

..For the Addicted and the Apathetic

We started RU the first Friday night in April 2010. We started this ministry for the addicted. We planned to reach out to others with the life changing truth of the Christ-Centered life. We knew God was going to use us to inform the addict of the truth and that truth would make them free. What we did not know was how the Lord was going to change us with this same TRUTH!

As we began to engage in the "It's Personal" journal and complete each challenge we were faced with our own "strongholds" or "stubborn habits" that God, through the Holy Spirit would like to change. Each week when we would meet for our small challenge groups, each of us would share about God's awesome power that He was working in us. Many had not felt that power in years. God really was speaking to us individually again. WOW! That power came with the very presence of God. One by one, each week, we would testify of Gods moving through His word, that we had "things" in our lives. No, they were not the same things the addict would come to us bound by, but chains are chains. It may be the chain of gossip or the chain of cocaine, it may be the chain of bitterness, or the chain of booze. Some chains may be smaller than others but a chain is a chain is a chain. No one knew what God had planned for Astatula Baptist Church. We realized we were in the same boat as many of the addicts we were focusing on – we needed a better relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ! We also realized that God wanted us to "yield" things over to Him that were affecting our relationship with Him. Then we could begin to teach others. You cannot bring someone to a place you are not at.

God also began to show us that not only was our vertical relationship with Him in need of attention, our horizontal relationships had been affected as well. As I was meditating on this matter of relationships this thought came to me. The cross is made up of two beams of wood crossed over one another both vertical and horizontal. The cross upon which JESUS died was made this same way. The longest beam (vertical) points to heaven. Jesus died so that we might have a relationship with God. Romans 5:10 *"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."* The most important reconciliation we need is with God. After Adam sinned in the garden of Eden, man's sin nature has dominated him insomuch that God was pushed out of his life. Sin separates us from God! The primary reason Jesus died on the cross was for sin. because of sin mans relationship to God was broken.

Church member or addict it's all about your relationship with GOD! If it's broken, it's broken.

Interestingly enough sins binds with chains according to Proverbs 5:22 *"His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins."* Those cords break the yoke of a proper relationship with CHRIST.

The secondary reason JESUS died on the cross is pictured in the horizontal beam or crossbeam. Our sins do affect those around us! Romans 14:7 *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."* Jesus also died to pay for the relational sins with people we come in contact with: family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc. We all know how the sinful habits of a drug addict affects those he/she comes in contact with. Most addicts have exhausted their family members. They have borrowed money, never to repay again. They have stolen property. They have abused their friends and/or family physically, mentally, emotionally, and psychologically. But wait, as much as these things and more drive the addict away from a proper relationship with those they love, so bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and malice within the church walls drives us away from proper relationship with GOD and with those we come in contact with.

You see Friend, we realized that WE ALL needed help with our relationship with GOD. It matters not what the sin is GOD is not pleased with it. Be it drunkard, druggie, demoniac or demeanor, sin is sin. It is not until we see the compassion GOD has shown on us that He can begin to show compassion in us. It is at this point that the LORD'S church goes from apathy to appreciation. We are realizing as a church we cannot have compassion on others without having compassion in ourselves.

We started Reformers Unanimous at Astatula Baptist Church for the addicted, but GOD started it for the apathetic.