

HEART-TO-HEART

We are reminded that Christ is in our hearts and we are in His and that love connects us all in unity.



Thankfulness

As we head into the holiday season, it is our time to reflect on the past year and to think about what we should be grateful for. Often, we think about good things to be thankful for, but do we ever also thank God for the challenges that we have in our lives?

As we learn more about Christ, we begin to understand that the hardships help us to learn to seek Him and to help strengthen our love for Him.

Is praying an afterthought or is it your first priority whenever you are anxious, encounter difficulty or are trying to solve a problem? God wants us to have a relationship with Him, to trust Him, and to seek Him. We are blessed to have a Savior who loves us unconditionally and only requires that we love Him and love others...and for that we are truly grateful.

*"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

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God's Power to Transform Us...If We're Willing

by Jeanne Nagatani

Charles F. Stanley wrote a devotional that spoke to me:

"1 Chronicles 29:12 'In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.'

The Lord desires to heal you of old emotional wounds and memories, and to heal you so completely that you no longer rely on any of the crutches you have used in the past as a substitute for trust in God... God alone wants to be the permanent – yes, eternal – solution for every difficulty or problem you encounter... He is the ultimate and final Source of your strength, healing, and comfort. God wants you to be utterly and completely dependent upon Him, not upon any other person or thing."

Looking back on my life, I used to always get angry about things when they didn't go my way. I used to lash out at my family if things were not up to MY standard. Everything was their fault; they did things to make me mad. It wasn't my fault for lashing out at them. My emotions could easily get out of control and later, I would regret lashing out, but I would never apologize for my behavior. After all, it was their fault.

Julie gave me a book by Lysa TerKeurst called "Unglued Devotional." I didn't read it for a few years. One day when I was at an emotional low, I picked it up and started reading. This was God's timing as I was now open to learning from it. It was a 60-day devotional; a lesson each day. It started me on a journey. I started to change a little, but I still didn't like myself. But the door to my heart was opened.

Once I started having a relationship with Jesus, He brought people into my life to help me. The honesty that my friends presented to me hurt me a lot. I got angry and didn't understand why they couldn't see my point. WRONG! I couldn't see their point because I rationalized why it wasn't my fault. Have you ever stopped talking to a person who was your friend because they told you a truth that you didn't agree with, so you never called them back? I did. I didn't call the person back until I started to realize, she was a true friend and in spite of being afraid of destroying our friendship, she told me her truth about what she saw about me. She was trying to help. It took me a while before I apologized and told her that I finally understood what she was telling me and why she said it. She's still a good friend. She speaks the truth to me, and I listen because I trust her.

Sometimes the truth hurts. When I did a self-evaluation and saw myself for what I really was, very angry with a lot of hurt, I finally got it. After taking my blinders off, and not being so defensive about everything, the healing started. For me, I had to come to terms with my childhood and all the anger and hurt that had accumulated over the years. I had to forgive the people who hurt me and I also had to forgive myself. It doesn't happen overnight. The anger and hurt took me years to overcome. I made the choice to be better. Whenever things get tough, I ask for help from God. He's always there. It also helps to have friends to give truthful advice, but whether I take their advice or not, it's my choice. God and I know my situation best.

Julie recently told me that I was a crazy person back then. I agree, but I know that I'm not that crazy person anymore. I like the renewed me that God helped me to become.



"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

1 Corinthians 15:10

Remembering Pastor Rod Yee

by Alli Oshiro

A retired Oakland police chief, pastor of San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church and part of the Conference Administrative Office, Rod was also our mentor and friend. In 2014, he and his wife Koko walked us through pre-marital counseling, and in 2015 Rod performed our wedding. Rod went home to be with Jesus on April 10, 2020 but his legacy continues to live on in the OMS and at WOCC. This article is a tribute to him.



January 3, 2015- Jason & Alli's Wedding

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:3-6

I have been thinking a lot about Pastor Rod in these last couple of months and I cannot help but be filled with gratitude. From our installation service on September 29 to attending the pastor's wives' retreat in early October, we see that even though Rod has physically gone home to be with Jesus; God's sovereignty is above all and we get to experience it through how He used Rod to pour into our life.

Our installation service on September 29th was both a time to look forward as we begin our journey at WOCC, as well as a cherished time to remember and look back. We couldn't help but be overwhelmed with joy and gratitude to see all 3 of our church families represented in the sanctuary – Honolulu Christian Church where we met and were married, Converge where we had both of our sons and had the privilege of serving for 10 years, and of course, where we have come home to – West Oahu Christian Church. We are so grateful for all the ways God has allowed us to serve His people over the years and as we look toward the future we are eager to fulfill all the plans He has for us at WOCC.

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"When God puts someone in your life, it's for a purpose. Either you need them to change your life or you're the one that will change theirs."

– Unknown

Remembering Pastor Rod Yee

(cont.)

This milestone event also prompted us to remember Pastor Rod. We thought of the many years of praying and persuading as he tried his hardest to bring Jason back into the OMS. We remember the late-night conversations at Zippy's Vineyard, with baby Skyler in his onesie, talking story with Rod and Koko over jello parfaits and french fries. Most of all, we remember how deeply Rod wanted Jason to come home, to be back in the OMS. We are grateful to the Lord for leading us to West Oahu Christian Church, grateful to Pastor Stan for this extended (and much-needed) "exchange zone" as he passes the baton, and we are grateful to Pastor Rod for his faithful prayers year after year. We see God's fingerprints through it all.

Back in 2014, I remember seeing a post on Facebook of the Hawai'i OMS pastors' wives heading to California for their retreat. I had wished so desperately that I could go with them one day. I longed to be with other women who understood the challenges of navigating the unique role of "pastor's wife." On October 17, 2024, as I sat with Aunty Amy at the gate and as we boarded our flight, I couldn't help but be filled with gratitude for God's goodness. He reminded me of the longing in my heart and that He had answered my unspoken prayers.

The retreat was simply amazing and there aren't enough words to express just how refreshing, encouraging, and needed it was. From getting my own room (not something that happens at every retreat), to relaxing and easy breakfasts, to quiet time and walks in the crisp morning air, the retreat far exceeded my expectations. And even more amazing than the retreat itself, I learned that Pastor Rod is the one responsible for advocating for the budget for the Pastors' Wives Retreat many years ago.

There were so many times in the last couple of months I wished I could have called up Rod to thank him for his obedience and faithfulness in following the Lord. Yet in those moments of sadness and grief, God lovingly spoke and encouraged me— do the same: be obedient to Him, listen to Him, and follow Him. Just as Rod was faithful, and Jason and I got to feel the ripple effects of his obedience, I pray we are used in the same way—that the ripple effect of our obedience and faithfulness will in turn bless and usher others into His presence and love.



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"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11

*Please feel free to contact:
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about this newsletter or to
submit an article.*