

August 2022

***“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” (John 15:11)***

Our Savior spoke these words just hours before He suffered unjustly at the hands of cruel men. Ironically, it was the supernatural joy that was within Him and the eternal joy that was set before Him (Heb. 12:2) that gave Him the strength to press forward and consider the welfare of His disciples in that difficult moment. Dallas Willard writes:

*“Joy is natural in the presence of God. Joy is that pervasive sense of well-being that is deeper and broader than any pleasure. It is the assurance that things will turn out well. It is the basis of inner transformation into Christlikeness and the outer life that flows from it.”*

If Jesus’ joy was key to His being able to face the most difficult trial of His life, then joy must be our first line of defense against weakness, temptation, failure, and disappointment. Being in a right relationship with God is the source of this joy (John 15:5) so we must not be passive. We must not focus on our past failures, nor on what might happen in the future, nor on our inward temptations and weaknesses. Nothing destroys joy like focusing on ourselves. Gaze on Jesus and your joy will be full!

God has been so gracious to allow us to **continue virtually walking alongside ministry leaders** over the last two months. We have seen the Lord work through ongoing counseling in the lives of God’s servants in **Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Mexico, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and the United Kingdom, as well as ministry leaders in New Jersey, Tennessee, Michigan, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.**

In addition, it has been a joy **to be able to conduct in-person counseling through six Personal Counseling Intensives (PCI) over the last two and a half months.** When we are with a couple during a PCI, we dedicate many hours of personal counseling over a period of 5-7 days. This includes a concentrated period of rest, guided time in the Word, prayer, and time to unpack the presenting circumstantial, emotional, and spiritual challenges. This process is a powerful jumpstart toward healing as hope is given through providing them with “next steps.” During the follow up sessions, the Word of God inevitably brings about dramatic changes as the counselees cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the areas that need strengthening. What a powerful experience for us to be able to witness healing and hope being renewed in the lives of these dear servants of God!

We are looking forward to our first men’s **Selah Refresh Retreat, August 18-20, 2022.** Please be in prayer for the Lord to meet with us in a powerful and transformative way as we dig deep into topics such as: “A Pastor’s Personal Walk with God,” “The Importance of Forgiveness in the Pastorate,” “Resolving Conflict Among Church and Staff,” “Winning the Fight for Moral Purity,” and “Helping the Pastor Overcome Depression.” It is an honor to be able to encourage and equip these ministry leaders so they can be better prepared to help others and face their own challenges in the ministry.

Being able to engage with God’s servants in cross cultural settings is one great distinctive of Selah International Counseling Ministries. The expansion of Selah’s influence in this area is dependent on relationships with trained biblical counselors, who are equipped to meet the needs of ministry leaders globally in their own languages. Today, we introduce to you **Ivan and Lizzy Villalobos, Selah Associates serving the Lord together at Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary, in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico.** Ivan and Lizzy both have Masters Degrees in Biblical Counseling and are in the process of becoming certified counselors through ACBC. One facet of their ministry in the college and seminary is to train young men and women to be biblical counselors. They also have various opportunities to travel around Mexico to provide biblical counseling workshops as well as to present their ministry in different churches for missionary support. They are also heavily involved in their local church, Emanuel Baptist Church, where they lead the young adults’ ministry, a Bible club, weekly evangelism, and a discipleship ministry on Saturday mornings. Lord willing, Dawn and I will be able to travel to Mexico next Spring to be able to minister with them in the Bible Institute and in their church. God is greatly expanding the Biblical Counseling movement in the Spanish-speaking community. If you would like more information about the Villalobos, feel free to email them at [lvillalobos@mgmi.org](mailto:lvillalobos@mgmi.org).



We praise the Lord for the doors he has opened to be able to be a part of bringing biblical hope and clarity to ministry leaders all around the world. **Stay tuned over the next few weeks as we will be presenting to you a huge opportunity for Selah International. We need your prayers and involvement!**

Only by His Grace, Chris and Dawn