

LIFE Notes

LIFECHURCH February 2012

It's All Good...It's All God

From Pastor Shaun



Pastor Shaun Williams

Already this year many people are facing difficult issues, trying to figure out why and when their troubles are going to end.

The Word of God says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the

Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive." (Jeremiah 29:11-14 NKJV)

God has plans for us and, sometimes, those plans take us through places to test us, to try us, to fortify us, and to prepare us to stand for God and be witnesses for His Glory and His Glory alone. It doesn't matter where you might find yourself right now—about to give up, give in, give out—you are in a test that is designed just for you, and you must look within to pass the test.

It's easy to praise and worship God when every question is answered and everything is going your way. It's easy to praise and worship God when you're in good health, you have a job, and there's money in the bank. But when we find ourselves in the valley of the shadow of death, when we find ourselves wandering in the wilderness with no water, we must not lose our faith in God.

As David said, "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." (Psalm 27:13)

It was in the test that Jesus made it possible for you and for me to have life and have it more abundantly.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Know that everything you're going through, it's going to work out! It's all good...It's all God!

Who's Who?

Meet the Loftons

We have attended LIFECHURCH for nine years. We came to LIFE because we were invited by a coworker, Diana Oracion. (So, if I've ever upset you or you just don't like us, blame her.) Knowing we were new in town, Diana asked if we went to church and if we'd found a church home. It was a relief to both of us because we hadn't attended church since moving to the area, and picking a church out of the phone book didn't seem too "spiritual".

One of our most memorable experiences happened during "meet and greet time" one Sunday. I noticed a large biker looking our way. I mentally marked the exits and nudged Beth to let her know that we should be ready to go at a moment's notice. The meet and greet time began and I prepared to stand, meaning to get a head start toward the exit should the biker come our way. My past experiences between brothers and bikers have been less than cordial, and I wasn't taking any chances. I edged to the end of my seat, ready to move, but with so many people moving around I lost sight of the biker in the crowd!



Othello and Beth Lofton with their children, Elijah (7), Nathan (5), and Abby (2). The eldest daughter, Courteney (18), is pictured on the right.

Then he was there, walking past us. Maybe he wouldn't see us. Maybe, if I sunk down into my seat, he would walk on by. The biker looked our way, walked a few more steps, and began to walk toward us.

"Hey! You guys married?"

"Yes." I said. I hoped my voice didn't tremble when I answered.

"Yeah, my daughter's dating a black guy too!" and with a smile added, "And they're getting married."

He thrust out a hand, pulled me to my feet, hugged me and said, "I'm Jack Harris."

Beth and I went on to provide the premarital counseling for Jack's daughter (and become friends with the entire Harris clan). We have also served in Crosswalk, Prayer Partners, Cleansing Ministry, Helping Hands, and we have served as LIFE Group leaders.

Being members of LIFE has shown us the beauty in the diversity of the body of Christ. I came from an all-black church and Beth from an all-white church (that's why we met at work *smile*). On numerous occasions, we've both said how we could never go back to that. We love worshipping in a house that exemplifies and embraces God's infinite creative diversity. Living LIFE has taught us to look past the outside of a person and look for the true person behind the facade.

(continued)

We moved away from friends and family for jobs, but we stay in St. Louis for LIFECHURCH.

– Written by Othello Lofton

Thank you, Othello, for sharing this AWESOME story, and thanks to the entire Lofton family for the beauty and strength that you bring to our LIFECHURCH family!

Spotlight Ministry

LIFE Groups – A Prayer Revolution

Here at LIFECHURCH, LIFE Groups have always played a major role in advancing the vision of our church. LIFE Groups accomplish a multitude of things due to the atmosphere that they create.

First of all, they are an excellent environment for fellowship. New relationships are constantly being developed and strengthened. This allows people the opportunity to surround themselves with others that have similar goals of growing and getting better in all areas of their lives. The Word confirms our need for this in Proverbs 27:17 “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”

Next, LIFE Groups are an excellent way for leaders to rise up and emerge in our church. Every semester new leaders step out in faith and choose to lead a group. The response we always get from those people is how much God used that opportunity to stretch and grow them in new ways. Many go on to serve in other leadership roles in our church and/or start new ministries as a result of the leadership growth they’ve experienced.

LIFE Groups are also an excellent structure for church communication. We are able to get information out about things like big events, ministry developments, volunteer opportunities, and much more. Group Leaders are able to share these types of important announcements with their groups at each meeting and answer questions people may have.

Also, LIFE Groups are fertile ground for discipleship to new believers. Many people that are new to the Christian life join a LIFE Group to learn more about pursuing their walk with God. Group Leaders enjoy the great privilege of leading and guiding those whose care is entrusted to them by God Himself.

These groups have also become a very effective way for our church to reach people in our community and make an impact. Every semester, there is some form of outreach project(s) that the groups participate in. Not only do these projects line up with LIFECHURCH’s vision to reach our city, but it also gives people the opportunity to experience the incredible joy that comes along with serving other people in need.

Finally, LIFE Groups are just another way for people to experience the power of God through answered prayer. Group members continuously lift each other up in prayer for the various needs that we all have in our lives. The Bible tells us in Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” Every semester we receive tons of testimonies from people about healings, new jobs, restored relationships, family members coming to the Lord, and so many more things.

LIFE Group registration is going on now! Please see the list of groups available to choose from in the brochure. If you need one, just ask one of our ushers and they will be happy to provide you with a copy. You may register online or simply put the LIFE Group number on your connection card and drop it in the offering bucket. Keep in mind – LIFE Groups are open to anyone, especially those that are not currently in church.

For more information on this ministry, visit the “Ministry” tab on our Website and click on “LIFE Groups.”

Doing LIFE Together

Notable Outreaches

Care Team

The Care Team consists of volunteers who donate their time to provide company, compassion, and prayer to church members and their families who have recently been admitted to the hospital or a nursing home.

If you know of anyone who has recently been admitted to a hospital or nursing home—or if there’s someone who has recently experienced the loss of a loved one—we encourage you to get that information to us as quickly as possible so that we can arrange for a visit from our team. Submissions can be included on your connection card or called in to our office at 314-843-5575 (after hours, press 9).

If you’re interested in becoming part of the Care Team, please contact Pastor Esther at eshackelford@lifechurch-stl.com or call her at 314-843-5575, ext. 234.

Upcoming Services

Sunday, February 5 – Pastor Rick

Tuesday, February 7 – Pastor Rick

Sunday, February 12 – Pastor Rick

Tuesday, February 14 – Pastors Josh & Tori
Valentines Day message

Sunday, February 19 – Pastor Josh

Tuesday, February 21 – Prayer Revolution
Kick-off

Sunday, February 26 – Pastor Rick

Tuesday, February 28 – Worship Night

Calendar of Events

Feb 4

LAUNCH Family Ice Skating

1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
at Kirkwood Ice Rink (meet at the rink)
Cost: \$4.75/person

Feb 10

Ignite Citywide Scavenger Hunt

6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Meet in LIFECHURCH Lobby

Feb 11

LIFECHURCH CERT

Training Day 3 of 4
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
at LIFECHURCH

Feb 12

Membership Classes

(Foundations Classes are a prerequisite.
Contact Pastor Don)
Administration Office
9:30 a.m.

Feb 18

LIFECHURCH CERT

MAKE-UP DAY
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
at Fenton Fire Dept.

JOYs Hearts and Flowers Fellowship

Noon to 3:00 p.m.
Bring a dish and meet us at the Church

Feb 19

LIFE Groups spring session begins

Feb 21

Prayer Revolution Kick-off

Feb 25

TurningPoint

Cook at 11:00 a.m./Leave LIFECHURCH
at 3:45 p.m. to serve meals at a homeless
shelter downtown.

LIFECHURCH CERT

Training Day 4 of 4
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
at Fenton Fire Dept.

Remember to visit our Website often at www.lifechurch-stl.com and click on the “Events” tab for more great things to add to your calendar!

