



Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Romans 5:5

July 2007

Reviving A Marriage

by Kendra Hanes, Women's Ministry Director

Phil and Shar Geisert have lived in Corvallis for over 20 years and have a heart for reaching out to those who have experienced sexual abuse or are struggling with sexual addiction. They have served in many leadership roles over the years, including board membership, teaching, and offering support to those struggling with homosexuality. I recently interviewed Phil and Sharon to hear their story and how God has worked in their lives, enabling them to minister to others.

Shar, can you tell me a bit about your life before you met Phil?

Shar: All throughout my childhood I felt different than the other girls. I didn't think like them, and I didn't trust men. My best friend's dad molested me when I lived next door to them. I learned that if my friend was over, he would not come. If she was there, I was safe. A path of thinking began that there was comfort at having a woman beside me in bed.

When did you two meet and get married?

Phil: We met in high school and ended up getting married when I had a year left in the army. The army was very much a party atmosphere, so we just partied and continued that lifestyle at home after I got out of the army. About a year and a half later, we broke up.

Shar: After the divorce, I began dating men, but was also starting to have an even stronger attachment to women. I saw a picture of a friend of my sister's, and I knew I wanted to have her. And we ended up together. When I finally decided to tell someone, this friend decided to tell the rest of my friends. I felt really betrayed, and that triggered other betrayals, but it also started me seeking the Lord. A guy came into my bar one night. I thought he looked kinda cute, so I went over to chat with him. All I remember him saying is, "Blah, blah, blah ... Jesus." Nothing else except that we talked about Jesus and that I felt loved. Within two weeks, I had made a decision for Christ, but it took the next two and a half years to work through all those feelings.

Phil, what was happening with you while all of this was happening to Shar? Did you know what was happening with her?

Phil: I had no idea. In my life I was drinking and had a reasonable amount of promiscuity too. Then the guys at work started talking about end-times prophecies. I'd get off work, go to the bar, and then go home to read the Bible, so I could mess with people's minds. A while after I started reading the Bible again, I made a recommitment to the Lord.

How long was it between when you got divorced and when you started dating each other again?

Phil: There were about four years of separation. We saw each other once or twice in three years and then started dating that last year.

Phil, you had issues with sexual addiction as well. How did that play out in your life?

Phil: I'd had pornography in the house growing up. I think that was my dad's way of teaching me about the birds and the bees. I didn't really act out while we were married, but after the divorce I would feel guilty every time I was with another woman. Pornography was a release of that guilt for me. When we got remarried, it was hard to break out of it.

You entered into marriage again with unresolved issues. How did those get resolved?

Phil: Shar's partner lived with us for a few months, and I still didn't know anything about it until after she moved out. When I did find out, I didn't know how to react. I was one of those guys who hardly



understood emotions. I could have always challenged another guy if she was more interested in him than me, but I couldn't understand her feelings toward another woman. I thought, "Can't fix it. Don't know what to do. Don't understand the dynamics. It was a bad decision, now we're moving on with life." And it was that way for me until Shar got into an emotionally dependent relationship with another gal a while later.

Shar: We went and confessed to Phil. I think that's when I began to realize, "I've got an issue here."

Phil: Before it had been something in the past from when we were apart. Now it was something after we'd spent some years together. It was more devastating to me.

What were the turning points for the two of you?

Phil: Once we were married, my sexual addiction had lessened, but it wasn't until Cleansing Streams (a deliverance ministry) that I felt some significant change.

Shar: For me it was hearing Deb Fredericks give her testimony. It was a relationship with her and her ministry

that got us plugged into Living Waters (a support program similar to Taking Back Ground). The conference we attended was such a turning point for me. It was a painful, painful journey, but afterward the healing really began.

Phil: The whole thing was enlightening ... realizing that it's not just one thing. There are all sorts of things involved in this whole process. It really helped us look at what we had gone through.

Shar: I found it really refreshing to sit at a table with other people and within five minutes be comparing issues, finding similarities. It was healing just to be able to be real.

Phil: I think the other thing for me was that I had always thought that our marriage the first time around had failed because of me. In reality, we never had a snowball's chance in heck of succeeding anyway. I didn't have to take the entire blame for that.

Can you share some lessons you have learned, either individually or together?

Phil: It's helpful to watch Shar's boundaries and help her keep them. That's where you can get out of balance, especially in a ministry like this one. It's also nice to be able to talk and let each other know if we've failed in an area or whatever. There's much more grace and freedom to confess without condemnation.

Phil, what advice would you give to a spouse of someone struggling?

Phil: Don't take the whole blame on yourself. Don't take that condemnation the enemy wants to put on you. As long as your spouse is willing to keep talking about things, keep working on the issues. Find someone who can help you, who can relate with you. Trying to fix them isn't going to work. Just praying harder isn't going to help.

Shar, what advice would you give to a married person struggling?

Shar: Be brave. Talk about it. Our enemy loves to keep things in the dark. Seek help. Daily seek the Lord. To me, deliverance is making a good decision at an important moment. It starts with one step, so make a first step. Be accountable to somebody that you trust, a safe person, but also someone who will get in your face a little bit. You can do this! For those who are asking, "When will this be over," it does get less and less and less. I want people to be hopeful, because I remember thinking, "I don't know how this is ever going to be different." It really can be different.



Taking Back Ground Starts in October

This two-year discipleship program is designed for men and women seeking to heal from sexual and relational brokenness. The program includes worship, teaching, and small group participation.

Topics Include:

Understanding Homosexuality
Knowing God in the Struggle
Walking Out the Process

**Applications are now being accepted.
Please call or e-mail for more information.**



Pray With Us

Lord, there is no way for us to live out the kind of love You ask of us without Your help. You've drawn us to You with Your perfect love, and we so imperfectly give it back. Help us today to love You and love others better, especially those we feel don't deserve it.

Thank You!

Last month, we had the opportunity to share a testimony at **Lebanon Free Methodist Church**. Additionally, we spent three weeks at **Oakville Presbyterian Church**, presenting **Homosexuality 101**, a three-part, interactive curriculum designed to educate, give practical advice, and answer questions. We greatly appreciated the opportunities to serve both these churches and the warm receptions we received.

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