

OVERCOMERS OUTREACH CANADA INC.

Newsletter - July 2012

Rotating Group Leadership

I had an email a few days ago from a fairly new member of a fairly new group. It read, in part “I cannot say enough about this group. We are rotating leadership of the meetings on a monthly basis & this is going well. The care & support has been huge! As one guy said on his first night, having been in other addiction groups, the level of sharing in this group is so far beyond what happens at those other meetings. I found that comment very insightful & uplifting.”

Our Eighth Tradition states: “Overcomers Outreach groups should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.” The Ninth Tradition states: “Overcomers Outreach, as such, ought to never be organized, but group coordinators network with the Central Service Center, seeing that the group is facilitated through adherence to the FREED book's “Meeting Format” and rotation of leadership.

Rotating leadership has benefits for both the individual and the group.

After a few months of sobriety, individuals who are committed to consistently attending the group should be invited to lead next week's meeting. The preparation will typically require some study which will add to the knowledge base of their recovery. When they actually lead the meeting they will increase their confidence and sense of responsibility, both of which have probably been diminished by their addiction.

As the individuals gain experience in leading meetings, the group gains a pool of non-professional leaders. These leaders serve as mentors and accountability partners to new members. This plurality of leaders also ensures that the group does not remain dependent on a single leader, ceasing to operate when this leader is sick, on vacation or unavailable for other reasons.

To qualify as a leader, each person should:

1. Proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour
2. Be actively pursuing their own recovery
3. Have read the FREED Book, cover to cover, twice
4. Adhere to the “meeting format” in the FREED book

Yours very truly,

Chris B.
President, Overcomers Outreach Canada Inc.



IT TAKES TWO

As I write this for our newsletter I am so thankful to Jesus for building our ministry. I am also thankful to Promise Keepers for using us as a part of their ministry. We now have groups in NB, NS, QC, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC, and there is ongoing work to start at least 4 new groups. With this said I will focus on three Scriptures:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT) *Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.*

Here we see that God says two are better than one. Now add Jesus and you have a strong, triple-braided cord - 2 people plus Jesus. What power!

Mark 6:7-9 (NLT) *And he called his twelve disciples together and began sending them out two by two, giving them authority to cast out evil spirits. He told them to take nothing for their journey except a walking stick; no food, no traveler's bag, no money. He allowed them to wear sandals but not to take a change of clothes.*

Simply put, Jesus needed co-workers in His day to promote the good news, that in Him we have forgiveness and victory. Today the need is even greater. We need more people in their church to commit to leading small group ministries. Ken S.

Here again we see that even Jesus sent His disciples out two by two to build His kingdom.

Then, in **Luke 10:1-2 (NLT)** *The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.* Now, the number is seventy-two being sent out, still two by two.

So why did I choose these Scriptures? Simply put, growth in our ministry is fully dependent on those two faithful people who are committed to serving Jesus and their home-group. They are our foundation. Without them there is no place for lost and hurting people to go to deal with addictions and compulsions. Their commitment to open up the meeting room, put out refreshments and take care of literature needs, offer sponsorship and support during the week is much needed. I am so thankful to God for all our group leaders and all they do.

***SERENITY PRAYER:** "GOD, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;

Simply put, Jesus needed co-workers in His day to promote the good news, that in Him we have forgiveness and victory. Today the need is even greater. We need more people in their church to commit to leading small group ministries. The harvest is great. So we need to pray to God to raise up more pairs of committed leaders. Amen.

Ken S. - Executive Coordinator of Overcomers Outreach Canada

Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. Romans 6:17-18

Testimony from Willie F.

I guess my life would look fairly normal and successful to those looking at me. I had a great family upbringing, not only going to church, but being involved. I went to Bible School, got married, had 2 children, and worked at the same job. However, I struggled in varying degrees with pornography since being a teenager through all these stages of life.

My pride and selfishness always kept me from asking for help. However, just before our 25th wedding anniversary, I confessed my addiction to my wife. This was a very difficult time in our marriage and family life. My wife's trust in me had been broken and we struggled with whether or not we could put back the pieces of our life. Thankfully, through the help of Focus on the Family, God's Word and literally holding on to the promises of the Lord, we were able to begin the long road of forgiveness and trust.

I attended Promise Keepers weekends and was doing much better, but the internet became an outlet for my addiction. It was at a Promise Keepers event that a speaker said he had never seen even one man overcome a pornography addiction on his own. This really spoke to me. I knew the verse "...be sure your sin will find you out." But my pride and selfishness kept me from asking for help. A little over a year ago, my wife found me on the internet and told me she was done, she couldn't trust me anymore, and that I needed serious help. It was heartbreaking to realize I could lose everything important to me, including my wife, children, and grandchildren. It was at this time that John Steadman of Promise Keepers e-mailed me and told me about an organization called Overcomers. Thanks be to God, I contacted them and have been attending ever since.

courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference." **AMEN**

God and accountability to these men have broken the chains of my addiction. I would be lying to say I am never tempted, but sharing with men who have the same struggles and being held accountable by these men has made all the difference in my life. My wife and I are enjoying our marriage together and sharing as we never have before. I now realize that each day requires my total surrender to the Lord, and my obedience to Him is the only thing that will continue to give me His victory and real joy in life. To Jesus goes ALL the glory!

Testimony of Rosanne:

My name is Rosanne. When I think of a testimony, I think of all sorts of things, from the time God first saved you, to what He continues to do in your life.

2002 was the first time I really accepted the Lord after I nearly died. This is when my journey began. While struggling, I continued to follow the Lord and obeying God's Law, I was water baptized in 2007. My life was changing for the better.

I am involved in a strong and very supportive church. I help in our children and youth ministries, I joined a home group, I participate in an Overcomers Outreach group, and I also do an at-home Bible study.

We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. Rom 6:6

This year I challenged myself to go deeper into my relationship with the Lord. The Lord challenged me to get real with everything in my life. I finished a 12 Step Program and this was when I really changed. It was then that I realized I was powerless over my life and I needed to have my life restored to sanity. I had hidden who I really was because I felt no one would like or even love me if they knew the real me. My program showed me how to really be freed. When I finally realized that I was helpless, that I could not do this on my own, that was when God stepped in. I had to admit all my sins to God and to another person, becoming honest about who I really was, something God already knew. I had to ask for forgiveness and admit I was a sinner. I knew that, without this program, I could not do the things I do today. I am free to tell others that I have overcome alcohol, drugs, sexual addictions, food issues, anger, the pain from the loss of unborn children, depression, and suicidal thoughts. The O.O. program showed me that this was a safe place to go to receive help, where no one judges or condemns you. I learned through the program that our God is awesome; He is a forgiving God, who washes away all our sins when we ask, and He also forgets all about our sins.

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Gal 5:22-23

This program really works. It has made me a better person who is full of love, joy, peace, and happiness. Continuing in an O.O. group will help you to receive the support you need and together we can help build and support each others lives. I am now a confident woman who can help support and strengthen others so they also are able to overcome their issues. Since I could be set free, then so could they. With the guidance of this program, friends, family, church families, and God's daily Word, we can conquer all. I know now that God has chosen me. I am His daughter and He is proud of me. He has forgiven me, set me free, and He has again made me PURE in his eyes. There is no greater feeling in the world than knowing the love of the Father. I'm so glad I took this program and completed it because it has really saved me. When you put God first in all you do, that's when things happen. God bless you all.

***This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person.
The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Corin 5:17***

Testimony of Don W

My name is Don and I struggle with compulsive sexual behavior, anger and dishonesty. I grew up in a home where my parents were Christians and raised me to believe in God. However, there was a lot of dysfunction in our home and I entered my teen years angry and confused, with very low self-esteem. I was led to put my trust and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior at the age of 12, but soon found myself with a lot of pain in my life due to rejection from my father and my peers at school. I started to have homosexual thoughts and used these and masturbation to deal with my pain. These gradually escalated and were acted out after I was married and had started a family.

This double standard of life, being a Christian and living in sin, led to a life filled with shame, guilt, dishonesty and anger. No matter what I tried on my own, I could not free myself from the chains of my addictions. This went on for approximately 13 years. Then I was introduced to Overcomers Outreach through Ken S., whom I met shortly after we had moved. I began going to Overcomers and, as I learned about the 12 Steps, listened and shared with other men who were there with their struggles, I began to see the positive effects it was having on my life. I finally realized that I was completely powerless over my addiction and that my life was totally unmanageable. It had become a vicious cycle of sinning, guilt, shame, repentance, short periods of abstinence and falling back into sin again (Step 1).

This was a turning point for me and Steps 4 to 7 truly put me on the path to freedom: making an honest and moral inventory, admitting to God, myself and another person the exact nature of my sin and being totally ready to have God remove all the defects of character. This was very freeing for me. Up until this point it had been “I should be doing this” or “I wish I could do this” or “I want to do this”. Now I made the decision - “I WILL do this” and that was when

God began to help me overcome my addictions. It took me a long time to realize the difference between “wanting to” and “willing to”. This led to making amends with those I had hurt and this was a very healing exercise which has brought so much peace to my life.

I continue to take a daily personal inventory and make a journal of how my day has gone. I have a committed and encouraging support group with whom I communicate on a regular basis. Prayer, reading and meditating on God's Word, being active in my church are regular activities in my life now. I have a deep desire to help others who are going through similar struggles in their lives. I give glory to Jesus Christ and am so thankful to Overcomers Outreach and the 12 Step program for the freedom that I'm experiencing in my life now. I need structure and discipline in my life and the 12 Step program gives that to me. It has been 3 years now since my last encounter!! My marriage has been saved and relationships restored. Praise God. IT WORKS!!!!

For God is working in you, giving you the desire [will] and the power to do what pleases him. Phil 2:13



Testimony of Al H.

Several years ago I was attending a Promise Keepers conference, appreciating the speakers, the music and the fellowship. One speaker spoke on the need for sexual purity, the need to put an end to internet porn addiction and to restore our souls, becoming the men that God intended us to be. Part of the presentation included any men who wanted to bring a piece of their addiction and burn it in a symbolic act to destroy porn's hold on us. I looked forward to the event, knowing that this was something I had to do. In looking back now I realize that my return to the addiction came in large part because I was doing it alone.

Then a couple of years ago while doing an online search an odd item appeared in my results. Choosing to check it out rather than ignore it, I took a look, became fascinated, interested, and soon thereafter I was hooked! I took up my new-found interest whenever I was alone, carefully clearing my 'Browse History' so I would not be found out. Then I got careless and my wife confronted me about it one day. I was devastated but confessed my sin and vowed to 'do something about it'. Time went on and while I 'toughed it out' I was really just avoiding the problem and situations where I might return to that environment. Then ...

Last year at the 'Built for Battle' Promise Keepers conference, I stopped by the Overcomers Outreach table, asked a few questions and hesitantly wrote my name on a list of interested men who wanted to deal meaningfully with their addictions and move forward in their Christian walk. Shortly after that I was contacted to see if I would be able to host a workshop event for those interested in starting a "FREED" group. I arranged for a facility, did some promotion and waited for people to respond. In early June, only one other person

attended and he had been to a previous workshop. While I was disappointed with the turnout, I was determined that I was going to deal with my addiction. I spent some one-on-one time with the Overcomers' Men's Ministry Coordinator and realized I was on the right path; a new group starting up was a great opportunity to begin the journey of recovery. The following Tuesday night the coordinator picked me up and we drove to the meeting. While I had shared some of my story of my addiction and my commitment to move past it, I was nervous, hesitant and unsure what the next couple of hours might hold. At the end of the meeting, I was so overwhelmed by my sinfulness and my need for God's forgiveness that I committed to Him my sinful desires and asked for His forgiveness and grace to move me beyond my addictions.

What I found was a diverse group of men with a variety of addictions who were open, honest, caring, and helpful fellow Christians whose sincerity was quite evident. Immediately, with my wife's blessing and encouragement, I became a regular member. As the weeks progressed, I opened up more, learned a lot about addictions and what it would require of me. Then, as the weeks turned into months, I began working on my 'Step Four' - my moral inventory. It is still in the process of being completed, but as the journey continues, I have found a group of guys I appreciate, care about, respect and value as great friends in the faith...and fellow recovering addicts.

This past March I offered to help work the Overcomers table at the Promise Keepers conference. A number of men stopped by: both those looking for help and those with stories of success and struggle. It was personally very encouraging for my own journey to hear these. Some attended a follow-up workshop the next day. Two of those men are now regulars in the group and our size continues to grow as the Lord brings men into our group in amazing ways.

My journey through recovery continues as I seek to complete my moral inventory with the positive points of it. As I approach the one year anniversary of the beginning of my recovery, I am encouraged as I have only had a couple of brief slips backward but continue to look forward to being 'clean & sober' for many years to come. I have also found other resources to help me regain the life that God has in store for me.

I am very thankful for Promise Keepers and their desire to encourage men to become all they can be, in spite of the sin and addictions in their lives. I am also thankful for them partnering with organizations like Overcomers Outreach to help men become all they can be in God!

*For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.
1 Corin 4:4 (NASB)*

therefore

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life”.
Psalm 139:23-24

Treasurer's Note

We have just concluded another busy fall-winter-spring session, when most of the Overcomers Outreach Canada activity takes place. Our Executive Coordinator, Ken Sundelin has traveled from one end of the country to another, participating in Promise Keepers events as well as hosting workshops and doing follow-up visits. Many new groups have been added, with still others poised to start. We are thankful to the Lord for the growing interest in this unique ministry and for the impact it is having in the lives of individuals and churches across Canada.

Our budgets have also grown over the past few years and we are thankful for how the Lord has continued to supply our needs. Our financial support comes to us through individual supporters as well as through committed churches and other charities. We are dependent on the Lord, as He moves His people to support this work.

As we look ahead to the upcoming 2012-13 program year, here is what we are anticipating in terms of expense and financial need:

1. Executive Coordinator's support (Ken Sundelin's salary and expense) - this area totals approximately \$34,000 per year. With existing donor commitments of approximately \$24,000, we are in need of an additional \$10,000 per year.
2. Travel and Conference expense (cross-Canada expansion) - airline travel, car travel, accommodation and meeting rooms cost about \$12,000 per year. We have existing donor commitments for half of that, so there is a need for an additional \$6,000 per year.
3. General operating expenses (telephone, website, office, etc.) - these costs come out to about \$3,000 per year, and there are no regular support commitments, so we are in need of this entire amount each year.

As you can see, Overcomers Outreach is a faith ministry - we move ahead in faith, trusting that God will bring in what is needed. We invite you to be a part of that, to the glory of God.

Donations can be made by cheque, and some have supplied us with a series of monthly post-dated cheques. We are also able to take donations online through [PayPal](#) - just visit our website where there is a link to do that; please add a note to designate the area of ministry you wish to support, and provide us with a mailing address for receipting purposes.

God bless you for your part in enabling this work to continue and grow.

Leo J.
Treasurer

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