

Remembering Shanon Dickerson

By Don Gardner

Prior to the year 2000, Mayfair met in a building located at 4700 Whitesburg Drive. It was during that time that the Bobby Dickerson family began to worship with Mayfair. Sister Jerri Dickerson was already a member of the Lord's church, but it was only after studying with Gary Bradley, who was then the Mayfair pulpit minister. that her husband, Bobby, and son, Shanon put on Christ in baptism.

Shanon eventually took a job in Nashville, but when an opportunity arose to serve in the mission field, he quit his job and went to Germany to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. While there, Shanon became ill and was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer forcing him to return home to the states. Ultimately, cancer would end the life of young Shanon Dickerson as the Lord called him home in May 2002.

Shanon's time on earth was short, but the fruits of his labor were many. In addition to his mission work in Germany, Shanon saw the need to do more for those who could not advocate for themselves. When he realized that thousands needlessly suffer and die daily from a lack of clean water, Shanon challenged his friends to join him in raising funds to drill wells in Africa and India. His effort gave birth to the "Living Water Project" in 2000. Today, that project still fulfills Shanon's mission of helping others who can't help themselves. As Gary Bradley described him, "He was like no other young man I have ever met."

Let's fast forward to 2009. Several Mayfair members began to realize that there were many out-of-town families who had loved ones who were hospitalized in the local area, often for prolonged periods of time. Those families often ended up sleeping in their cars in the hospital parking lots because they had nowhere else to stay and could not afford a hotel. Those families needed a "home away from home."

Mayfair began looking for a way to meet that need.



Shanon Dickerson

Dr. Jim Smelser and his wife Karen had seen a similar need fulfilled through a mission effort called the "Hands of Compassion" while they were working with a congregation near Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Their experience with that ministry was very helpful in the planning that went into making Shanon's House a reality.

Several families were involved in the planning including Shanon's parents, Bobby and Jerri Dickerson. By the end of 2009, Mayfair had located a house at 1005 Big Cove Road, just a short distance from two local hospitals. Funds were raised to purchase the house and \$60,000 was raised from a congregation-wide offering to furnish the house. By 2010, the house was ready for guests who needed a "home away from home."

Recalling how Shanon had dedicated his life to helping others, the Mayfair elders decided to name the new house, "Shanon's House of Compassion." Johnny and Christy Johnson agreed to serve as directors and moved into the house in January 2010.

While many people were involved in planning, implementing, and donating funds, all glory must go to God from whom all blessings flow. As Gary Bradley summed it up, "It was a God thing from the beginning."

On page 2 of this issue of **Joy in the Journey**, Johnny and Christy Johnson share some of their memories and the lessons learned from the past 13 years at Shanon's House.

Shanon's House

By Johnny & Christy Johnson

Shanon's House of Compassion is a 3,000-square-foot facility that serves as a "home away from home" for people who live 25 miles or more from Huntsville and have a loved one in one of the local hospitals. The facility can accommodate up to nine people with private bedrooms, laundry facilities, snacks, a light breakfast, a spacious dining area, and a large gathering room.

Although Mayfair purchased the property in 2009 and began operation of Shanon's House in 2010, we believe that God had a plan long before that time. In 2007 our nephew Brent was injured in an accident in Little Rock Arkansas. His parents lived nearly one thousand miles away in Leesburg, Florida.

The members of the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ, where my nephew attended, were very kind and helpful to my sister and brother-in-law. The members provided everything they needed. They were at the hospital praying with them and supporting them.

While at the hospital I noticed how others were sleeping in chairs and eating out of the vending machines. I have often thought that one of the saddest places to be is the ICU waiting room because nobody wants to be there! I remember praying, "Lord I wish there was some way I could help people in this situation."

In 2008 we decided to move to Huntsville. To this day we can't remember why we chose Huntsville. I had lived in Montgomery since I was three years old. I thought moving to a new city would be an adventure. When we arrived, I realized I had left everything that was familiar to me including my friends and the ministries with which I had been involved.

The first year here was difficult. Johnny had told me if I didn't like Huntsville after a year we would move back to Montgomery. In the summer of 2009, the announcement about Shanon's House was made public. I thought this could be a ministry where I could help. In my prayer journal, I wrote "Lord, please let me help with Shanon's House. I can take cinnamon rolls over there each week."

Our first year in Huntsville was almost up when we were sitting at the table one morning and Johnny's prayer was "Lord please show us where you want us



Johnny and Christy Johnson

to work." Two days later Gary Bradley called and asked us to consider being the house directors for Shanon's House. My mind went back to those prayers I had prayed years before and to this day we are so thankful to be able to serve in this ministry.

Since 2010 Shanon's House has had over 800 guests. We have had guests from all of the southern states, as well as New York, Virginia, and Ohio. Many of our guests are from the Florence area. We service all of the hospitals but because we are right across the street from Huntsville Hospital for Women and Children, many of our guests are parents with babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). It's amazing to us that some of these babies weighing less than 2 pounds are now 12 years old!

At Shanon's House, we meet some of the nicest people. Guests come as strangers but leave as friends. We have learned a lot in the years of being here. We have learned that you don't have to say a lot of words; listening to them is a comfort and a hug is a universal language. We have learned that people are grateful for the little things such as breakfast in the morning or laundry washed and folded.

I've learned to appreciate Johnny's gift of discernment and protective nature. He has a hard job. He also handles phone calls from the social workers and when there have been times when guests have needed to leave, he tells them in the kindest way.

We have learned to appreciate our children's giving spirit. They are so understanding about Shanon's house. Before we started at Shanon's House, we

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Shanon's House of Compassion

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asked them what they thought. One said, "go for it, Mom and Dad." The other said. "How can you not do that work?"

We've learned that there are two kinds of people - givers and takers. The givers are a pleasure to have as guests and are very appreciative. Every once in a while, we will get guests who won't talk to us and simply want a place to sleep. These guests are hard. I've learned that when I do for the ungrateful the same as I do for those who are grateful, there is peace that comes with the knowledge that I am working for God. I have the verse on my mirror from Luke 6 that says "... he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:35b-36 NIV).

We've learned to rely on God more. We have learned that the Mayfair church is a unique congregation. The elders and ministers saw a need and trusted in God to bring about Shanon's house. The congregation responded to supply what is needed to keep this ministry going. One lady called about staying here and said "this is wonderful! What would make a church want to do something like Shanon's house." This gave us the opportunity to tell her what a loving and caring congregation we have at Mayfair.

We learned that a home-like atmosphere is a blessing. We have learned that everyone has a story and with the home atmosphere, guests will open up and tell us their life stories. One guest said recently "after being in the hospital all day it's just nice to have someone to talk to."

Shanon's House has made us more aware of how God is answering prayers. Several years after starting working at Shanon's House, we both commented on how we were discouraged. At the time, we had a

full house of guests that were not very friendly. Johnny prayed that morning, "Lord, if this is where you want us to be, please let us know."

That afternoon there was a knock at the back door. It was a guest who had stayed with us several years before. When I opened the door, she said "I was hoping you were still here, because you know this is where God wants you to be!" Once again God had answered with a quick response to our prayer. After that day, our guests become more friendly and we still count them as friends.

We are beginning our 14th year at Shanon's House. When guests come for the first time, we always tell them that while they see the two of us, it's a whole church that made this possible and provided everything you see, and keeps it going.

Here are some notes from some of our guests:

"We all have been greatly blessed with the opportunity to stay here during these hard times. We are grateful for the hospitality shown to us during our stay. It has made our time here more comfortable being able to stay in a comfortable environment with our family. God bless you for this ministry."

"This is an absolutely wonderful 'home away from home.' Words cannot adequately describe the warm loving feeling of being here. I will always be grateful for the love, concern, and hospitality."

This note is from a mother who was adopting a baby.

"Thank you so much for your generosity and hospitality this month. Being 11 hours from home, and my husband being deployed, made this NICU stay a challenge, but you eased so many concerns and made everything much nicer. Our baby will always have Shanon's House as part of her story and we think it makes her first chapter a more enjoyable one. Thank you for caring for our whole family with such kindness."

We continue to be thankful for Shanon's parents, Bobby and Jerri Dickerson, and for the leadership at Mayfair for stepping out in faith to provide a place for hurting people. We are thankful for the Shanon's House board of directors, who are always there if we

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The Power in the Name

By Dick Savage

Prayer in Jesus' name is taught in the 14th chapter of John:

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:13-14 NIV).

Some people misapply this verse, thinking that saying "in Jesus' name" at the end of a prayer results in God always granting our request. This is essentially treating the words "in Jesus' name" as a magic formula. This is not what Jesus had in mind. We should always pray in Jesus' name, but that means so much more than just ensuring we add those words to the end of our prayers.

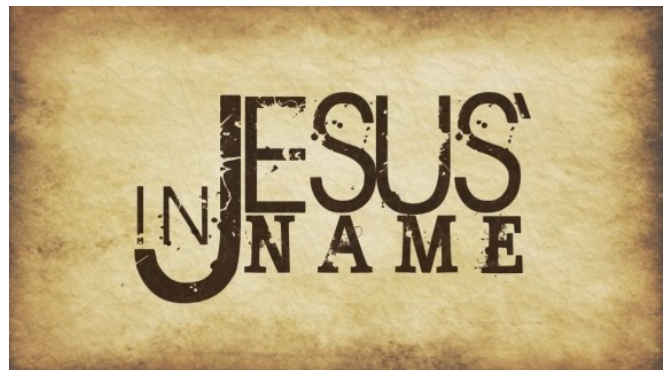
From biblical times until today, the phrase "in the name of" is a Hebrew idiom that can mean "on behalf of" or "for the sake of." This is the same meaning a police officer might have when he says, "stop in the name of the law." The officer represents an authority greater than himself, and he is informing the perpetrator of that fact.

The power of praying in the name of Jesus lies in His authority as the Son of God and the creator of everything. It is hard to overstate how important names were in biblical times. After God created His universe, He named the parts: day, night, heaven, earth, sea, etc. By doing so He was exerting His sovereignty because the one who names another has authority over the other. When God reoriented a person's life, He changed his name: Abram to Abraham and Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, and Saul to Paul. God announced to Joseph, that Mary would have a son and He should be named *Yeshua* which meant God's Salvation. This shows God's authority and Jesus' mission in carrying out the will of His father.

Praying in Jesus' name means praying with His authority and asking God the Father to act upon our prayers because we come in the name of Jesus, based upon our relationship with Him. Praying in Jesus' name means that we are praying according to the will of God,

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14-15 NIV).

Praying in Jesus' name is praying for things that will honor and glorify Jesus. While considering Jesus' name relating to prayer, we should also consider God's name and the instructions He has given to us regarding His name. What does it mean to "hallow" God's name? Here the word "name" actually refers to God's reputation. The phrases "hallowed be your name," "your kingdom come," and "your will be done on earth" are related to each other in meaning. All of them express the desire that God's reputation (His Name) will grow on earth, that people will accept God's reign over their lives, and have the desire to do His will.



You might not think that God's reputation would be important to Him, but the idea of His reputation expanding throughout the world is a central theme of the Bible story. At first, God taught Israel how to live and He intended that they would be a "light to the nations." Surrounded by many pagan nations with unbelievable heathen practices, the Israelites were to worship the true God and show how He wanted all people to live.

In the coming of Jesus, God gave clarity to His identity. He revealed His heart for lost mankind and His willingness to pay the price for our sins through His sacrificial death on the cross. When Jesus sent out His disciples to make disciples, the overall idea was that God's reputation would expand throughout the earth as more people came to know who God was. Salvation ripples throughout the earth today as more and more people hear about God and accept Jesus as

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their Savior. God's ultimate plan is that His kingdom will fully come when His "name" is *echad*, that is when He alone is worshipped by all mankind.

In contrast to "Hallow His Name" profaning His name is a serious sin. The third commandment reads: *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain"* (Exodus 20:7 NASB). Of all the commandments, this is the only one that God promises to punish.

In Jewish thought, this text literally says, "You shall not lift up the name (reputation) of the Lord for an empty thing." One of the ways that ancient Rabbis interpreted this was as doing something evil publicly and associating God with it. It defames God's reputation.

Here is an example: A Florida preacher, announced that he would burn the Quran on a specified date. He did as he stated. He intended to denounce the falsehood of Islam but instead caused Muslims to despise Jesus and His followers as godless blasphemers. In their minds, it proved that Jesus' command to love your enemies had fallen on deaf ears. Americans of all beliefs were horrified that a preacher would recklessly endanger other people's lives and foment war. His actions brought shame to the name of Jesus around the world. He profaned the name of the Lord and had a negative impact on God's reputation.

How often have we heard of people that were treated poorly by a fellow Christian and proclaimed,

"if that is what Jesus is like, I want nothing to do with it." Each of us is capable of profaning Jesus and God's name by our actions. It doesn't just have to be using God's name in an inappropriate way or using vulgar language, Using God's name as a profanity will certainly profane His name, but other things can also.

The ultimate example of bringing glory to God's name is Jesus. He declared:

"I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me will be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26 NASB).

No one who believes that Jesus is God can claim that God is cruel or uncaring. Jesus has proven otherwise through His own actions on our behalf. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, God's reputation has expanded to the ends of the world. As Jesus' followers, we are commanded to be like Him. We need to be aware that the world is watching. We need to ensure that our words and actions protect God's reputation and reflect the holiness and love of the God we serve.

Saying "in Jesus' name" at the end of a prayer is not a magic formula. If what we ask for or say in prayer is not for God's glory and according to His will, saying "in Jesus' name" is meaningless. Genuinely praying in Jesus' name and for His glory is what is important, not attaching certain words to the end of a prayer. It is not the words in the prayer that matter, but the purpose behind the prayer. Praying for things that agree with God's will is the essence of praying in Jesus' name.

From the Shepherd's Pen

Power for Christian Living

By Darryl Wortman



Since 1980 over 80,000 wind turbines have been installed in the U.S. The power each turbine can produce depends on how well the turbine blades are aligned with the direction of the wind and the ability of the blades to capture the force of the wind. If aligned well and correctly designed, a wind turbine can generate enough power for more than 950 U.S. homes.

In the same way, Paul's letter to the believers in Philippi tells his beloved brethren, and us today, how to align our lives with God's will so we have the capa-



bility to be an influence for good in the world around us: "our power." In the first three chapters, Paul gives us the philosophy, pattern, and prize for Christian living, and then in chapter 4 he gives us three

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practices critical to our power for Christian living: Rejoicing, Praying, and Contemplating.

Chapter 4 begins with Paul encouraging two members to resolve their ongoing conflict. His final admonition to them is, *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4 NASB).*

“Always” is a keyword in this passage. Regardless of the day, whether it is dark or bright, whether it is difficult or easy, whether it brings problems and temptations or is smooth sailing, we are instructed to rejoice. He repeats it in case we missed it the first time: *“again I say Rejoice”*. God has given us richly all things to enjoy and to enjoy means to rejoice.

At the end of my freshmen year of college (1979), I took a summer job with the Southwestern Company selling encyclopedias, Bibles, and medical books door-to-door in Texas. They provided all new recruits training before sending them into the “book field.” The training included detailed information about the books and a crash course on selling. My training, and experience that summer, taught me that the level of enthusiasm I displayed when talking to a potential customer was much more important to my success than my book knowledge. People like to buy from people that radiate joy and brighten their day.

Similarly, when we radiate the joy of the Lord our power for Christian living is much greater. I recently read a commentary on Philippians, that stated: *“As a child of God, we ought to have real joy, the joy of the Lord in our lives, “and “The child of God who goes through life with a sour look and a jaundiced approach to this world will never have any power in his life.”* We can be sure that Satan will attempt to take away our joy because it is the source of our power.

Later in chapter 4, Paul talks about the practice of praying:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7 NASB).

The reason we are to worry about nothing is that we are to pray about everything. Paul says we need to talk to the Lord about everything in our lives.

Nothing should be left out: our pleasures, pains, temptations, worries, joys, weaknesses, troubles, needs, everything. That is the way God wants us to be.

Notice this passage starts with our anxiety and worry and concludes with our peace. Between the two was prayer. Have things changed? Maybe or maybe not. Our prayers, whether answered or unanswered, have the power to bring peace into our lives and strengthen our ability to help others find the comfort that is only found in the name of Jesus.

Finally, we have the practice of Contemplating:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8 NASB).

This passage has been called the shortest biography of Christ in scripture. Jesus is the one who is true. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is honest. He is the Just One. He was the only pure human who ever walked on the Earth. He is the most excellent and is worthy of praise.

It is essential to be in God’s will and fill our minds with God’s word. In Mark Comer’s book, *Live No Lies*, he writes: *“The poet Mary Oliver once said, ‘Attention is the beginning of devotion.’ The starting place in devotion to God and movement into his kingdom is simple; it is to set our attention on his Spirit and truth. This is our responsibility: to turn our attention to God all through our days and weeks.*

To think of him. To think deeply of him. To think rightly of him, in line with Jesus’s vision of God as the trinitarian community of self-giving, creative, generous, calm, loving joy and delight. To let Jesus’s incredibly compelling vision of who God gives shape who we become. And this is not the drudgery of religion or onerous obligation; remember, we’re already filling our minds with inputs all day long, and many of those inputs are creating in us hearts that are fractured, anxious, distracted, and angry.

When we curate our attention on Jesus and allow the flow of his thoughts into our minds, we begin to experience his peace, his love and compassion for all, and his deep, pervasive joy. We become calmer, more loving, and plain happier. Just by abiding.”

Our Bodies are a Holy Temple

By C. L. "Butch" Kinzer M.D.

My previous columns in this publication have dealt with what I call practical issues: The need for end-of-life documents, the need for exercise, and the need to provide your doctor with information regarding all your medications. In this issue, we will discuss a specific disease - diabetes.

As I considered this topic, I contemplated 1 Corinthians 6:19 where Paul tells us that with the New Covenant, we have a new temple. I will not elaborate on this verse other than to observe that it tells me to take care of myself physically as well as spiritually.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19a ESV)

To take care of oneself spiritually, we study the Word. To take care of oneself physically, we access information (evidence-based information) about how our bodies function. It is information that we have regarding our control over disease processes.

Thus, diabetes mellitus type two (DM 2) is the first disease process that I will address to hopefully empower you to learn to live with the disease; and, thereby care for your temple.

DM 2 is also known as maturity-onset diabetes mellitus (MODM). Historically, it develops in middle age. It is seen in overweight people, and it is often coupled with a lack of activity.

Those with DM 2 are at risk for a vascular disease which can be manifested as diabetic retinopathy, coronary artery disease, and peripheral vascular disease. Unlike hardening of the arteries, diabetic vascular disease wrecks damage to both the macro and microvasculature. With an effect on the microvasculature, reestablishing blood flow in the arteries does not result in sufficient blood flow to tissue because of the effect on small blood vessels. The damage to the small vessels can only be reversed with good control of the blood sugar.

Diabetic peripheral neuropathy is another complication of diabetes. It manifests first as a prickly burning sensation in feet and legs that never goes away. Also, kidney failure can develop. Though, it is reasonable to consider this a manifestation of microvascu-

lar disease as is diabetic retinopathy. The direct effects of diabetes are weight loss, fatigue, and diabetic ketoacidosis. (My apologies for not explaining further, but the space allotted does not allow for an explanation of everything mentioned in this article).

Diabetes

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high blood s

Risk Factors!

Considering the causation of DM 2, genetic predisposition, being weight challenged, and inactivity are all involved. Glucose is something we all need to survive. Yet, at elevated levels, glucose (sugar) is toxic to all cells. Thus, much of the treatment of DM 2 is aimed at lowering blood sugar. There are medications available that have varying degrees of effectiveness. Sadly, often one drug is not sufficient leading to the need for multiple medications.

In caring for DM2 your doctor knows the level of your blood sugar is very important. Early in my career, we did not have home glucose monitors so we would look at urine sugars. Later, glucose monitors were developed giving immediate feedback guiding treatment. Today, hemoglobin A1c has become an extremely useful tool for gauging the effectiveness of the treatment.

As I have alluded to, the goal of controlling blood sugar is to modify the possibilities of kidney disease, diabetic peripheral neuropathy, hypertension, ischemic heart disease, et cetera. All these efforts are aimed at improving the quality and length of life.

The most important aspects of DM 2 treatment are in the hands of those who suffer from it. Those aspects are what doctors refer to as lifestyle modifications. If you smoke, stop. Maintain control of your cholesterol. Lose weight and exercise.

Weight loss is obvious as being overweight is a risk factor for developing diabetes. Exercise is also an ob-

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need them. We are thankful to our brothers and sisters at Mayfair for their continued support.

We are thankful to "The Tree of Life Quilters," who provide a quilt for each guest to remind them they are covered in prayers. One guest commented when I gave her the quilt with tears in her eyes; "This will be a sweet memory in the hardest days of my life."

But most of all we are thankful to our Heavenly Father who answered that simple prayer back in 2007 and I do get to make cinnamon rolls each week!



The Patience of a Teacher

There was a teacher helping one of her kindergarten students put on his cowboy boots? Even with her pulling and him pushing, the little boots still didn't want to go on. By the time they got the second boot on, she had worked up a sweat.

She almost cried when the little boy named Johnny said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet."

She looked, and sure enough, they were. It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on, this time on the right feet.

Little Johnny then announced, "These aren't my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream.

Once again, she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off his little feet. No sooner had they gotten the boots off when Johnny said, "They're my brother's boots. My mom made me wear 'em."

Now she didn't know if she should laugh or cry, but she mustered up what grace and courage she had left to wrestle the boots on his feet again.

Helping him into his coat, she asked, "Now, where are your mittens?"

Little Johnny said, "I stuffed 'em in the toes of my boots."

Mayfair Assistance Helpline

256-704-3384

Mayfair has a helpline for members who may require physical assistance with home maintenance, automotive repairs, or transportation needs. Call and leave a message regarding your needs and you will be contacted for details.



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vious factor as it is a key contributor to weight loss. Yet, there are physiologic effects of weight gain and inactivity that contribute to diabetes because they lead to insulin resistance. In other words, the insulin you make does not work as well.

Interestingly, while the two are connected in weight gain, they are not connected physiologically. Increased weight gain leads to increased insulin demand, while inactivity leads to a decrease in insulin receptors. Therefore, the extra insulin you make does not work as well. On the other hand, increased activity results in an increase in insulin receptors. In fact, studies have shown that those who exercise on a regular basis, despite a lack of significant weight loss, have blood sugars that are much better.

Through my years in practice, I observed many diabetics who have lost weight, and who also exercised attaining much better blood sugar control. I observed some who were normal even to the point of needing to stop all diabetic medications. In short, diabetics should maintain a normal weight and participate in thirty minutes of aerobic exercise five days a week.

I do not pretend that following the lifestyle modifications of your doctor is easy. I know personally, it is not. However, that does not change the reality that it works. I have seen it and the medical literature supports it.

Finally, we must never forget that our bodies are the Temple of The Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). In the maintenance of the temple, we must also study and practice The Word.