



Abundant Living

MINISTRIES

Encouraging Christian Living Since 1978

February 2024

Trust... BLIND trust!

Our daughter Monica and her husband Madhav have seven children (all seven happen to be teenagers right now), three of whom have low vision. Well, I just want to tell you about their recent experience.

You're probably familiar with the *Lions Club*... Although they are a national group, I think of their food stand selling the best cheeseburgers at our local annual Ephrata Fair. One of their favorite projects is helping blind individuals.

Three years ago, Monica & Madhav's family was invited by the *Lions Club* to spend a few days skiing at *Deep Creek* in western Maryland. *Lions Club* provided the lodging, a chef to prepare food, instructors, and use of all the ski equipment.

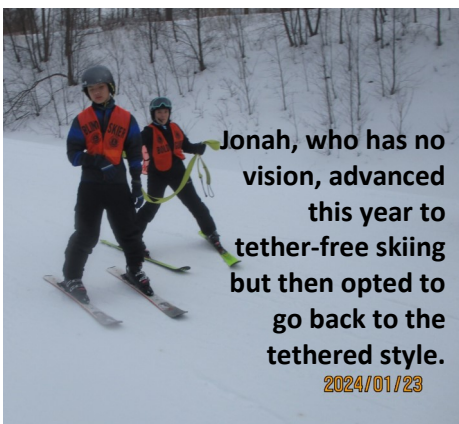
LEVEL ONE - That first year, each of the three vision-impaired children was matched with two instructors. The picture above, on the right, illustrates how the vision-impaired held onto a "broom stick" while two guides took them down the slopes, giving verbal instructions.

LEVEL TWO - The next year, they progressed from "broom stick" to "tethered" skiing. This time, a guide skied behind a low-vision teen, giving verbal instructions and "holding back on the reins" if required.

LEVEL THREE - BLIND TRUST!! - A few weeks ago they were invited once again, this time with the challenging invitation to "lose your tether," and ski with absolutely nothing more than the voice of the guide who skied behind them. All three took the challenge... even Jonah, who has no vision. Yes, he was successful. Imagine the adrenaline rush! (He did opt to go back to the tethered style after he made a couple "free runs.")



Not our grandson, but this illustrates level-one style..



Jonah, who has no vision, advanced this year to tether-free skiing but then opted to go back to the tethered style.

2024/01/23

When I recently told this story to a friend, he commented how this was a great illustration of the Holy Spirit who guides and directs us... when we so often are "blind" to the realities of a situation. And I suppose that, similar to my grandchildren's experience, we feel the panic or fear when we don't know what lies ahead.

Oh, May I trust Holy Spirit's guidance each day!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



Open Arms Childbirth Class

four consecutive Thursday evenings 7:00-9:00pm
April 4, 11, 28, 25, 2024

Covering the important information offered in a hospital course, *Open Arms* adds a distinctively-Christian perspective. You will enjoy meeting other expectant couples as you prepare for a great labor and delivery.

There is no cost for this course.

Register by contacting the ALM office.



Confessions of a Spouse

Married couples were asked to submit marriage-related questions or concerns:

"How can I get my husband to be more romantic?"

"Why can't my wife be less critical of me?"

"I wish my husband would talk to me more!"

"My wife puts the children ahead of me!"

These complaints are typical of those often posed by husbands and wives... perhaps you've made one yourself. But notice the common denominator in the statements. Each expresses the desire for their spouse to change. None of them asks: "How can I be a better wife?" "How can I be a more loving husband?" "What can I do to be more giving?"

God instructs us, through scripture, *Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed* (James 5:16). And Jesus taught, *Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye* (Matt. 7:3-5).

If husbands and wives would spend more time confessing their own sins to each other, and addressing their own

faults, they would experience greater improvement in their relationships. Prayerfully consider making some of these confessions/purpose statements to your spouse...

♥♥ I have been self-centered with my time and attention... definitely focused on getting, rather than on giving. Please forgive me.

♥♥ I have put other people and interests ahead of you. I purpose to put you and our marriage back in the place of honor in my heart.

♥♥ I have failed to pray for you daily. Starting today, I intend to pray for you each day.

♥♥ I have been critical of you. Please forgive me for my negative speech and attitude. You have many wonderful traits and are truly a blessing to me.

♥♥ I have been more concerned with achieving my own ambitions, than helping you reach God's goals for you. I purpose to do all I can to cooperate with God's mission for you.

♥♥ I have grown lazy about nurturing our relationship. I am truly sorry. I'm inviting you to join me in some of the activities we used to enjoy doing together, to revive the "spark" between us.

♥♥ I have been impatient toward you. Please forgive me. I purpose to extend the same patience toward you, as I appreciate others extending toward me.

♥♥ I have not loved you unconditionally, as Jesus loves me. I have shown you love when I liked what you were doing, and I withheld love when I didn't. That is sin and I've asked God to forgive me and I also ask you to forgive me. I want to reassure you that my love for you is forever... in the good *and bad* times ... just as I vowed to you on our wedding day.

The apostle Peter wrote, *All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"* (1 Peter 5:5). During this month that focuses on love, consider replacing complaining with *confession*. You may experience a new *grace* in your marriage... and that is a Valentine gift far more enjoyable than a box of chocolates!

Written by
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