



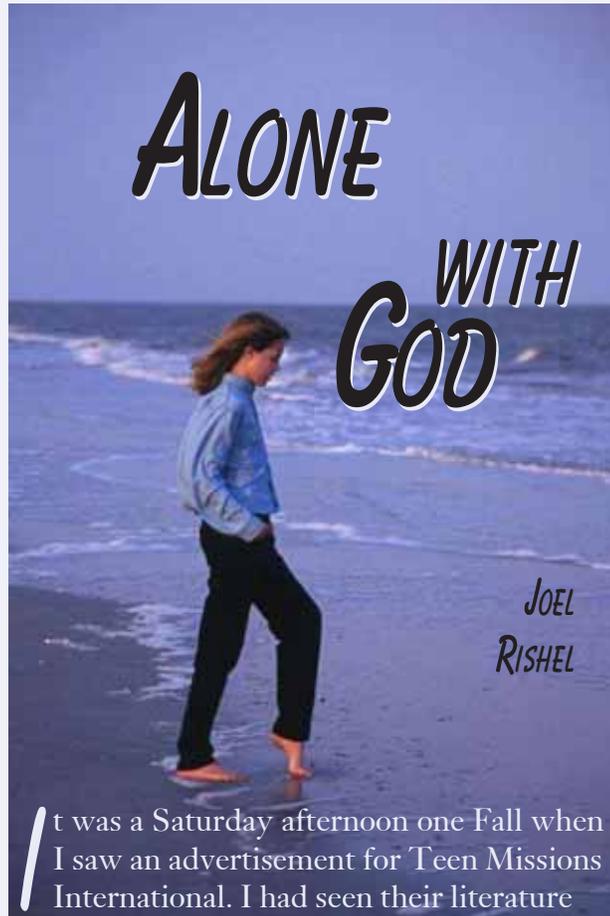
**Character Building Ministries**  
660 Dow Avenue #1, Carnegie, PA 15106  
(570) 772-1643  
[www.CBMinistries.com](http://www.CBMinistries.com)

# FALL

The Newsletter of Character Building Ministries

**FALL 2002**

*Character Building Ministries is dedicated to the edification of Christian camp staff by equipping them in the Word of God.*



It was a Saturday afternoon one Fall when I saw an advertisement for Teen Missions International. I had seen their literature

before, but what caught my eye was that they were promoting a summer missions trip to Australia. I had always wanted to go to Australia. And then the thought began to fester—maybe *I could go*. Before long I had my parents' permission and began to send out letters and picture cards to friends and relatives to raise my support.

I'm ashamed to admit that one of the primary motives in signing up for this trip was to get out of the house for the summer. Although I was raised in a very religious home and well-trained in the church, I was an exceedingly rebellious teenager. I knew that this was the only sort of thing that my parents

*Continued inside ...*

This free Newsletter is sent to leaders and directors of Christian youth camps who are concerned about the spiritual growth and development of their staff.

## What's Inside?

### For Directors

Do you desire to see your staff members growing in their personal relationship with God? This issue's lead article tells a personal story and presents the passion behind CBM's resources.

### The 5-Year Club

This is Character Building Ministries' sixth year, but we have nine more camps joining our 5-year club. Look inside to find out who they are.

### Click of the Mouse

The internet can be such a powerful resource—that is, if you know the right places to go. Try clicking on these sites for useful information on a wide range of camp issues.

would let me do. I was anxious to get away from my parents' authority. But God had other plans.

A few months later, and with almost all the support money raised, I had a frightening epiphany. There were no lights, no visions, no voices—only a simple thought that began to gnaw at me until it captivated my mind. *How could I possibly go to Australia on a missions trip when I knew I wasn't a Christian?* Maybe it sounds crazy to you that I would even sign up to be a short-term missionary when I knew I wasn't saved, but that's just how confused and rebellious I was.

So I started to plan my exit-strategy and even drafted a letter of apology to all the people who had graciously sent me money. Oddly I had the thought that perhaps I should pray to God before I backed out of the trip. I can't remember exactly what I prayed over the next few days, but I do remember that my prayers began to focus on asking God to forgive me for being such a hypocrite. Then I remember thinking that going on this trip would have possibly been the most noble thing I had ever done in my life, yet it was filled with hypocrisy and rebellious motives. The memories of a whole multitude of sinful actions and words and motives

flooded back into my mind. I sort of wished that I *could* become a Christian, but I felt like I was too sinful in my heart for God to have grace on me.

Then the Lord opened my heart to the words of Ephesians 2:8-9, verses that I had studiously memorized in Sunday school. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Just then I had another epiphany, only this one was much more pleasant. *God's grace is a gift.*

Now that should have been an obvious truth to someone raised in a Christian home, yet there I was for the first time, realizing that there was *nothing* I could do to earn God's favor. I began to want that gift very deeply, and so I simply asked God to give it to me, even though I felt like I was the last person on earth that deserved to be saved.

The next months are still somewhat of a blur. I shared my conversion experience with my parents; I was baptized in May; and I went on the missions trip in June. I was full of anticipation when the bus picked me up to take me to the training camp in Florida. I was thrilled to meet a lot of new friends. The adventure of a missions trip was exhilarating.

On the first morning they informed us that we



I didn't know very much at all about searching my heart, confessing my sin, worshiping and praising God, or telling Him the desires of my heart.

## [CAMP RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET]

Have you ever wasted time "surfing" through useless links trying to find something that will meet your needs? Well, here is a small sampling some of our favorite sites that we think you'll find helpful for your spiritual refreshment and for practical ministry. While Character Building Ministries does *not* endorse all the content or ministries of these websites, we hope that you will derive benefit from these resources. As always, please use discernment.

- ◆ [www.Apologetics.com](http://www.Apologetics.com) - This site provides cutting-edge resources in Christian apologetics that seek to answer questions commonly asked by believers and non-believers alike. It includes articles and archived radio programs.
- ◆ [www.BrownieLocks.com](http://www.BrownieLocks.com) - Here is just a really fun webpage that contains a complete list of jokes, holidays, riddles, craft ideas, music, recipes, history, current events, and more. Although not Christian in nature, this site is kid-friendly, and can be a valuable resource for rainy day and theme events.
- ◆ [www.DesiringGod.org](http://www.DesiringGod.org) - This is the ministry site of pastor and author John Piper. His articles, sermons, poems, and other resources can be used for personal study or to write camper or staff devotions.
- ◆ [www.EnchantedLearning.com](http://www.EnchantedLearning.com) - This site covers a wide variety of different subjects from anatomy to language dictionaries, from history to geography. If you are looking for educational tools, crafts, or activities, check here first.
- ◆ [www.ChristianBook.com](http://www.ChristianBook.com) - This is the place to search for the largest selection of Christian resources. Great books at reduced rates is Christian Book Distributor's specialty, but you can also find clothing, gift ideas for staff or donors, and other ministry tools.

would begin each day with a half hour of personal quiet time. We could go anywhere we wanted but we had to be by ourselves. So I found a quiet place and sat down with my Bible. But I was completely unprepared for what happened next. I didn't know what to do or what to say when I was alone with God. I had memorized lots of Scripture verses, and I had a lot of knowledge about Christianity. I knew how to become a Christian and how a Christian should live. I knew all the right things to say when I was called upon to pray or asked to give advice to someone in need. I discovered that what I didn't know how to do was to feed myself with the Word of God and personally commune with God in prayer. I didn't know very much at all about searching my heart, confessing my sin, worshiping and praising God, or telling Him the desires of my heart.

I was supposed to be alone with God for 30 minutes, and I didn't know where to start, what to do, or what to say. So I said a short prayer, read Psalm 1, and closed in prayer. That took about 3 minutes, and I spent the rest of time feeling incompetent, alienated, and frightened. I started thinking that maybe, after all, I really wasn't a Christian, because I simply didn't know how to fellowship with my Savior.

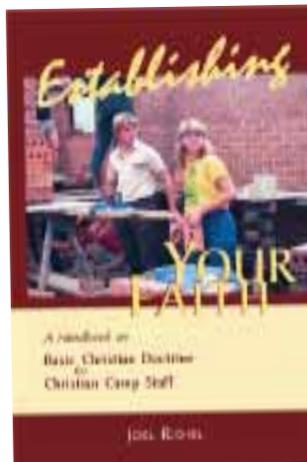
As it turns out, they had a devotional book prepared for us, which they forgot to give me on the first day. I was so grateful to receive it. Here was a guide for me, something to help me get started. It had Scripture passages to read, devotional thoughts, directive questions, and suggestions for further study and prayer. I began to read, pray, meditate, journal, and study. Pretty soon, I had a hard time finishing in 30 minutes.

This experience has been a foundational motive in the formation of Character Building Ministries. Just like me in 1982, there are many Christian staff members who do not know how to spiritually profit from being alone with God. I have a desire to see them helped by our staff devotional books. Our ultimate goal is for CBM resources to be a means of grace in equipping staff members in the Word of God—and thus connecting them directly with God Himself. 📖

*Joel Rishel is the Director of Publications for CBM and former Program Director for Camp Susque in Trout Run, Pennsylvania. He is also Director of Operations for Soli Deo Gloria in Morgan, Pennsylvania, [www.SDGbooks.com](http://www.SDGbooks.com). You can email him at [Joel@CBMinistries.com](mailto:Joel@CBMinistries.com).*



## COMING SOON ...



Have you ever wished that your counselors were better equipped in the Word and more spiritually mature in the faith? Have you ever wondered how you can encourage your staff to grow in sound doctrine without overwhelming them?

Finally you can give your staff members a concise handbook that will equip them in all the basics of sound Christian doctrine. Numerous Biblical references are given for personal study and reference, and every teaching is done from the perspective of camp ministry.

There are thirteen lessons covering all the essentials of Scripture, God, salvation, and the Christian life.

This valuable resource will be available this summer. Watch for your CBM Resource Catalog in February.

## 5-YEAR CLUB

Last Fall we celebrated the fifth year of Character Building Ministries' devotional books. At that time we had the privilege to thank eleven camps who had used our devotional books all five years. We thought it would only be fair to recognize the camps who are now added to the prestigious 5-year club (that's what we're calling it for now). Out of the 177 camps that ordered from us this year, we are doubly grateful for your continued support.

**Bair Lake Bible Camp** JONES, MICHIGAN

**Camp Good News** WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

**New Life Camp** ROSE CITY, MICHIGAN

**Grace Youth Camps** MEARS, MICHIGAN

**Camp Tapawingo** FALLS CITY, OREGON

**Lakeside Christian Camp** PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

**Camp Findley** CLYMER, NEW YORK

**Lake Koronis** PAYNESVILLE, MINNESOTA

**Tel Hai** HONEYBROOK, PENNSYLVANIA

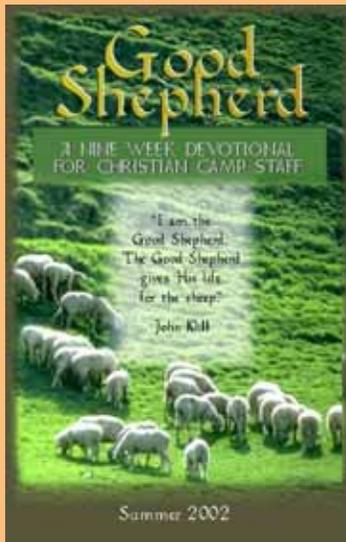
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# EDIFY

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I've been really impressed with how directly the devotions speak to all areas of camp life—counseling support staff, kitchen, and even leadership.  
~ Camp Hebron (Halifax, PA)

It seems to get better each year.  
~ Lake Koronis (Paynesville, MN)



Here's what fellow Camp Directors are saying about *Good Shepherd*, CBM's 2002 Staff Devotional Book.

I love that they are so relevant to camp staff.  
~ Adirondack Camp Cherith (Corinth, NY)

It is applicable, short, and easy to use.  
~ Camp Whitesand (Saskatoon, CANADA)

It is Biblical and relies on God's Word to do the teaching.  
~ Grace Youth Camp (Mears, MI)

We got many comments from staff as to how the Lord really spoke to them daily in these devotionals.  
~ Brethren Woods (Keezletown, VA)

This winter will be our first appearance at the CCI/USA Conference and Exposition. Please visit the CBM display in Vancouver—we'd love to meet you!

◆ Would you like to see a CBM display at your sectional? Email us for the details ... [Bill@CBMinistries.com](mailto:Bill@CBMinistries.com).

◆ Are there other full-time staff members at your camp that would appreciate and benefit from *Edify*? Just let us know and we'll be glad to send it to them.

Camp Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (        ) \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Character Building Ministries, 660 Dow Avenue #1, Carnegie, PA 15106

Return this card for a  
FREE sample copy  
of *Good Shepherd*.  
Find out for yourself why CBM  
has grown over 20% every  
year for the past 5 years.