



Toll Free: 800.361.6880
Email: info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

Illinois Offices:

Blue Island
Chicago
Crete
Darien—Opening Soon!
Evergreen Park
Frankfort
Lombard
New Lenox
Orland Park
Plainfield
South Holland
Tinley Park

Indiana Offices:

DeMotte
Schererville

Visit us or donate online at
www.chicagochristiancounseling.org



facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling



Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list or
Send your email address to info@chicagochristiancounseling.org.

Our Mission Statement

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling,
consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

Continued from Page 2, Give Thanks?

continues "... we will not fear for God has willed His truth to triumph through us." There are many things in this world that are troubling and frightening. Thankfully, for us as Christians what we see, feel or experience isn't all that there is. We know that our hope, our strength, and our comfort is God who is our Rock and our Salvation.

It is for this reason that the Apostle Paul, who experienced so much difficulty in his own life, could write these words of exhortation: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." As we approach the season of Thanksgiving, are you able to give thanks? With all that is happening in our world and perhaps in your life, can you give thanks? There are times when thanksgiving doesn't flow naturally out of me. However, when I

remember what God has done for me, when I remember that I belong to him, when I remember that Jesus has already defeated all that is evil and that I stand with him in victory, I can again give thanks.

With all that is happening
in our world
and perhaps in your life,
can you
give thanks?

God doesn't call us to give thanks FOR difficult or evil circumstance; he calls us to

remember what he has done and to give thanks for him.

As I think about this season of thanksgiving, I acknowledge that I have much for which I am thankful: a wonderful family, the opportunity to work for this great organization, those who support the work of this ministry financially and in prayer, dedicated counselors and staff and board members, and so much more. Perhaps you have many things for which you are thankful as well. As I think about giving thanks I realize that most of all I'm thankful for what God has done. So no matter what I experience I have a reason to Give Thanks. Can you say that too? ■



Mel Jonkman, MDiv
Chief Executive Officer

PRESSING ON...

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14



A Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center

Nov | Dec 2011

Holidays + Family = ~~Team Work~~ STRESS | Marriage Tip Series

■ by Beth Elgersma, MSW, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

I don't need to elaborate on stress during that season between Thanksgiving and Christmas. You know it all too well. In addition to all the "busy" stress, who needs stress in extended family relationships?? However, it is another area that we all have to deal with in one form or another, from minor to major. Are you and your spouse handling this stress as a team or are you working against each other?



In order to work as a team, you might try the following steps:

- 1) Individually think and pray about what you would like your Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations to include. What's most important? Isn't it the spiritual remembrance and purpose of the day? Beyond that, your goal may be to connect lovingly with family and friends.
- 2) Talk and pray about your hopes as a couple. Most people have some things that make time with extended family difficult. It may be a time of grieving, complex scheduling issues, expectations that are not workable for some family members, individual boundaries that are not respected, control issues on the part of some family members, or other problems. Prayerfully, brainstorm your ideas to resolve the problem.
- 3) Include extended family in your problem solving if appropriate. They may have some good ideas, and be more than willing to be flexible.

- 4) Inform those with whom you celebrate about your decision(s) if possible. Knowing what to expect can help the person(s) to adjust their plans accordingly. ■



Beth Elgersma sees clients in our South Holland location.

New Year Reflection | Emotional Fitness
and your Spiritual Life

Do you have a reason to GIVE THANKS?
Page 2

New Staff
Building a Strong Marriage workshop
Keeping a Gratitude Journal
Page 3



MARRIAGE TIP | Work as a Team in Handling Relationship Stress with Extended Family

Emotional Fitness and Your Spiritual Life

■ by Traci Noble, MSW, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

“As the beginning of a new year approaches...How many of us stop to think about the improvements we need to make emotionally or mentally?”

The winter months are upon us, which means most of us are already busy and stressed with the hustle and bustle of the holidays. As the beginning of a new year approaches we might consider making our list of New Years Resolutions, or at least start thinking about what changes we'd like to make in our life. Exercise, losing weight, saving money, and reading through the Bible in a year have often hit the top of my personal list! How many of us stop to think about the improvements we need to make emotionally or mentally? The good news is that if we make goals related to spiritual growth, good mental and emotional health will likely follow.

The Barna Research Group shares the following statistics on their website regarding church attendance :

- Church attendance is the number one predictor of marital stability
- Attending church is helpful in the prevention of mental illness, cancer, and heart disease

- Teens who attend church are four-times less likely to commit suicide
- People attending church are physically healthy and less depressed
- Alcohol abuse is 300% less for those who attend church

In addition, research indicates that prayer, drawing comfort from faith, and having support from church members helps to combat depression. Another study reports that individuals who prayed frequently were less likely to be mentally ill and had higher self-esteem. These statistics are not implying that as Christians we will be spared from illness or problems. However, as Christians our hope is in the Lord who tells us in Matthew 11:28-30 to come to Him when we're weary, and reminds us in Matthew 6:25-27 not to worry because He will take care of us. Not only is church attendance important, as the above facts imply, but the physical, emotional and prayer support that we receive from fellow Christians is so crucial for our personal growth and overall mental health during

difficult times when depression and anxiety are present.

I encourage each of you to think about how you can grow spiritually in the upcoming year. Attending church regularly is crucial, but maybe you need to join a small group, spend consistent time in prayer and Bible Study, or memorize Scripture. All of these activities will strengthen your walk with the Lord and equip you to manage the struggles that life brings and cope with difficult and uncomfortable emotions. If you are having a difficult time managing your emotions or handling a personal or family crisis, don't hesitate to find help. Talk to a pastor, trusted friend or family member, or contact Chicago Christian Counseling Center. ■



Traci Noble sees clients in our Schererville location.



I recall the words to the great hymn *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*. The third stanza begins like this, “And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us,” but it doesn't end there. It

Continued on Page 4, Give Thanks?

New staff...



Anna Akan, MS, MSW, LCSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Schererville Office

Anna Akan



Patricia Smith Huntoon, MA, LCPC
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor
South Holland Office

Patricia Smith Huntoon

Go to our website for a complete staff listing and speaker bureau
www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

Keeping a Gratitude Journal

■ by Lynne Scherschel, MS, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist

When we think of gratitude, Thanksgiving often comes to mind, the day set aside to express thanks for our blessings. God, however, said that it is His will for believers to “give thanks in all circumstances.” (1 Thess.5:18) He also commanded us to think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy, i.e. to think positively. (Phil. 4:8) Is it just possible that our Creator, the one with the Owner's manual, might know

the best way for us to live? As a matter of fact, when we live with an attitude of gratitude, our brain pathways are enhanced, and our brain chemistry tends to balance. Conversely, when we engage in negative thinking, the opposite happens.

An attitude of gratitude can be cultivated by engaging in a gratitude journal. This is the way it works. Get yourself a good-quality notebook, and each day write in it five things for which you are thankful. That doesn't sound too difficult, does it? Well, there is one catch: you may not repeat any of your blessings for the entire month. At the beginning of the next month, you start over. The idea is to get yourself to look for your blessings. That gets your brain working in a positive direction, thereby improving its chemistry and pathways. This



Lynne Scherschel sees clients in our Schererville location.



“...when we live with an attitude of gratitude, our brain pathways are enhanced, and our brain chemistry tends to balance.”

effect has been proven on brain scans! Whether you tend to be depressed and negative or consider yourself a positive thinker, this exercise can only enhance your life physically, emotionally, and spiritually. ■

**Are you on Facebook?
So are we!**



Don't miss our therapist recommendations! We've planned to share some wonderful resources with you there — books and scripture that have impacted our clients, online resources, articles, and more. This newsletter too!

www.facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling



Register Now.

Spring 2012 One-Day Program
Saturday, March 3, 2012
9:00 a.m.—5:30 p.m.

Building a Strong Marriage will benefit couples planning their marriage or trying to make their marriage stronger. The program is offered in the spring and fall each year and held at Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church and is facilitated by our therapist Joy Bocanegra, MA, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

Call 708.845.5500 x 104 to register