



Heart to Heart

A Newsletter for Parents of Children with Disabilities

“...that their hearts may be encouraged...” COLOSSIANS 2:2



“...oh tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy...oh tidings of comfort and joy.”

Strength from Joy

By Donna L.H. Smith, H*VMI Intern

These familiar strains from the old Christmas carol, “God Rest ye Merry Gentlemen,” can give us hope as another holiday season quickly approaches.

It seemed unbelievable to me that some television stations and many department stores already had their Christmas program lineups and decorations out right after Halloween. Thanksgiving falls somewhere in there and is given a little thought, but not as much as Christmas. Why? I think it is because we want to feel happy. If we feel happy, we can face challenges with greater strength. But the Bible says it’s JOY, not happiness that brings strength.

Many times I think we view joy as a huge celebratory feeling. And it can be. When momentous events happen in our lives, we do feel great joy. I have a friend, Melissa, who has Down’s syndrome. Melissa does not speak and she is still quite shy, even though she is over thirty years old. But she is a joy - to her mother and to the rest of her family. This young woman and I have an understanding. Even though Melissa does not speak, I know she understands everything I say to her. And, she knows I know! That was not always the case.

I had been given the impression that people did not think Melissa understood them, and I was not sure Melissa understood me. But, that all changed

twelve years ago. One day I was in a Subway with Melissa while her mother was parking their car. I said, “Melissa, your mom is right out there, and she will be in as soon as she parks the car. She said we should find a place to sit. Why don’t you pick?” Melissa immediately turned around and found a booth to sit in. That proved to me that she did understand! I have had other opportunities since that time to communicate with Melissa, and I know she understands! I dream of Melissa speaking someday. Who knows? Maybe it will happen. Little by little she has been coming “out of her shell.” Melissa is a wonderful lady and such momentous occasions do bring JOY!

But we can also find joy in the everyday. Maybe you are already doing that. *Nehemiah 8:10 says, “... Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”* (italics mine) This verse has always meant a lot to me when I go through times of challenge. Too often we can get weighed down and feel overwhelmed with day to day tasks. Those are the times when we need to go to God and ask Him to restore His JOY in our lives. Take time to find those joy filled moments in

- ... a smile.
- ... a giggle.
- ... a mundane task.
- ... in the humorous and playful.
- ... AND in the midst of the greatest challenge!

If we can learn to find JOY in the midst of our most challenging day, we are on our way to conquering depression, disappointment, anger and heartache. Remember our source of strength from Nehemiah 8:10. Strength to meet challenges, obstacles, trials and pains. The JOY of the LORD is your strength!

H*VMI Seminar Series March 13 -14, 2015

First Methodist Church in Collingswood, NJ

SEMINAR TOPICS

Understanding and Helping People with Mental Illness: *A Christian Testimony and Perspective*

A Mile In My Shoes: *Reaching Out to People Touched By Disability*

Help for People in Pain: *Coping with Grief and Loss*

Understanding the Hurting Person: *Understanding and Discipling People Facing Abuse*

A Child’s Grief: *Supporting Grieving Children and Teens*

Please spread the word to those who might benefit personally or in ministering to others in these areas. More information is available at www.hvmi.org or email tkelley@hvmi.org.



JOY in Hebrew (chedvah) means rejoicing and gladness!
In Greek (chara) it denotes cheerfulness and delight.

“The joy of Jesus was the absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice of Himself to His Father; the joy of doing that which the Father sent Him to do.”
– Oswald Chambers

“The joy of the Lord will be my strength. I will not falter, I will not faint. He is my Shepherd, I am not afraid. The joy of the Lord is my strength.” – Twila Paris

Support Groups

Join other parents of “children” (of any age) with disabilities for fellowship, sharing, prayer and encouragement from God’s Word at our PIP (Parents in Progress) Support Group meetings:

Lancaster County, PA

Second *Monday* of each month, beginning at 7:00 P.M.

Collingswood, NJ

Second *Thursday* of each month, beginning at 7:30 P.M.

Contact us at 717.859.4777 or visit www.hvmi.org for details.

Resources:

Check it out! <http://vimeo.com/86925527>

Psalm 139 read in a way that is sure to bless!

Bundles of Joy by Janice Brown. A local Christian author writes about her journey as the mother of two children with special needs. Also visit janicedbrownsite.wordpress.com.

Different Dream Parenting by Jolene Philo. Offers practical help, extensive advice about resources, and encouraging spiritual guidance.

www.not-alone.org Blog for Christian parents of children with disabilities.

Lynsy

- by her mother, Kathy Vosgerichian

Why do I love her this way?
I got to say, it’s not because of what she’ll do today.
It’s not because of what she’ll say.
She cannot walk; she may even balk.
She may hit me. She may even kick me.
It may not be fun as we’re getting things done,
But this is what love does.
Endures to the end - again and again.
It comes from above through the Father’s love.
Despite all our sins, it’s where He begins
To welcome us home and make us His own.
He’ll give you His love; show you what it does.
Show you what it’s about - never leave you with doubt.
And if you fall down, He’ll help you off the ground.
Never leave you alone with nowhere to roam.
He pleads, “Come on back ‘cause you’re under attack.”
He wants you to win; be without sin.
He wants you to be pure.
He’s knocking at your door.
He knows you can’t do it, so He sent Jesus to get you through it.
He’s all that you need so go on and plead.
He got it all done, so you and He could be one.

THANK YOU

to those who gave during the November *ExtraGive* event.

Through your generosity, more than \$27,000 was given to support the ministries of H*VMI, including PIP.

H*VMI Upcoming Events 2015:

April 11

H*VMI Banquet, Voorhees, NJ

October 3

H*VMI Banquet, New Holland, PA

Check our website or call us for additional information or to register for events you’d like to attend.

www.hvmi.org
717.859.4777

Heart to Heart is produced by **Parents In Progress** a ministry under the leadership of



*Handi*Vangelism Ministries International*

Parents In Progress

is a group designed just for parents of children with disabilities, offering resources to help them as they raise and nurture their children; and providing a “safe” environment of support and encouragement where they can freely discuss the issues unique to their families.

“PIP is the one place I can truly express my frustrations because I know everyone there understands and cares.”

For more information, please visit our website or contact Tara Kelley at:

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