

God's Beautiful Plan

I cannot express what a wonderful feeling it is to be headed into Teen Challenge Graduation weekend with my husband as one of the graduates! I know three years ago, I wasn't ever expecting to see him enter the doors at Teen Challenge. Now, he is graduating!



Shane & Kathy Dudley & Family

We have been blessed beyond measure by the Teen Challenge program, and all the people who have been there along the way. Most importantly, we are blessed by the ONE who continues to keep us where we need to be. Teen Challenge gave us the chance to wipe the slate clean in our marriage, and start over. Through writing letters and short phone calls, we learned to communicate at a level that we never had before. The time away from each other helped us to rekindle a fire that had been missing from our relationship for several years. And the best thing about the time we had away from each other, was how we were

able to focus on our relationship with God individually. We all know how easy it can be to let our priorities get out of order, and we had fallen a long way. But God knew that, and He used the program at Teen Challenge to help us realign ourselves with HIM and reclaim what Satan thought he could steal.

No matter what comes our way, be it an individual hurdle, or a steep hill for the whole family, we know without a doubt that we can conquer it together. We may be further in the Teen Challenge journey, but I have learned that our journey never ends. That is the beauty of God's plan. There is always another lesson to be learned, and I always have more room to grow.

Shawn Christenson is another 2011 Teen Challenge graduate. Look for his wife Kaylynn's testimony, and their picture in the next edition of Oasis.

Restoration

Gorgeous spring weather greeted our couples as they arrived for our Spring Wives' Weekend. For some, it was the first time they had seen the new friends they made at the Winter Wives' Weekend. After a great meal, the couples enjoyed a wonderful time of worship in the chapel led by Jake Stielow. Each couple also received prayer ministry by Pastor Ed and Judy. After separate men's and women's sessions for sharing and prayer, we closed with fellowship and snacks.

Our speakers, Pastor Jon and Tara Downs joined us on Saturday morning. The Downs have been married for over 20 years, and have four boys and a newly adopted daughter. Jon has been in ministry for 15 years, and is currently the children's pastor at Heartland Assembly of God. Tara works with SHIKO; a ministry to single Moms.

The Downs began by sharing their testimony. Jon said he grew up in church, but did not serve God. Tara also grew up in church, but felt church was forced on her. They married young, and had a son soon afterwards. Jon talked about his selfishness; in his mind, "it was all about him." His drinking also caused problems. They realized their marriage was in trouble, and had a second son to "keep things together." However, their struggles escalated. Soon, Jon was "drinking and doing drugs heavily," and almost died several times due to alcohol poisoning. They were living separate lives.

Jon's mom had been praying for them, and Tara was the first to come to Christ. After surrendering her life to Christ, Tara stopped worrying about Jon, and began focusing on caring for her boys and her own spiritual life. Jon began to see the change in Tara. The night he finally surrendered to Christ he saw a vision of his Mom praying for him. She had been praying for his salvation for over 10 years. Jon's surrender to Christ was the turning point for Jon and Tara.

Tara explained that after Jon came to Christ there was a refining process for both of them. Jon had so often lied to her; it took time for her to trust him again. She had to allow Jon to prove himself. She also had to allow healing to take place, and allow God to change her as He was changing Jon.

Several wives indicated on the Wives' Weekend Evaluation that the most helpful part of the weekend was Jon and Tara's testimony. One stated, "It renews my faith to see someone else having made it through what we are currently working through."

In their next session, Jon talked about living under Kingdom principles. He emphasized activating the Kingdom of Heaven in our daily lives – marriages, jobs, finances, etc. He said if our relationship with God is only a category in our lives, we are in trouble. Our relationship with God needs to be central, and regulate everything else in our lives. He encouraged the couples to let God change their lives, and pour out their lives to others. He stated, "The secret to raising Godly children is a Godly marriage."

Jon and Tara also did separate sessions for the couples. In Tara's session, she talked about some of the things that have helped her grow in her Christian walk. She said going through "Christ Life" helped get out a lot of hurt and bitterness. She said learning her identity in Christ, spending time in His presence listening to worship music, learning the "love languages," and obeying God in starting a ministry to single moms were all helpful in her walk with Christ, and her renewed marriage.

Our last session was a time for couples to share what God has done for them since their Teen Challenge journey began. Several of the current couples shared wonderful testimonies of what God is doing in their lives and marriages. Shane and Kathy Dudley have completed Teen Challenge, and love to come back to help with Wives' Weekends. Their testimony of God's grace to restore their lives and marriage was a great encouragement to the current couples.

We traveled to Pella that evening, where we enjoyed dinner, and a walk around the Pella Square. Just a week before Pella's annual Tulip Time, the tulips were already abundant and beautiful. The perfect spring weather made it an enjoyable way to wrap up Saturday's activities.

On Sunday we attended Heartland Assembly of God. Pastor Dave Olson, a TC graduate and former

Restoration, con't.

staff member, preached a great message on “Mind Renewal” - a perfect conclusion to our Wives’ Weekend.

The wives always express their appreciation for these weekends. This one was no exception. I received a thank you note that included this comment: “(My husband) and I both felt blessed and really amazed at God’s restoration of our marriage.” That is the essence of Teen Challenge Wives Ministry.

Our Summer Wives’ Weekend is July 22-24. Our speakers will be Jeff and Lynn Arp. Jeff and Lynn met when they were five years old, and celebrated 26 years of marriage last December. They have two adult children, Jordan and Tyler. Jeff and Lynn served in pastoral ministry from 1987 until 2009. In March 2010, Jeff became Intake Coordinator for TC. Lynn has been in the health care field most of her life, and is currently working as a nurse at Iowa Orthopedics, as well as taking classes for her RN. The ministry of Jeff and Lynn Arp will bless you. Please RSVP by July 5 if you plan to attend. You may call me at (515) 988-2204 or email me at judyaubuchon@msn.com.



Thank you for joining us for our Spring Wives’ Weekend! It was a wonderful weekend of restoring and building relationships. We hope to see you all in July!



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Mark Your Calendars!

These are special events at Teen Challenge, and the wives of students are invited. Please call ahead for information and reservations. (515) 674-3713 or (515) 988-2204

Summer Wives' Weekend --- July 22nd – 24th

Valley Bank 14th Annual Teen Challenge Golf
Marathon – Sept. 12th

(Wives are invited if they raise funds for Teen
Challenge and golf. The goal is \$1,500 per
golfer – contact Judy for details.)

Fall Wives' Weekend --- October 21st – 23rd

