



# OVERCOMERS OUTREACH CANADA

September | 2018 Newsletter

## From the President's Desk

The seasons are changing and as summer comes to an end we shift gears to enter fall. There are also some changes on our Overcomers team. As stated in our preamble, our leaders are chosen not to govern but to serve. To that end I would like to introduce myself as the incoming President. I hope that I can serve faithfully in this capacity under God's guidance. We would like to acknowledge the service of Chris Jordan for his willingness to serve in this role in the recent past. I believe it is also incumbent upon me to thank those who serve in various roles from a board level to those leading weekly groups, etc. You are all part of a team who bring your gifts to serve those in recovery under God's guidance to heal. We know from the Bible story of the lost sheep that Jesus as our good shepherd seeks to bring us back to his safety when we drift away.

*"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."* (Mark 15:4-7)

If we look at the team that Jesus assembled to become his disciples, we see that they had both strengths and weaknesses. The Bible clearly outlines both aspects of these men's humanity; they were not perfect, but God could use them within his plan. I hope that you will join with the broader Overcomers Outreach team to play the part you are uniquely equipped and positioned for. The support we gain from those in our small groups has the basis in biblical teaching as follows:

*"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."* (Ecclesiastes 4:12)

As this is September I would like to include a brief note relating to Step nine:

**Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

*"You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you have it; it's yours. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive you your sins too."* (Mark 11:24-25)

I believe that part of the reason Overcomers helps us start the journey of recovery and remain on the correct course is that it requires us to act, not on our own but with the support of those in our respective groups, and most importantly with the assistance of our "Higher Power" - Jesus Christ.

## Phil Van Bergen

Acting President, Overcomers Outreach Canada

## Phil's Testimony

I first became a Christian when I was in my early teens. The things I learned in Sunday school gave me a sense of comfort through some of the typical struggles of teenage life.

Subsequent to graduating from high school and leaving home my focus was shifted from anything spiritual. Through this time I experienced times when I was closer to God and others when I pushed Him far away. During this time matters of faith took a back seat to other priorities.

I would say that a significant turning point in my life was during a time in which I very much identified who I was as a person with the work I did. At that time our first child was born. Both my wife and I had significant health issues that required us both to be transferred to a regional hospital on an emergency basis. At the time of these near death experiences for both of us it was unclear what God's plan was for us.

I have been working through this again as I have been equating my self-worth with my work. In the past I would deal with some of the stress of life through drinking. I still drink but it is not a compulsion at this point. I continue to have a problem with lust and anger and have been working on these areas.

**Question:** *"What is lust? What does the Bible have to say about lust?"*

**Answer:** *The dictionary definition of lust is "1) intense or unrestrained sexual craving, or 2) an overwhelming desire or craving."*

*Matthew 5:28, "But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

I have mentioned a number of areas I struggle with. One of the things the Bible and Overcomers align in is that we are forgiven by grace. From a practical standpoint this means that I may not have the same compulsion (sin) as someone else in the group. We have all fallen short and through the grace of God are forgiven.

"Overcomers" and a patient, forgiving God continue to help me work through some of the character flaws that I have an ongoing struggles with. The passage below illustrates very clearly how Overcomers helps in this area.

*"Some of us were taught to believe that, if we were Christians, our lives will automatically be in order, and we will experience peace and serenity. Yet many Christians know their lives are in turmoil despite their intense devotion to religion. Time, patience, and commitment to God's principles and ways are required to change. And our Christian experience doesn't magically erase the pain or consequences of the past. Instead, our faith empowers us to live our lives according to God's will.*

*For Christians who suffer from an addictive disease, or who are the product of a family with addictive traits, the Church's message can sometimes be perceived as shaming. This can keep a person from seeking recovery. There is rarely confusion, however, when the Church's message is honest. The Bible modelled this honesty by documenting the strengths and weaknesses of God's people. Unfortunately for some, to admit imperfection might mean that we are not good Christians. In reality, to admit to imperfection means we need God, and*

*that's OK. True recovery begins as we work the spiritual principles embodied in the Twelve Steps. It is most easily accomplished when we acknowledge our need for help, comfort and courage to face our problems."*

Prayer is a much bigger part of my life today than it was in the past. Learning to trust God for His plan for the future continues to be a growth process. I am counting on God to help me win some of the battles that I still have to deal with.

## **Surrender**

Romans 7:21-23,25

*It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love to do God's will so far as my new nature is concerned; but there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. In my mind I want to be God's willing servant, but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin. Oh, what a terrible predicament I am in! Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free.*

I have yet to meet a person who wanted to stay in their life-destroying addictions or compulsive behavior. NO I am sure all people want to be free and have a sober life and a life of serenity. And over the many years of sobriety I have in Jesus Christ, and being that I am in a ministry that helps those who are caught up in a life that is being destroyed, I know there is a solution! Jesus Christ.

The solution is that we must give our lives to Jesus with complete abandon. I could not manage my life alone. I had tried that for many years and always failed. Then my sins of addictions dragged me down the pathway of destruction and in the end a serious suicide attempt where God had to step in and save my life.

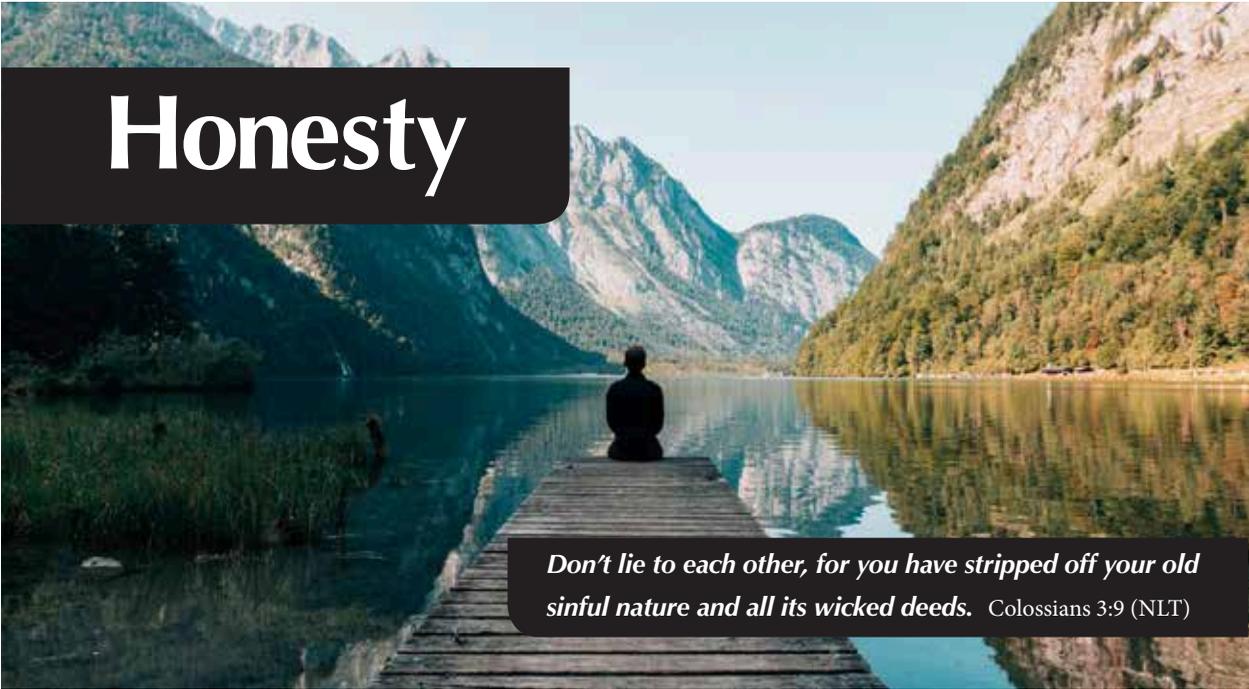
I accepted the fact that I desperately needed help. I stopped trying to do things my way and surrendered entirely to God. Only then did I start having sobriety and serenity. In Jesus, I knew I was forgiven and in Him I found the power to stay sober, and in His love I was able to forgive myself and to forgive all others. I have found a new freedom and joy beyond anything that I thought I could ever experience, peace of mind in all situations. I enjoy serenity but only when I entrust my life totally to God. As long as I am honest and humble enough to keep asking God for His help, knowing full well that if I go back to trying to run my life on my own power, I shall fall and go back to a life of destruction.

If you and I give our lives to Jesus in total surrender every day and moment, we will all have a beautiful life. Amen

## **Ken Sundelin**

Addictions Consultant, Overcomers Outreach Canada

# Honesty



*Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.* Colossians 3:9 (NLT)

## **Honesty: ANNUAL OVERCOMERS OUTREACH CONFERENCE** **October 13, 2018, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm** **Kilcona Park Alliance Church, 1977 Norris Road in Winnipeg**

A **FREE** training conference for anyone who wants to help people overcome their addictions and compulsive behaviours. The conference includes worship, speakers, breakout sessions and testimonies of those who have found **FREEDOM IN CHRIST!** Everyone welcome.

### **Overcomers Outreach Canada**

Box 1933, Beausejour, MB R0E 0C0

Phone: 1.866.881.2480

Email: [info@overcomersoutreach.ca](mailto:info@overcomersoutreach.ca)

Website: [www.overcomersoutreach.ca](http://www.overcomersoutreach.ca)

Twitter: [twitter.com/OvercomerCanada](https://twitter.com/OvercomerCanada)

Facebook: [facebook.com/overcomersoutreachcanada](https://facebook.com/overcomersoutreachcanada)

**Phil Van Bergen**, Acting President: [pvan@mts.net](mailto:pvan@mts.net)

**Ken Sundelin**, Addictions Consultant: [kensundelin@hotmail.com](mailto:kensundelin@hotmail.com)

To read this newsletter online,  
please go to "News"  
on our website.

To see a price list of our  
resources, visit  
"Resources" on our website,  
or email  
[resources@overcomersoutreach.ca](mailto:resources@overcomersoutreach.ca)