

Carol: Yes, yes! And you know what is so funny is (that) we say change is possible for the people we like, and then for the people we don't like, we say what? They'll never change. And you know who we are the hardest on? Ourselves. And so we need to realize that change is possible not because we can do it by ourselves but because we let it go, we hit rock bottom, we cannot figure out which way to go, and we lean in to the only person who can help us, and that is Jesus.

CRIN: Not to overanalyze the film, but I have found personally that just because of my own experience in Celebrate Recovery, and the insights I've gained into my own life has helped me to gain insights as I observe others, and what I wanted to tie that to, is how the film is spoken about as a baseball player with an alcohol problem, but as we gain insights we see that underneath that alcohol problem is an anger problem, and that anger problem has its genesis in childhood hurts. And all of those aspects are so well brought out in Home Run, and I am sure that a lot of people are going to be able to tie them together as well and then perhaps identify with those aspects.

Carol: And do you know why? Because they see themselves and they know that they drink because, or if they don't know, this movie is going to help remind them. You know, we drink because we are anesthetizing pain. Or we use drugs because we are somehow or another not wanting to deal with something, and sometimes it started off to find courage, and then we used it to, you know, have a good time, I don't know. But in the end we believed a lie somewhere down the road. The thing that I like about Home Run is when you view it, one of the little sub messages is things are not what they seem. You look at Cory (main character) and what do we do? We look at him from afar and we say "He drinks too much. If he would just stop drinking, then he'd be a nice guy and he wouldn't get in so much trouble", right? And we look at Karen, right, and we say, what did Cory say to her? "You're just a sheltered Sunday school teacher." And the fact is, things are not what they seem. We cannot look at a person and size them up and begin to know their life. We can't begin to know what they have been through.



CR Founder John Baker and Carol share a playful moment at Summit 2012, Lake Forest, CA

We can't begin to know all the reasons why they've chosen, even their poor choices, why they chose poorly. And there is where grace comes in. Why would I judge you? I have not known what pain you've been in, what choices were made that hurt you, and so I just love that things were not as they seemed; and people are usually doing bad things for other reasons, you know, not because they just want to be bad.

CRIN: Is that how you see it Micah?



Micah: Yeah, absolutely. One of my favorite lines in the film is in a step study situation where a character says, "In answering these questions, I found out why I use". I love that line because at the end of the day, we're using some sort of coping mechanism to cover a deeper lying issue, and so if we can uncover what that deeper underlying issue is, a lot of times, and heal that, and start there with our healing; these other things that we are using to cope become healed as well, so to speak, right? So I love that because the drinking isn't the problem, it's WHY is he drinking. What was the thing that was the underlying issue? His father was a drunk. His father's father was a drunk, and there was a lot of emotional and psychological abuse that happened, and so it was a generational thing, and what Cory decided in the film is "This is where it stops". He's not going to carry on and allow this to be carried on in his family, and it's a very important thing to understand and realize in the film.

CRIN: Which brings us to what John Baker says about Celebration Station and the Landing. He says the goal of Celebration Station and the Landing is to make Celebrate Recovery obsolete,

Carol: "I think one of the things that comes out in this movie is it is never too late. What I love about Cory is, in this story of Home Run is, I think the message is no matter what, it is not too late to turn, find healing, and make your life a beacon of hope to people who need to make changes for themselves and live the life the best life you can in the circumstances you're in. Certainly there are plenty of inmates who made these turns in their life and are doing a world of good while still being incarcerated; I think the idea is most people want to do good and they have somehow or another become their own judge and jury and said it's too late for me to do good, that it's never gonna change, this is where I am. It's just not true, and it's not too late, God is still with them and God still loves them and God still finds them acceptable, and if there is a message to anybody that were to hear the movie or see it or even read this article is that it is never too late; God still wants to use your life, your individual single life, you still are important, and I think the devil whispers in our ears all those things, it's too late, you'll never change, and even if you did, who cares, and it's a lie, it's a lie! God cares."

Micah: You can always find purpose. You're not where you are by accident. God has a plan for your life, and you can be used no matter where you are. My platform isn't necessarily in a prison. I really probably don't have much to relate to someone who is incarcerated, but someone who has been incarcerated that can look at someone else on the inside and say, "Hey, I've been there, I know what that's like, me too", those are probably two of the most powerful words in the English language when put together is "me too". What that does is provide a personal connection between you and the other person that says "I understand"; and a lot of times we isolate ourselves because we think we are the only ones going through what we are going through, and that's just not the case. It's a lie, and we buy into that lie, so when you can look at someone, whether you're inside or outside, and say "me too", you're making a connection with someone and can relate with someone and can help them along in their journey, because you have hope... I have hope because of Christ.

CRIN: What would you like to say to the incarcerated personally, and what would you like them to hear from the film, and I think you have already covered some of it.

Carol: I hope and pray that what they hear from the film is it's not too late to make a change, that your life is important and precious to God. He knew you would be here and He still desperately desires to know you, to walk with you, to be with you, and to turn your life into something that glorifies Him; and there is joy and fulfillment in waiting for that and pursuing that with the Lord. Change is possible. Change is possible no matter where you are, what you've done. For me personally, it's wrapped up in the same. I feel so passionate about the message of the movie. I don't have a personal separation. I feel that way personally. I want to encourage people to live the lives they were supposed to lead, and to not believe the lies that say it's over for you, 'cause it's not.

Micah: When we can turn to our Creator, our Heavenly Father, and our Savior Jesus Christ, and turn to others who are going through similar situations and be able to lean on others, that is when we really find freedom, and whether you're incarcerated or not, freedom is possible. You can live a purpose-filled life when you have Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

CRIN:This is going to be a tremendous tool to recruit inmates into the program.

M: And that's what we're hoping too, is that when inmates get to see this, they are able to see that change is possible and that there is a ministry out there that is for them that understands them and that is open for them to come and be themselves and go through their stuff, as dirty as it might be, but with an understanding that they are going to be loved, they are not going to be shunned, they are not going to be pushed away, but they are going to be accepted, and that true change is possible.

Carol: That's right. None of us have walked this earth that doesn't have regrets. None of us walk this earth that doesn't have things happen to us that are hurtful and heartbreaking, and all of us have hope, and God is not stingy. He is gracious and generous with His grace and His mercy and it is for all of us.

Do Not Be Discouraged

Written by Christine Sumner Wednesday, 31 October 2012 08:52

My message today is “Do not be discouraged” when things go wrong in your life. It won’t go on forever. We have to learn to roll with the punches of life. We have to rely on our Lord to take care of us in the tough times. I am the first to admit that sometimes it is hard to remember this as I go about trying to handle my problems all alone but in the end I always rely on Him.

From the first mention of my taking Celebrate Recovery to the women at the jail, Satan has haunted my footsteps at every turn. I have had to keep reminding myself that this is an assignment from my Lord and Saviour “and I will not be denied.”

All sorts of things came barrelling into my life. On and on I trudged, keeping the faith all the time and telling myself, “this too, shall pass.” But by the time I overcame one thing, here came another. If I had had less faith I would have given up and never gone into the jail again. But I am convinced this is my purpose in life and I will not let anything deter my efforts, no matter how fast and furious they are thrown at me. My Lord’s work is more important than anything else.

I have learned that the more you try to follow the Lord, the more obstacles are thrown in your path, some by accident, some intentional. It’s all the same. One more challenge to overcome.

I know my Lord watches over me and will not let me be overcome. If not, I would have given up a long time ago but my faith keeps me going and it will keep you going if you just remember that He has promised never to leave us. He is our best friend in times of grieving and troubles. I had them both at the same time and it would have been easy to have raised the white flag but the love of my Lord and the remembered love of my family kept me putting one foot before the other down the path I had set out for myself, the one I was divinely appointed to.

So do not be discouraged when trouble comes. Just remember He is only a prayer away.



CELEBRATE RECOVERY INSIDE

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Home Run Producers talk about faith, film, and finding freedom with Celebrate Recovery Inside Newsletter

Editor’s note: Shortly before the national release of the movie Home Run, I got to sit with Associate Producer Micah Barnard and Co-Executive Producer Carol Mathews (Co-executive Producer Tom Newman was in England filming “The Christmas Candle”). Their faith in God and faith in what they do is evident in this interview, and evident as well in their vision for the film and for the message that Home Run seeks to bring to this world. DJ

CRIN: Let’s start with your experience of taking the film to Angola (Prison in Louisiana) and what that was like for you.

Micah: It was a surreal experience and very humbling. I had an impression in my mind of what it was going to be like, and it was completely not that impression at all. The inmates were very receptive to the film open, very appreciative that we brought it to them. Many admitted to fighting back tears and it was just a really, really great experience. I got to interview a few of the inmates and hear their thoughts on the film and overwhelmingly everyone was saying that they were just really impressed, not only by the quality of the acting but everything from the cinematography to the way it was directed. I didn’t expect to hear inmates talk that way, and so it was really interesting. They have seen a lot of films, these guys, and so they were really impressed with the film and very appreciative of it.

CRIN: You had spoken about interviewing some of them. What kind of a lasting impression did they have on you, or did the place (Angola) have on you?

Micah: True freedom, it doesn’t matter whether you’re incarcerated or not. True freedom is a heart thing, and there are men living inside a prison that will never get

out that are living a fully fulfilled life with purpose and they are experiencing freedom like many people will never experience who are never in prison and are



never incarcerated that way. So, it was just amazing to see guys who have purpose and know what they are called to do inside the prison.

CCRIN: So well stated. And you kind of touched on the point that there are people who are not locked up who are in prisons of their own.

Micah: And they talk about all the different types of prisons that there are... the prison of bitterness, of anger and rage, the prison of whether it’s an actual addiction to some kind of emotional thing you are going through, something that has been done to you that you’re not willing to let go of. One of the inmates said, and this will stick with me forever, that “True freedom happens when we confess our stuff, whatever that might be, to someone else and begin to walk out the process of whether it is forgiveness or restoration, towards restoration; because that’s where true freedom happens”. That’s the best form of freedom that we could ever experience here on earth.

CRIN: Which, as it happens, is the message of Celebrate Recovery (Cont’d)