

Operation Integrity Fellowships

by David Zailer

Recently I was taking part in a new *Operation Integrity Recovery Group Meeting*. This fellowship came to exist just like all Operation Integrity fellowships come to exist. One motivated man, joined by a small number of other motivated men, meeting together to help one another recover from destructive sexual behavior.

As I sat in this group meeting, I listened to these men share their experiences, both past and present. As I was listening, I was gaining a sense of just what good people these men were. Now don't get me wrong, these guys were some serious sinners, and I know a sinner when I see one. They usually look a whole lot like me. However, what was most amazingly obvious to me was a subtle, yet profound goodness in each of them. I could hear from what they shared about themselves that, along with their moral failings, there was a kind of organic dignity and worth in them. In seeing this, one realized that these men could not be described in terms of good versus bad. It was more like they had an original worthfulness that was all human, as shown with their obvious flaws and shortcomings, and more than human at the same time because each man expressed an instinct to want more out of life than what he could provide for himself. To me, it seemed that these sinners were reaching out for an intimate connection. A connection that only God can satisfy.

At the center of everything we do at Operation Integrity is a belief that God exists and that He is interested in having a meaningful relationship with all people. We believe that God has the human face of Jesus Christ and if you want to know God, you can know him through an honest encounter with Christ.

This is how it's been for us at Operation Integrity. First, we admitted that we could not solve our problems on our own, no matter how hard we tried. Then, we asked God to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. The result was that when we were ready to change, God helped us by helping us to become different kind of people from what we were before. Operation Integrity is about recovery from destructive sexual behaviors *and* experiencing deep inter-personal change. We change organically, individually, and collectively in fellowship. Our willingness to change is the seed, an Operation Integrity fellowship is the fertile soil and God's grace is both the sun and the rain which nourishes us, helping us to put our roots deep into the goodness of life. As we grow we learn to understand God's grace to be his willingness to look beyond our failures. We begin to see ourselves and others for what God created us to be, his children. This change in our thinking helps us to become different in every way. We become the kind of people who no longer find it necessary to live in the destructive ways we've known in the past. In God's grace, we learn to prefer goodness over bad.

The Operation Integrity process is not a formula but it is a strategic program. While specific results cannot be guaranteed as to exactly how one will

change, we do see that the changes that happen in those who take part in the Operation Integrity program are both dramatic and undeniable. When we bring our honest desire to change into an Operation Integrity fellowship, God shows up and provides the miracles. These miracles happen in our hearts, in our minds and our lives.

Today, the *Operation Integrity Recovery Group Program* is available to everyone. What started with three men, meeting in a small backroom of a church, has grown into a refined, purposeful, expansive and inclusive program. The OI program is a program of fellowship and growth and rigorous personal honesty. In this kind of environment, and in this way, we believe that it's possible for anyone to recover from their destructive sexual behaviors and to find increasing personal, emotional and spiritual integrity.

If you would like to start an Operation Integrity fellowship in your area, we can help you make it happen. Please go to the ***Start an OI Fellowship*** on the Operation Integrity homepage for more information.