

Dear VPC Friends,

No amount of money can buy the treasures my family and I have received at VPC. These treasures will last forever - - our salvation, God's gifts of love and grace, and our transformed lives. Here's some of my own story:

I would describe myself today as almost unrecognizable from the person I was when our family joined VPC 30 years ago. At that time I was a shy, passive, mouse-in-the-corner personality. I was comfortable only when looking on from the fringe and avoided attention, such as speaking up in a group. Little by little, through VPC's small groups and Bible studies, God took this mouse out of the corner and changed me into a person who could lead groups, and even talk in front of a crowd. It was a major makeover.

Yet, I had a lingering sense that there was more to the life of faith.

Then Growing Your Soul came to VPC, a new ministry designed for those who are hungry to know more of God and more of themselves. By this time, I had acquired a lot of information about God in Bible studies, yet I didn't **know** God and I didn't know his extravagant love. Nor did I know myself, even though I had lived a lot of years. As it turned out, knowing God and knowing myself was the "more" that I was seeking.

In Growing Your Soul groups, I became centered in God through devotional reading and spiritual disciplines. I prayed, "Lord, help me to know myself so that I may know you." In time, I did discover my true self, the real me, as created by God. What a joy! When I am able to live in that true self, it's so much easier, because I am freed from anxiety about doing and being what other people want me to do and be. David Benner's description is apt: Finding one's true self "is like putting on a perfectly custom-tailored dress or suit after wearing clothes made for other people." (from *The Gift of Being Yourself*)

Now, I am a work in progress, grateful for those times when I am soaring, free to serve God and others in ways that match who God created me to be. Living in my true self means that peace and joy replace anxiety and a sense of duty in ministry. I'm following my longing to help others experience healing and wholeness through spiritual friendships, Renewing Prayer Ministry, and as a MOPS Mentor Mom. I am eager to pass on the treasures I have received.

My story is just one of many at VPC, as we've heard God Sightings testify during Sunday worship. These people have also become centered in Jesus and the VPC community, and their lives are now soaring in God's love.

VPC is one of the best investments our family has ever made. Does VPC use our gifts well? My own life experience and the evidence of others' VPC stories are a resounding, "Yes". Gifts of time, talent and money to VPC allow Christ's mission to flow in and through us, and the blessings we receive in return are immeasurable. Together we are a cloud of witnesses. These are the treasures no money can buy.

Gratefully,



Lisa Baltzer