

2458 Gallows Rd  
Dunn Loring, VA 22027  
703-573-2527  
703-573-4090 FAX

Community Church of God

Pastor Tommy Sicker

Nov.2, 1998

Dear Duane,

When Brother Glen was here a couple of weeks ago, he shared with me that you have been going through a hard time. He didn't go into a lot of detail, simply asked me to pray for you.

I do not know all that you may be going through, but don't give up hope because things can be better than you ever dreamed possible.

Last January, things in my life rather came to a head. Of course, you know that several years ago I struggled emotionally -- was in the hospital etc.. For many years now, I have been stressed out, burned out and angry on the inside.

For at least a year prior to this past January, I began to be not only depressed, stressed out, short tempered, but totally overwhelmed by everything. The smallest problem seemed like a mountain to me. I could not seem to focus on what I needed to be doing and seemed to have no control over my actions or thoughts. It reached a point where my family was beginning to really suffer because of my actions -- my blood pressure was out of control -- I even had a mini stroke. Finally, my family more or less gave me an ultimatum -- get help, or! I am not sure what the "or" might have been but I decided to seek help.

This was a tremendously hard decision to make. I had always felt like if a person could just get spiritual enough they would not have any emotional problems. On top of that, what would people think -- especially my congregation -- about their pastor seeking counseling?

Long story short I entered a six day, in-house treatment program, followed by one hour counseling sessions three times a week for several weeks, then two counseling sessions a week for several more weeks, down to 1 counseling session a week for several more weeks. I was in counseling for more than six months.

I can't tell you what it did for me Duane. First of all, just the miracle of God leading me to a Christian counselor (he is not just a counselor, this is his ministry) -- it was a miracle from God to find someone like him in such a large area that we live in. This proved to me that God loved me just like I was, with all of my brokenness and pain, anger etc. This counselor was the first person I was ever able to totally open up to and be totally honest with.

Where Salvation Makes you a Member

November 2, 1998

Page 2

In the process of time I was able to resolve issues in my life that I never understood -- deal with deep down anger -- lay aside resentment (some of these things I did not even really realize I had down inside until I was willing to talk about it.)

In addition to the counseling, the doctor also discovered that I had a chemical imbalance. I learned about that years ago. You may remember when I was hospitalized before I was diagnosed with a chemical imbalance and put on medication. I only stayed on the medicine for a short time because I felt condemned being a preacher and having to take medication.

I now understand how ridiculous those feelings were. If my arm were broken, I would get it set. If my body lacks certain vitamins, I try to put them in my body. If my brain lacks certain chemicals, why would it be wrong to supply those chemicals? I now realize that I was a victim of a lot of unscriptural teaching along these lines. I now I take a small amount of medication every day for this chemical imbalance with no feeling of condemnation, and I can't tell you how much brighter the whole world looks to me.

For the first time in my life, I no longer struggle with certain issues that I had struggled with most of my life. I am no longer overwhelmed, angry or hold resentment. I feel like my life really has a purpose now and I can serve the Lord as never before.

I want to quickly say, that God was my healer -- without Him all of the counseling and medication in the world would not have solved my problems. I am very much aware now that God wanted to heal me years ago. My lack of being healed was not because He was not willing to do it. I now know that I had so many scars, so much pain, so much guilt from actions that I could not even comprehend the reasons for, that these things were like walls that kept God from being able to get through to me. It's not that God cannot do anything, but He does not forced himself on us. Because of all my scars I really didn't know how to surrender to Him to the point that He would be able to heal my emotions.

It was through counseling with this Christian counselor that, one by one, I could tear down the walls that hindered God from administering the healing that He had always wanted to give me emotionally, spiritually, physically -- in every way. I truly am a new person. I am just so sorry that it couldn't have happened years before.

I would give everything that I own if I could live my life over and pastor Ezra church of God the way that I am now. So many things would be different. I did the best I knew how when I was there and I know that there will be some people in heaven because of my ministry there. However, I also know that I caused a lot of pain in many people's lives and for that, I am truly sorry. I am sorry if I brought pain to your life. I am not making excuses or trying to avoid responsibility -- I am simply explaining that I could only work with what I had to give at the time and that was not much. Much of what I should have been able to give, and would have like to have given, was impossible because of the emotional scars inflicted on me in my younger years.

November 2, 1998

Page 3

Now that I am better, I can do one of two things with my life. I can sit back and do nothing except regret the past or I can give all of the past to Jesus and see if He can still use me in the time that I have left. I have chosen to do the latter. At present, He is using me and I praise Him for that.

I have written all of this to you because you and I have been good friends in years past. You have shared quite a lot with me about yourself and I just wanted you to know about the help that I have received. I know that you will be happy for me and I want you to find the happiness that I have found. Whatever your struggle is now, it's not hopeless. A year ago I felt hopeless, but now I have hope.

Let me assure you that there is nothing degrading, or spiritually wrong, with seeking the help of a CHRISTIAN counselor. The stigma that some people attach to receiving help from a counselor I have learned comes from ignorance. Our emotions are God given and when they become ill, due to pain inflicted on us by others, God would have us to seek Him and the help of someone who is trained in that area if necessary.

I share all of this with you, not because I am trying to be your counselor (I can't be) but in hopes that you will be encouraged that God is still on the throne and the pain that I know you feel, can be healed. When we were in Illinois, Carol saw a counselor named Kent Maddox. He was at the church where sis. Keefer works or worked. A Baptist church I think. She liked him. I don't know anything about him myself but if things get really tough you might want to talk to him.

I want to take this time to thank you for the years that you stood behind me and was part of my ministry at Ezra. I had no more loyal friend there than you and I appreciate that. I know that you have a good pastor now in Bro. Glen, and I hope that you will give him the same love a loyalty that you gave me. He really cares about you.

Always know that God loves you, even when you can't feel it. He is more real to me today than ever before in my life.

I am holding on for you,

Bro. Tommy