

United Intergenerational Ministry Bulletin Inserts
equip generations with knowledge they can use to
support and minister to each other.

Busting Bad Attitudes

The Problem

Bad attitudes are prevalent and hard to handle. They can prevent people from being successful and even cause them to fail. Bad attitudes in congregations can ruin ministry by not supporting it or by speaking badly about it. People with bad attitudes often fail to welcome others to Christ simply because of their bad attitudes and it can also be difficult to welcome these people to Christ. So, busting bad attitudes is important and, thankfully, God has equipped us to do this through His love.

The Solution

Bad attitudes do not come from God because God is good. One of the best ways to bust bad attitudes is to share the good God offers, especially His love. The strongest love with the greatest potential for busting bad attitudes comes from God to us through the saving work of His Son and the power of His Holy Spirit as we partake of His Word and Sacraments, and as we pray. His love in us empowers us to demonstrate His love through all that we say and do.

Demonstrate God's Love

- People with bad attitudes are prone to criticizing and putting people down. The love of God in us compels us to lift people up as we go about complimenting and encouraging them every day. The good effects of God's love busts bad attitudes as it touches hearts and lives and souls.
- People with bad attitudes tend to judge and condemn others. God's love compels us to love all people and to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), correcting gently (Galatians 6:1), and not judging (Matthew 7:1), but leaving all judgement to God (Romans 12:19), whose love is able to bust bad attitudes.
- People with bad attitudes are often just unhappy because they are lonely, feel unloved, etc. So, sharing God's love with them by being kind and helping them or just listening to them can help to bust their bad attitudes.

While there are many things we can *do* to help bust bad attitudes, there are also things we can *say*.

Speak God's Love

There is a language that speaks God's love; it is not harsh; it does not condemn; rather, it seeks to understand and help and love. It works very hard to resolve disagreements and keep peace, and it is able to befriend people with the worst attitudes.

Only those filled with God's love can speak God's love-language. They can speak it when people do not deserve it, do not desire to hear it, or may even become angry with them for speaking it. Filled with God's love, nothing can stop them from sharing it. And God works His love through them to bust bad attitudes by changing the hearts and souls of people who have bad attitudes. This is good news for us, especially when we have bad attitudes.

Seek to Understand

The Bible cautions us to first look at ourselves (Matthew 7:3) or in this case at our own bad attitudes before we try to bust the bad attitudes of others. Recognizing our own bad attitudes can help us be more understanding of others. We should also try to find out what causes a bad attitude. As we do, we may change our attitude or how we approach the attitudes of others. We may discover that we have been wrong about a person or at least unfair. We may need to ask God and them to forgive us.

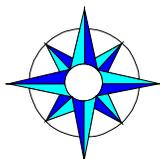
Have the Attitude of Christ

Philippians 2:5-11

We cannot be perfect and free from sin like Jesus, but through our baptismal forgiveness, *we have put on Christ*. (Galatians 3:27) and we live in His love. It may take a short time or a long time, but as we persist in sharing His love, He can bust bad attitudes in people around us and also in us. Then, through His love in us, we will be about the important ministry of welcoming all people to Christ bad attitudes and all.

**Check out more resources
that help us put on Christ at:
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Revisit the Reformation

The Problem

If we truly desire to welcome all people to Christ, we need the faith to do so. The Reformation leads us to that faith. As we revisit the Reformation, we will see that it was not only about reforming our faith, it is about standing firm in our faith. There are so many things that can lead us away from faith that stands firm: everything from TV and music to activities and even people. Every day, we choose between prayer, Bible reading, and worship, and the things we need or want to do instead. Many of these things are important. We need to do them. Yet, nothing is as important as what we do for the Lord. It is just that many of these things are more demanding and because God is so patient, we believe He will understand and wait until we have time for Him.

God Waits For Us

And God does wait - and call - and love - and forgive us. We can do everything else first and leave God for last. However, as we do, our lives are never as full and free and loving as they could be. We are also not prepared to welcome all people to Christ.

We Are Too Busy

We lose so much when we place God at the end of the line. While we are busy with life, our faith grows weaker and weaker. We no longer think about God, much less depend on Him and share Him with others. That is why it is so important for us to revisit the Reformation.

God's Grace Saves Us

God is so gracious and so good, and we are so bad. Martin Luther knew he was bad - so bad he was filled with the fear of being lost in hell - until he read God's Word and found God's grace. After that, he had no time for anything but God and His Word. He dedicated his life to telling the world about God's grace and to reforming a church that would not be reformed. He was also prepared to die for his faith and belief that we are saved by grace through faith. Because of all that Luther did, sinners continue to grow in faith by God's grace in every generation, and they have the opportunity every year to revisit the reformation for more strength to stand firm in their faith.

God's Gives Up Everything

Revisiting the reformation assures us our faith comes to us by God's grace. But do we understand that even our *desire* for God and faith come to us by God's grace? God gives us everything by His grace. Without Him, we have nothing. We may think we can stand up for our faith just like Luther, but all of our strength comes from the Lord. And how many of us forget that while standing up against wrong in the world is right, we also need to *do what is right* and that includes making time and giving up things we like and even need to do for a God who has given up His Son or *everything* for us.

We Gain Everything

Revisiting the reformation shows us how silly we are to fear giving up our time to spend time with God - as if we will lose so much. What we lose will be what we never needed in the first place, and the closer we draw to God, the more we receive from God: His joy, peace, love, strength, forgiveness, and endless blessings. How can we have no time for God's blessings? What are we thinking? The truth is, we have not been thinking, at least not in any profitable measure for our souls in heaven and even for our lives on earth. We need the strength of the Lord in our lives and we receive it by His grace through the faith He gives us.

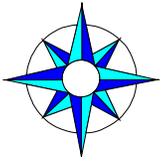
Don't Wait!

So, why wait for Reformation Day to revisit the Reformation? While God's grace will save us forever in heaven, our time on earth will end in the twinkling of an eye. (1 Corinthians 15:52). There is great need for us to study God's Word every day like Luther and find what Luther found: faith, grace, salvation, and all that we need, including the strength God gives us, to welcome all people to Christ.

To learn more about
salvation by grace through
faith visit:
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Rich Beyond Measure

Those who have food, clothing, shelter, and people who love them are rich. Yet how many of us realize that as we worship, praise, and thank God for His blessings, we become *rich beyond measure*?

Our Worship

We may think worship is reserved for the times we go to church, and we should not neglect to worship God in His House as many times as we are given opportunity. But it is when we continue to worship the Lord outside of church when we are at work or school, driving the car, sitting on the beach, etc. that we receive that much more strength of faith from Him and, therefore, become *rich beyond measure*.

Our Praise

We can and should praise God in our hearts and with our lips any time and in any place. We also praise Him when we speak well of Him and even when we welcome people to Christ. However, praise is one of the few things we can give to God, and when we give to God, we receive more from Him (Luke 6:38) and we become *rich beyond measure*.

Our Thanksgiving

We have much to thank God for and we should lift up our thankful hearts to Him at every opportunity because it is the thanksgiving in our hearts that makes us rich. However, it is as we recognize all of His gifts and our hearts overflow in genuine thankfulness for all He has and continues to do for us each day that our very souls become *rich beyond measure*.

Our Failure

In our sinfulness, we do not worship, praise, and thank God as we should. In our failure, we become poor in our spirit and in our lives. We are empty without Him. We actually stifle our riches, the blessings that come from our God, each time we fail to worship, praise, and give Him thanks. Amazingly, each time we forget or neglect Him, He forgives us through His Son. Each time we leave Him, He never leaves us or forsakes us. And it is as we realize this about Him that our lives and souls become blessed and truly *rich beyond measure*.

Our Opportunities

While Thanksgiving Day offers an excellent opportunity to worship, praise, and give thanks to God, you will find more opportunities below to do so every day and become *rich beyond measure*.

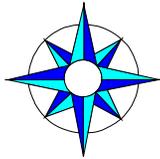
- Thankfully and willingly give God a generous portion of the **time** He has given you:
 - talk to Him in prayer constantly.
 - worship and praise Him in His House and through what you do and what you say every day.
 - read, hear, study, and inwardly digest (memorize in your heart) His Word during the He will give you when you ask Him.
- Thankfully and willingly give to God the use of the **talents** He has given you:
 - take time to think about and list all of your talents.
 - thank the Lord for one of your talents every day.
 - plan how to use your talents and then use them to serve the Lord wherever you are.
- Cheerfully return thanks to God for all of the **treasures** He has given to you by:
 - recognizing and thanking Him for your treasures: food, clothing, house, family, forgiveness, etc.
 - giving your **time** to serve the Lord.

- recognizing and using your **talents** for His service.
- supporting ministry near and far with your prayers and financially with your **treasurers**.

As you do, you will be both *rich beyond measure* and welcoming all people to Christ.

Check out more resources that help us to worship, praise and thank the Lord at: familycrossfires.org

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Come Home To Christ

Christmas

“I’ll be home for Christmas” is a popular Christmas song because it brings to mind warm memories of Christmas at home with family and friends. It is this thought or warm memory that draws people home each Christmas. If only we could capture this feeling and use it to draw the hearts of people all around us home to Christ. Wait! Maybe you can if you share this insert with them.

God’s Invitation

The old familiar Advent Hymn “O Come, O Come, Emanuel” is our invitation to Christ, while the Christmas Hymn “O Come, all Ye Faithful” is God’s invitation to us. Christmas is filled with invitations; our inviting God to come to earth and His inviting us to come to Him. He, of course, has accepted our invitation and has come to be with us, and great comfort and joy await all who accept His invitation. It seems easy. All people need to do is come. But why don’t people come home to Christ like they come home for Christmas?

Come Home

For most, home is a welcoming place. Even those who did not particularly like their home when they were young come home for Christmas every year. It’s true that some problems can surface when all family members come home for Christmas, but that does not stop most of them from coming home. It seems that the hearts of people from families big and small and near and far are drawn home at Christmas. But what draws them?

A joy does surround Christmas. Some call it the Christmas spirit. Christians know it is Christ. For those who possess the Christmas spirit but do not recognize it as Christ, this joy does not last. It does draw people home, but it does not give them lasting joy. This is why people need to know Christ and Christians must share Christ. He alone gives lasting joy. Still, much more needs to happen in each one of us before people will recognize Christ is the joy of Christmas, the joy that never ends, and come home to Him

To Christ

Before we can help others feel and believe and recognize that the joy of Christmas is Christ, we must accept His invitation to come. The wonderful part of Christ’s invitation to “come” and receive His joy that will last is that He never stops giving it. If we have been missing it for a short time or a long time, He invites us to come back to Him. Even when we forget or neglect Him, He remembers and invites us to come. Each time we refuse to come, He forgives us and invites us to come. And He blesses us when we come even though we do not deserve it. Our homes and families, while they can never be perfect, are blessed with His joy at Christmas and every day of the year as we come home to Christ.

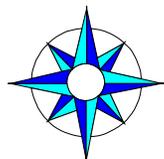
As we come home to Him, He strengthens us to invite all of the people around us to come with us. But we have to do more than just invite them. We need to show them, or more specifically, they need to see His joy in us so clearly and beautifully that they want to come home to Him too. His joy in us draws people home to Christ for lasting joy that is able to resolve disagreements in families on Christmas Day and every day. This is exactly why all people need to come home to Christ and why we need His joy in us to help them.

Every Day of the Year!

With families facing so many problems and tragedies, it is good to know the invitation from Christ to come home to Him never expires. It is even better to know that those who accept His invitation and come will be filled with His joy that lasts, and that as it shines in and through them, it welcomes more and more people home to Christ.

**Check out more resources
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Leave A Lasting Legacy

While all of the bulletin inserts for this year have been designed to help equip congregations and individuals to welcome people to Christ, this insert introduces UIM (United Intergenerational Ministry) and the legacy it can help you leave generations to help them continue to welcome all people to Christ.

Pass on Faith

All UIM Resources have been created to reunite and strengthen generations in faith that saves in heaven and helps them through life on earth. Strong faith passes on faith. UIM Resources help strengthen generations in faith so they can pass it on. However, it is the reuniting of generations to learn and the help and care of each other that happens in the reuniting process that is unique to UIM, where everything from learning stories and passages to application activities, and clean-up reunite generations. As older help younger, and the childlike faith of younger teaches older, Christian friendships are both formed and nurtured as each generation is strengthened in their Christian faith and lives.

Pass on Coping Abilities

In the past, one generation taught the next generation about God and how to cope with problems in life through His strength. They were available to each other because they all lived close to each other; some even lived in the same house.

Generations are becoming more separated from God and from each other. While their faith grows weaker from their separation, the problems and tragedies sweeping our land increase every day. They are left without the faith and life support they need from God and fellow Christians to survive. This is why UIM has become dedicated to helping congregations provide the faith support generations need to not just survive, but thrive!

Pass on Honor

UIM helps generations to thrive by helping them to 1) recognize and flee sin, 2) draw a clear line between right and wrong, and 3) grow strong in faith that is able to know and do right and pass on all that is honorable for generations.

Pass on Respect

UIM helps generations thrive by teaching them to pass on respect by showing respect. It helps to build awareness of seemingly insignificant acts of disrespect like being in a hurry, not saying “please” or “thank you,” etc. It reveals how faith fosters respect because it does not know anything but respect. It shares the harm that comes to people and the world when disrespect grows and offers the joy and strength of the Lord to show respect and share it to welcome all people to Christ for respect that comes with faith in Him.

Pass on Forgiveness

Generations thrive as they learn to forgive as God forgives them. UIM Resources declare how forgiveness strengthens them and offers them peace and joy. They learn how forgiveness is not done to help others as much as it helps those who forgive, and that God gives them strength to forgive those who have hurt or hate them when they do not have the strength to forgive. They also discover how their forgiving others leaves a lasting legacy of faith and strength that can prevent and heal problems and tragedies for generations.

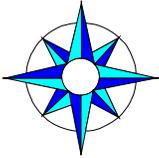
Pass on Love

Generations thrive as UIM Resources work to fill them with so much of God’s love

that it overflows to people all around them, who in turn become filled with God’s love and pass it on for generations. If you would like to leave a lasting legacy of love, faith, courage, honor, respect, and forgiveness, find out more about UIM on the web at familycrossfires.org. You will find: Worship services, Sunday School lessons, Bulletin Inserts, Newsletter Articles, Vacation Bible School programs and a foundational church growth program entitled “Christ’s Caring Intensified In Congregations” or CCIC. UIM Resources are provided for a donation so all congregations can afford them and grow in faith that welcomes all people to Christ!

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The Mystery of God's Love

God's Love Never Ends

One reason God's love is such a mystery is because it never ends. Our human love has limits. We will love as long as we can - as long as we have the patience and understanding - the strength and resolve - but our love can end. As awful as our situation may be and as much as we may believe God does not love or care about us because we think He doesn't help us, God's love never ends.

The Extent of God's Love

God loves us even when we do not love Him and that is a great mystery to human minds that refuse to do the same. Even if we doubt His love, God still loves us. And we have proof that God's love is great in the death of His Son - who showed us the full extent of God's love as He stretched out his arms and died for us. Though we may not believe it or desire it or feel it, God loves us!

God is With Us

Another mystery of God's love unfolds with the realization that we can angrily reject and even leave Him, but He will remain with us. God and His love will not vanish at our anger or wish ever! God will never leave us or forget His love for us no matter how much time passes. And even if we should lose everything we love or everyone who loves us, we will never lose Him. No matter how hard we try to push Him away, God and His love will stay with us and desire to live in us.

God will Provide

We may be in pain and plead for God's healing. He may or may not heal us, but He will always give us all that we need to sustain us. We may be hungry and God may or may not give us food, but He will always give us food from heaven. Why God does or does not provide some things remains a mystery, but we can be sure that God will provide all that we need because He has already done so by providing Christ.

God's Love is Certain

The fact that God loves people who do not deserve His love - who doubt that it exists - who become angry when God does not do what they want remains a mystery. How can God love sinful people at all, much less with such certainty? Picture what you would do for someone you love and then know that God has done so much more for people who fail to love Him. There has never been nor will there ever be a love as certain nor as great a mystery as God's love.

God's Love Never Fails

We may fail God over and over by not forgiving as He forgives us. With all that we have done wrong - the sins committed - the anger we let fester- He continues to love and forgive us. He never fails us and this remains a mystery. Even when we constantly forget or neglect Him, God does not forget or neglect us. And it is God's unending persistence that both proves and fills our hearts with His unfailing love - much like a circle that never ends but gets larger and larger as His love is poured into it until it bursts, unable to contain itself any longer from sharing God's love for all people with all people to welcome all people to Christ.

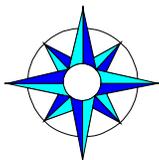
God's love is Free

Perhaps the greatest mystery of God's love is that while it cost Him the life of His Son, He offers it to us both free and freely. It is a magnificent gift to us from a magnificent God. We cannot perceive why we deserve it - poor miserable sinners that we are. Then, still in our sin, the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies us in the one true faith through Jesus Christ, the ultimate sacrifice and mystery of our God, who has made His love clear and free and all ours!

Check out more resources that share God's love at: familycrossfires.org

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The Power of Ponder

Mary's Heart

When Jesus was born, Scriptures record that Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19). She must have pondered serious questions like "Who is this child sleeping in my arms?" "What will his life mean for my life - for the life of all people?" This child came from the Lord - as all children do - but clearly Mary knew that her child was different from other children. No one knows exactly what she pondered. The Bible does not say. We only know that she did carry out God's will; BUT what if she hadn't taken the time to treasure and ponder the things surrounding Christ's birth in her heart?

Our Hearts

We rush here and there don't think of, much less ponder and treasure, God's will. Are we missing the power God gives and the plan He has for each of our lives when we do not take time to treasure and ponder the things of God? Are we missing the power of ponder?

Making Time

Certainly, none of us are Mary, the mother of our Lord, but we are part of God's magnificent plan for His people just like Mary. While pondering may not fit into our busy lives, not taking time to ponder what God has planned can leave us missing all that is magnificent! On the other hand, if we leave our busy lives behind, we will have time to ponder. And by pondering God's will, we will be blessed far more than our busyness can ever bless us.

Doing The Magnificent!

So, what would you do if God asked you to do something magnificent for Him? Because He has. You are to bring Christ to all nations (Matthew 28:19). Ponder with me for a moment. Are you ready to freak out His request? Is it so far-fetched to think Mary felt the same way? Scriptures tell us she accepted God's will, but that doesn't mean she wasn't afraid or confused by what God had asked her to do.

Leaving Busy Lives

We are not all that different from Mary. Some consider her holy and she surely was blessed to be the mother of our Lord, but she was human like us. She needed to ponder and treasure the things of God so she could accept them and so do we. As we do, God will help and strengthen us just as He helped and strengthened Mary to follow His will and give birth to His Son. It was magnificent! But ponder this: Isn't it magnificent when we are able, through God's power, not our own, to leave our busy lives behind and treasure and ponder God's will and follow Him?

Asking for God's Guidance

Are you doing what God would have you do with your life? It is a personal question that requires a personal answer. Hopefully, it will cause you to take a step back and ponder God's will and plan for your life. Ask God to guide and direct you through His Word to know and do His will, whatever He asks, and to do it without fear. Then, listen to Him and treasure and ponder all He tells you in your heart and mind. As you do, His plan and will for your life will become clear, and He will give you strength of faith to accomplish the magnificent!

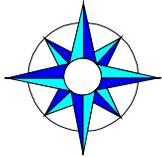
Doing God's Will

We can be sure God's plan for each one of our lives includes welcoming all people to Christ because He commands us to bring Christ to every nation. It is as we treasure His command that we find ourselves willing to do it. What we need to ponder is how He would have us do it because that is when He shows us all that we need to know. That is, after all, the power of ponder.

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Ready, Set, Escape

Get Away

More and more people are feeling the urge to “get away from it all.” Some work in the city and drive several hours each weekend to the country to get away. Some escape through hobbies they enjoy and others escape through medication, alcohol, or even drugs. Escape has become a national need, and I understand where people are coming from because some days I want to escape too.

For Fun

At first glance, the problem may appear to be that we have no time for fun. There is a human need to have fun. At least, I know I need to have fun. Still, when we take the time to have fun, something important may not get done. That can be troubling until we look at the statistics: a high percentage of people today die from too much stress or from not relaxing or having fun. So, having fun is something we need to do, and, yes, important things may need to be left undone or at least be postponed until another time.

For Rest

Some are wondering if they read the last paragraph correctly? Did it say to have fun and leave important work undone? Not only did you read the last paragraph correctly, but there is more. We all need to rest to have fun. Tired people can’t have fun even when they try. Without rest, fun is useless. It is only more work that tends to increase the need to escape. So, rest. Reading, hobbies, sports, etc. can provide some with “rest.” Others need to sleep. So, find out what gives you rest and do it.

For Complete Escape

However, and this is hard to believe but true, after much needed rest and fun, all people still need to escape. Granted, I am talking about a different kind of escape. It’s called complete escape, and it is the kind of escape that leaves us in perfect peace. It is the kind of escape to peace it is impossible to have without God’s help and strength.

For God’s Help

God’s help comes from His Word. You’ve heard this before, but are you hearing, reading, studying, and digesting God’s Word? Every problem in life finds it’s solution in Christ, who is God’s Word made flesh (John 1:14). We need to accept the reality of our situation, and that is “We need Christ.” He is our complete escape through the peace only He can give (John 14:27). It is fairly easy for us to understand this on the outside, but until we are able to experience it on the inside, we will not escape completely.

God Is In Control

So, get ready! With God’s Word in us, He is in control. Our important work will get done because God will give us His wisdom and strength and even make the time we need to complete each task. That is how complete escape takes place. So, get set and draw close to God through His Word and also add worship and prayer to your daily agenda. You will enjoy escape in ways you never have before or never knew you could. The peace of Christ exists for you and all people. It is peace we cannot understand (Philippians 4:7), but we can claim it. We can live in it, and we can feel it in our souls. It will set us free. because when the Son sets us free, we are free indeed (John 8:36).

Freedom in Christ

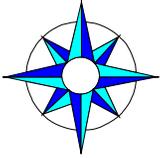
You can still drive hours to your country home and enjoy all of the things that formally helped you escape, but you will no longer *need to*. You will enjoy complete escape wherever you are or go. Christ has set you free. Believe it. The Bible says it and that makes it true.

Get ready! Set your mind on God’s Word right now, and go escape through Christ! He is the key, the only way to your complete escape. Then, share Him to welcome all people to Him for the complete peace-filled escape only He can give.

Check out more resources that give rest for the soul at: familycrossfires.org

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The Steps to Contentment

Transformation

The secret of contentment in our lives that the Apostle Paul speaks about in Philippians 4:12 requires a transformation of our souls. This transformation takes place through the redeeming work of Christ and the power of God's Holy Spirit through His Word and Sacraments. That is why it is so very important to attend church worship where we can partake of God's Word and Sacraments.

However, it is also important for all of us to understand that we are not transformed because we partake of God's Word and Sacraments. We are transformed because Christ suffered, died, and rose again. If we believe, even a little, that we can do anything to bring about our transformation, our contentment and salvation are in jeopardy of being lost. So, it is crucial that we learn how our transformation takes place, not from anything we do, but through all that God our Father has done for us.

Overcome Discontent

Our God not only transforms us to be content through His Word and Sacraments, He strengthens us to overcome the discontent rising in epidemic proportions in the world and in us every day.

Here's How: Psychologists and counselors often ask troubled people to think about and even write down the things that cause them trouble or for our purposes, discontent. Then, they analyze the problems and help the people find ways to rise above each problem or point of discontent. Our God does all of that and more. Through His Word and Sacraments, God transforms us from the sinful discontented people that we are into new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). He makes our very souls content. He is our help and strength in trouble (Psalm 46:1). Through His power, not our own, we place all of our discontent into His hands and He helps us "learn" to be content whatever the situation just like Paul (Philippians 4:11).

Step One

As you may have noticed, there is "learning" involved. There are steps we need to take to be transformed and content. The first is the step out in faith that God gives us through Christ to believe without seeing or understanding or needing proof. Faith trusts God completely and He has made our faith and trust possible through Christ. While we must take the steps, it is the faith God gives us that makes each step possible as we hang on to Him.

Step Two

The next step is confession of all our sins. The fact that God gives contentment through confession is easy to understand because getting rid of sin soothes our souls. Still, confession is not easy. It requires admitting our sins and failures and inabilities. It painfully strips our souls bare, but then God refreshes our souls with Christ's forgiveness and His very own and very deep love, and we begin to feel content. But we are not there yet.

Step Three

We may have confessed our sins and God surely has forgiven them, but learning to be content requires faith or believing we are forgiven. If one confessed and forgiven sin remains in our minds and hearts, we have been forgiven of that sin but we are committing another by not believing we are forgiven.

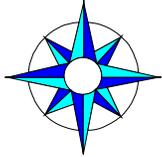
Step Four

Discontent thrives when God's forgiveness is missing in our lives. We may not think we deserve to live forgiven after what we have done, and we don't. But while we were still sinners, Christ died for and comes to us (Romans 5:8), not only to forgive us, but to give us strength of faith to live in His forgiveness. God does it all; we simply need to bathe in His love and forgiveness that transforms us to be content in whatever the situation. And as we share our faith and contentment through all that we say and do, our words and actions help to welcome people to Christ for faith and love that will soothe their souls and make them content too.

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The Self-Syndrome Snag

Care for Yourself

It is true that we need to take care of ourselves before we can take care of others and welcome them to Christ. If we do not care for ourselves, there is no way we can adequately care for others or be welcoming. So, we need to take care of our physical and emotional health first or before we can care for and welcome others. However, there is a snag because both caring for ourselves more than we care for God or others and self-hatred is sin, even dangerous, deadly sin.

Two Extremes

Some people who do not love themselves find it hard to love others and God, *which is sin*. Many sins are also committed because some people cannot love themselves or might even hate themselves. Low self-esteem is often a cause of the inability to love. In mild forms, it hurts those who suffer from it. Extreme cases of self-hate can turn people into psychopaths who terrorize and take the lives of others. Lives and souls are lost every day and forever because of self-hatred.

The reverse of self-hatred is extreme self-love. In mild forms, these people live only for themselves. They usually do not love God, so their souls are empty. Extreme cases can become sociopaths or develop narcissism; excessive or erotic interest in oneself and one's physical appearance. People with these disorders have no moral compass. They can hurt even kill to get what they want and feel no remorse. They can be dangerous and their actions have led to tragedies.

Achieve Balance

Luke 10:27 says, "Love your neighbor as yourself," which implies a need to love self so that we can love others. The snag or sin comes when self-love is done to such a degree that we love self more than God or others. So, we need to achieve balance - the place in between - where we can love and care for ourselves so that we can love and care for others in ways that welcome them to Christ, and God will help us.

Work for Balance

God's Word teaches us and also strengthens us to love Him above all and to love self and others in perfectly balanced proportions. We can love ourselves because God loves us so much He gave His Son to save us. His love fills us with love for Him, and He fills us with love for others, and for ourselves. In fact, His love in us helps us to love and value all life, all of God's creation. However, filled with the love of God is not a place we can get to and remain in on our own. As we learn in every UIM Resource, God's love is a gift from Him that we can only receive through Christ.

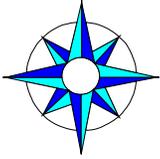
In our world, which constantly tells us to take care of self first, the self-syndrome snag is real and a strong force of sin to be reckoned with. The world, of course, does not want anyone to become a psychopath or sociopath. They can be dangerous and even deadly. That is why the world rightly tells us to achieve balance. Yet, the world cannot give us the balance that comes through the forgiveness of Christ. As we daily confess our sins and receive His forgiveness we are made new and filled with faith that produces God's love in us, love that is able to love God above all, and love others and ourselves in balanced proportion.

Learn From Jesus

The world also tells us raising self-esteem is the answer to the problems and tragedies caused by self-hatred and dangerous self-love. Jesus, shows us that *selfless love* is the answer. He gave His life so that we can live in His love in heaven and also on earth. He teaches us that it is better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), and when we give we can enjoy the good feeling that comes with it. Jesus knows the only way to truly balance love for self and others is through His love, and as we learn from Jesus we will be able to love God, self, and others in ways that welcome people all to Christ.

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Making Good Changes

Because so many of us have bad habits we truly want to get rid of, this insert may help you. You can also share it to help others and also welcome them to Christ.

Change Bad Habits

There are some common mistakes that prevent us from changing bad habits. Most people try to change the habit without addressing the underlying reasons for the habit. One gentleman said he could stop smoking if he didn't have so many excuses to keep smoking. He hit the nail on the head. He needed to get rid of all of his excuses for smoking before he could even begin to work on not smoking. Find out what is keeping you from getting rid of your bad habit(s). Begin to work on getting rid of your excuses one by one.

- Think about and dig deep inside yourself to discover the underlying reasons for each bad habit. Ask God to help you and He will.

- Pray, not only for strength from God to get rid of your excuses, but to help you keep working on getting rid of them.

- Ask friends to confront you when they see you involved in any behavior that may lead you to engage in your bad habit(s).

- Even ask friends to help you recognize your bad habits.

Change Bad Language

Realize that bad language is a bad habit. It is sin and it hurts us as all sin does. Each time we use bad language, we actually degrade ourselves. Deep inside, we all know right from wrong, and when we use bad language, we know we are wrong. The more we deny wrong or try to justify it, the more it hurts us deep inside. Bad language can weaken us and our resolve to handle other challenges.

If you use bad language and would like to change, confess your sin. Ask God to forgive you and to help you to improve how you speak. He will help you because that is what our God does.

- Ask God to keep your desire to change active in your mind and heart.

- Become aware of the situations where you use bad language and begin praying each time you enter them. If you cannot stop using bad language in these situations, avoid them as much as it is possible for you and keep praying for strength to work on using good language.

- Even use a practical deterrent. Keep a container handy where you can drop money inside every time you use bad language. It seems silly, but it works!

Change Overspending

Overspending has become a huge bad habit people want and even need to change. It's so easy to overspend. We never set out to overspend, but like Paul, we do the wrong we do not want to do (Romans 7: 15-20) and end up overspending.

The major reason we overspend is because we can. If we don't have cash, most of us can use credit. Then, overspending does not hurt our budget until the credit card bill arrives later. And often, even when overspending hurts us, we may get frustrated with ourselves and feel ashamed, but we still aren't able to change our bad spending habits.

To help yourself or others stop overspending, make God part of making out a budget and helping you stick to it.

• Ask Him to help you decide on every purchase and penny you spend. Consider what kind of spending God approves of and does not approve of.

• Discern if what you buy is something you need or simply want. Buy what you need and can afford first, then earn more money to buy what you want.

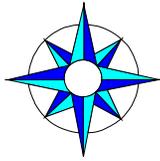
• Treat all money and riches as the Lord's because they are and spend them for His glory.

Then...as God strengthens you to make good changes, welcome others to Christ for strength of faith to make good changes in their lives too.

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WARNING: Overload

Welcoming people to Christ is a very critical matter today because overload is an epidemic and He is the cure. It is also important to recognize if you are on overload and help people around you to do the same. Here are a few helpful warning signs to watch for:

- mild to serious stomach ailments.
- frequent head aches.
- frequent or constant irritability.
- uncontrollable anger or frequent angry outbursts.
- sleeplessness.
- apathy.
- unable to leave work undone.
- overeating or an eating disorder.
- depression.
- drug and alcohol dependence.
- paranoia.
- thoughts of suicide.

Professional Help

Those who exhibit many of the signs above should get professional help. Call a hospital emergency room, a medical doctor, or a crisis hotline in your area. Preventative help in this insert must only be used along with the professional help individual symptoms require.

Preventative Help

The Lord has provided professional help for overload and He desires us to use it. He also helps to prevent overload. This article will share how. Please read it carefully and share it to help others facing overload.

- First, give your overload to Christ; *casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.* 1 Peter 5:7. Then....
- Surround yourself with a support group of Christians who understand your need to relieve your overload.
- Make prayer and Bible reading a mandatory part of your day every day. Do not skip them ever!
- Attend church worship and Bible study at least once a week. Less does not work as well. Attending more often helps more. People who have been where you are at and used worship and God's Word to gain His help and strength will attest to these facts.

Practical Help

- Make a list of things you do in one day and work to remove one quarter to one half of those things from your schedule for a short time or forever if necessary.
- Make a list of things you like to do, especially healthy things like exercise, etc. Then, *this is crucial*, MAKE TIME and DO THEM one at a time!
- If you no longer enjoy doing things you once loved to do - force yourself to try doing at least one thing. You don't have to enjoy it; you just have to do it. Enjoyment will return as you work to decrease your overload.
- WARNING: If you are unable to perform necessary tasks, you must *seek out professional help.*
- Try turning on lights even on bright days. You may even benefit from light therapy under a doctor's supervision.
- Take note of what gives you even a little relief. Basically, be in tune with how you feel. When you feel good or even a little better, STOP. Remember what you were doing and keep doing this and anything else that helps you feel relief!

More Spiritual Help

- Seek out and play Christian music every day all day long. Use headphones at work or school. Choose music and words that send God's love pouring through your mind and heart to support and lift you up.
- Have a daily quiet time with God because His wisdom and strength always come with Him and help to prevent and heal the effects of overload in the faith and lives of all who spend time with Him.

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