

LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

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AUTUMN 2007

CLOTHED WITH GARMENTS OF SALVATION

THE WORD 'BIBLE' IS USED IN MANY BOOK TITLES TODAY TO DESCRIBE THE SO-CALLED AUTHORITATIVE WORD ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS WINE, CAKE, BREAD, AND EVEN TRIATHLETE'S TRAINING! AT THE TIME OF WRITING VICTORIA BECKHAM HAS JUST RELEASED A NEW BOOK WHICH IS BEING PUBLICISED AS A "STYLE BIBLE", ENCOURAGING US TO BELIEVE THAT WHAT WE WEAR WILL REFLECT ON HOW MUCH WE ARE VALUED OR ACCEPTED.

The first time clothing is mentioned in the Holy Bible is in Genesis 3 where the eyes of both Adam and his wife "were opened, and they realised they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves" (v.7). But even man's effort to clothe himself sufficiently is done in vain for later in verse 21 we read that "the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them." Even our human efforts to cover up are going to be lacking!

It was shame that caused Adam and Eve to hide, deny, repress and cover up their God-given dignity and identity. Shame tells us that we don't belong, that we are not really worthy of honour and respect. Shame has become so pervasive in our society that we often can't recognise how we bow down to its destructive effects on our lives.

When shame is courted, it leaves men believing that they have no true authority or majesty. Women on the other hand are left believing that they have no power or radiance. Shame interweaves itself into our personal histories so much so that we no longer know how not to expect being shamed. For many, there is the anticipation of being shamed even before anything happens. Subsequently, any virtues or God-given qualities we may possess have already been rejected or sacrificed to shame's crippling message of unworthiness.

We clothe ourselves, therefore—often without realising it—in a state of insufficiency and hide not only from ourselves and others, but also from God in case His gaze should confirm that

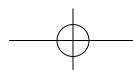
what the world says about our insufficiency is true. Yet unquestionably we know that this is not the last word on this matter...

We have enjoyed a summer of many blessings at Living Waters. The Healing Week saw many leave behind their tattered rags of shame and inadequacy. As Jesus exchanged His glory for our shame by dying on the Cross, it was there at the Cross, through the pouring out of His precious blood, that our false selves were washed and cleansed. Our old shame-ridden selves were exchanged for the true selves as God created us to be.

The challenge we are left with is this: where do we now turn our gaze? To the temporary, destructive messages of the world's many 'bibles', or to God and His eternal word, fully manifest in Jesus Christ? If we, like the psalmist, call upon God to "remove my sackcloth" then we shall be "clothed with joy, radiance and majesty" (Psalm 30:11, 104:1). If we make God our delight then not only do we need never to fear feeling inadequate, but rather we can confidently live out the future "clothed with garments of salvation and arrayed in a robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10).

Overleaf are several ways in which we can learn to live out the application of God's eternal word in our lives. We would love to welcome you and any others you may know who need to get in touch with their eternal dignity.

James Parker
Living Waters



CENTRAL LONDON COURSES STARTING IN JANUARY 2008

New Pilot Course—‘The Journey of Grace’: 20 chapter discipleship course, ideal for newcomers & those who have completed the ‘LW Programme’ in the past.

Dates:

Saturday 12th January, then Monday evenings until 21st April (excluding 24th March), + Saturday 9th Feb & Saturday 8th March.

‘Falling Forward’: 20 chapter course for those struggling with sexual addiction.

Dates:

Mondays 7th January 08 – 31st March (excluding 24th March), + a weekend away (1st – 3rd Feb) & Saturday 15th March.

Contact the office for an application form for either of these courses:

020 7630 1044 / Lw1uk@aol.com

Dates of SSA Meetings for all those affected by same-sex attraction (men, women, spouses, family, friends, etc)

Friday 2nd November,
Monday 26th November,
Monday 17th December 2007,
Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th January 2008.

Central London venue—for details contact the LW office.

Cost £10 per evening session, £35 for January weekend, or £55 for all sessions.

FYI the following link has a good recent article on SSA:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/october/6.48.html>

Day with Mario Bergner (www.redeemedlives.org)

10th November 2007, London, SW1.

‘The Shepherds Voice - Hearing God by Praying the Bible & the Our Father’.
See brochure enclosed.

ACCOUNTABILITY—THE PURSUIT OF VITAL RELATIONSHIPS

‘Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves’ (Ecclesiastes 4). God’s word is all about being involved with each other: love one another, serve one another, carry each other’s burdens, confess your sins to one another and pray for each other, to name but a few phrases! Moses had Aaron by his side, David had Jonathan, Ruth had Naomi, even Jesus Himself had a few well-chosen, close friendships.

Living Waters has set up an easy to run, step-by-step model of accountability that can be used in any prayer cell, small group or

wider church setting to help people voluntarily and intentionally grow in the vital relationships we need to mature in our Christian faith.

If you are interested in learning more then put **Saturday 26th April 2008** into your diary which is when we will run a day in Central London to teach and model what living in accountable relationships really looks like.

Even accountability can be rewarding and fun...!