

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Faith and
Counseling 2

Wired for
God 2

Dad where
are you? 2

Burnout 3

The Majesty
of God 3

Battle for
The Mind 4

KCM Launches Premarital Counseling Program

Is there nothing that will stem the increasing tide of divorce in America?

The statistics are staggering with an overall national rate now pushing beyond 50 percent. Fact is:

- 40% of first-time marriages
- 60% of second-time marriages
- 73% of third-time marriages

end in divorce. On average, first-time married couples who divorce, split after seven years and finalize on the eighth year. Equally concerning is the growing trend towards cohabitation. Today, an estimated 6 million couples cohabit versus 500,000 in 1970. And while Jesus said, "Don't let your heart be troubled." (John 14:1), these statistics are upsetting to say the least.

Yet, Jesus also said, "...with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26). And indeed, they are! A study published in *The Journal for Pastoral Counseling* (2006), found that "Clergy are strategically positioned to provide marriage preparation interventions..." This is due to the fact that 75—80 percent of first marriages occur in religious organizations (Stanley et al. 2001; Trathen 1995); which affords a wonderful opportunity for accessibility to couples who are marrying. However the study also found that, on average, clergy performed just 2.4 sessions with couples prior to marriage. One possible cause for the limited amount of sessions is due to the fact that most pastors/ministers simply do not have enough time in their day to meet with couples more often. This is not to say that members of the clergy don't see the importance of such training; rather, it is an acknowledgment that pastors/ministers have many hands pulling at

their time, and availability is limited where counseling is concerned.

With this in mind, Kingdom Community Ministries (KCM) has launched a comprehensive, eight week premarital training program called—Rayah! The program



utilizes one of the most complete and valid couple assessments—PREPARE; which has been administered to more than 4 million couples. PREPARE training focuses on:

- Strengths and growth areas
- Assertiveness and active listening
- Techniques for conflict resolution
- Family-of-Origin
- Financial planning
- Personal, couple, and family goals

KCM combines four sessions of PREPARE training; with an additional four sessions of biblically-based training on God's true plan for marriage and His description of what a husband and wife are meant to be.

"Rayah is the Hebrew word meaning, darling, beloved, the object of love and affection." reports Dr. Michael Mannia, KCM President; who went on to state, "Numerous studies have proven the effectiveness of premarital counseling. We want to serve the Body of Christ by partnering with members of the clergy to provide a reliable, Christ-centered approach to marriage preparation that we

believe will help address the issue of divorce right here in our community."

Indeed, hundreds of studies have shown the validity of marital preparation. For example:

- Couples who attend such programs experience on average a 30 percent increase in measures of marital strength (Carroll and Doherty, 2003).
- Premarital training programs are effective and make the case that couples can do more than merely survive; they can also thrive when they learn the skills to make their relationship work (Fagan, Patterson, and Rector, 2002).
- In a study involving 3,886 couples, researchers found that the average couple participating in any one of the 85 programs studied improved their behavior and relationship so that they were better off than more than two-thirds of the couples that did not participate in any program (Giblin, Sprenkle, and Sheehan, 1985).

"We want members of the clergy to know they are not alone in the matter of premarital training. KCM is here to support their efforts. One of the powerful components of Rayah is that it costs the churches nothing. As a means to better ensure ownership, responsibility, and accountability to the Rayah Premarital Counseling Program, couples pay for the program themselves." says Dr. Mannia.

Form more information on Rayah, contact Kingdom Community Ministries at: 661.324.4070 or by e-mail: info@kcmcounseling.com

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Faith and Counseling



What part should a counselee's faith play in the counseling setting? An equally important question would be what part a *counselor's* faith should play in counseling? One survey found that 72% of Americans say religious faith is among the most important factors in their lives; however, only 33% of psychologists state the same (Bergin and Jensen, 1990). Needless to say, these findings pose a serious dilemma for counselees. Yet, how valid can one study be?

What other data might back-up these findings? A Gallup poll indicated that more than 60% of prospective counselees prefer counselors who present spiritual values, and 80% want their beliefs brought into the counseling process (Kelly, American Counseling Association, 1995). In their book, *Caring for People God's Way*, authors Clinton and Ohlschlager assert, "With a great many of mental health professionals deficient in an understanding of spiritual im-

portance, the notion of finding suitable Christian counselors for all clients seems problematic, if not daunting." Dr. Michael Mannia, Founder of Kingdom Community Ministries offers this insight, "Those of us in the helping professions can no longer sit on the sidelines and expect those in ministry to meet the overwhelming need for Christ-centered counseling. The demand is simply too great. This is precisely why KCM was launched."

"He has made
everything
appropriate in its
time. He has also
set eternity in their
heart..."

(Ecclesiastes 3:11a, NAS)

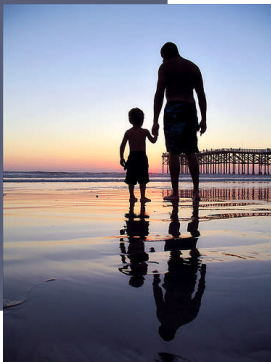
We're Wired for God

King Solomon, writing via God's inspiration, observed that our Creator has "set eternity" in our hearts. In other words, He has given mankind the capacity to understand the world in its natural state as it reflects God's wisdom in its magnificent order and time. The apostle Paul reiterated this point when he wrote, "...since the creation of the world His invisible attrib-

utes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20, NAS). While we live most effectively by operating in the present moment (see Matt. 6:34); we intrinsically look to eternity. Secular science would have us believe we're here as a matter

of random chance; that there is no real purpose to our lives: we live, we die, that's it. This is perhaps one the devil's greatest lies of our time. For without purpose, our lives are meaningless. The true answer found in the universal existential question, "Why do I exist?" is clear; our Heavenly Father intended it to be so; and thus, our lives have purpose, now *and* forever!

Dad, where are you?



Nearly 40% of children in the U.S. fall asleep in homes where their fathers are not present (Blackenhorn, 1995). According to The Institute for the Study of Civil Society (Sept., 2002) fatherlessness

promotes mental disorders, crime, suicide, poverty, teen-aged pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and incarceration. Stemming this growing tide of destruction seems insurmountable; yet, with the strength of Christ, we can do all things (Phil. 4:13). Pray that the

hearts of fathers who have left their families will be broken in such a way that they would turn their face back to God; and thus, to their families. Remember, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." (James 5:16b, NAS).

Are You Burned-Out?



Burnout in ministry has always been an area of concern. Yet, this has become an issue requiring increased vigilance for the Body of Christ. Take the following assessment to see if you might be experiencing burnout.

Check the following statements you believe *presently* apply to your life:

- More and more, I find that I can hardly wait for quitting time to come so that I can leave work.
- I feel like I'm not any good at work these days.
- I am more irritable than I used to be.
- I'm thinking more about changing jobs.
- Lately I've become more cynical and negative.
- I have more headaches (or backaches, or other physical symptoms) than usual.

- Often I feel hopeless, like "Who cares?"
- I drink more now or take drugs or prescribed medication just to cope with everyday stress.
- My energy level is not what it used to be. I'm tired all the time.
- I feel a lot of pressure and responsibility at work these days.
- My memory is not as good as it used to be.
- I don't seem to concentrate or pay attention like I did in the past.
- I don't sleep as well as I used to.
- My appetite is decreasing these days (or, I can't seem to stop eating).
- I feel unfulfilled and disillusioned.
- I'm not as enthusiastic about work as I was a year or two ago.
- I feel like a failure at work. All the work I've done hasn't been worth it.
- I can't seem to make decisions as easily as I once did.
- I find I'm doing fewer things at work that I like or that I do well.
- I often tell myself, "Why bother? It doesn't really matter anyhow."
- I don't feel adequately rewarded or noticed for all the work I've done.
- I feel hopeless, as if I can't see any way out of problems.

- People have told me I'm too idealistic about my job.
- I think my career has just about come to a dead end.

Add-up the total amount of items checked. If you checked twelve or more, you are most likely experiencing burnout.

So what can you do? First, understand that you are not alone in this matter. According to an American Psychological Study (2007), it is estimated that:

- One-third of Americans feel they are living with extreme stress.
- About one-third (31%) of employed adults have difficulty managing work and family responsibilities.

Second, if you're in ministry—read Galatians 6:2 and practice what you preach. Don't be afraid to reach out for help. Third, Kingdom Community Ministries offers affordable, Christ-centered counseling in a discrete setting. Call 661.324.4070 today.

“One-third of Americans feel they are living with extreme stress.”

The Majesty of God

The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength; indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. Thy throne is established from of old; Thou art from everlasting.

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their pounding waves.

More than the sounds of many waters, than the mighty breakers of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty. Thy testimonies are

fully confirmed; holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore.
- Psalm 93 (NAS)





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Kingdom Community Ministries (KCM) exists to serve the Body of Christ by offering biblically-based, Christ-centered counseling services. Our mission is to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ by bringing counselees into a closer relationship with the Lord; and helping them to overcome the crippling effects of sin and guilt. KCM counselors are licensed ministers with graduate level degrees in Ministry with emphasis in Christian Counseling; however, we are not licensed psychotherapists. We offer evening appointments, and a sliding scale payment plan for those who qualify. Your prayerful consideration of our services is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Battle for The Mind

In order for the Christian to consistently produce fruit, we must mature through the process of sanctification (a growing in holiness). Yet, the enemy of God (the devil) seeks to render the Christian ineffective in their walk with the Lord through pitfalls and the development of strongholds in their mind.

Herein lies the battle (2 Corinthians 4:4). Considered to be the reasoning faculty, the mind is the dimension within our soul that enables consciousness; which leads to: thought (Genesis 6:5), reasoning (Romans 7:23—25), emotion (2 Samuel 17:8), desire (Nehemiah 4:6), and intention (2 Corinthians 1:15, 17). In short, control the mind, and you control the whole person (i.e. body and soul). Which is precisely why the devil wages war against our mind and not some other component of our human-

ness.

This battle between the Christian's old, fallen self and the new regenerated self often times produces tension. When this tension becomes too great, our ability to produce fruit for God can be



seriously hampered. In order for the believer in Christ to conduct the all-so-important soul-work in this lifetime, the regenerate mind requires counsel and

training in order to overcome the habitually iniquitous old self; as well as, tare down strongholds of the enemy that have been established in the mind of the Christian (Ps. 1:1; Prov. 11:14; 15:22).

Kingdom Community Ministries seeks to assist in healing spiritual and emotional wounds inflicted in the battle for the mind; while at the same time, helping to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, who are: rooted in our Lord (Colossians 2:10); in order that they might be built-up in Him (Colossians 2:7); which leads to a walk with our King that produces power, and results in a victorious life lived for His Kingdom (Colossians 2:6).

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