treasurer or Financial Secretary? If you have accounting skills and think this position might be for you, please call or come and speak with us.

Please call (724-266-7576) or e-mail Sarah, sarahd@thelazaruscenter.org, if you would like to receive The L.C. newsletter by e-mail.