



**Update from the Bonham's
November 2024**



**SHEPHERD'S
H E A R T**

Dear Friend,

I recently came across statistics that said 23% of people quit their New Year's resolutions by the end of the first week and 43% quit by the end of January. Only 9% complete them. (<https://fisher.osu.edu/leadreadtoday>) On November 19 I joined the 9% by completing my resolution to walk 1,000 miles in 2024. The key? Keep the goal reasonable, keep track of progress and walk with others as much as possible. (And don't let Michigan weather discourage you!)

There are spiritual lessons in physical discipline. When we set goals to care for our bodies it requires sacrifice for a delayed reward. It can help shape us into the kind of person who is willing to sacrifice for spiritual benefits that come later. Bearing fruit requires remaining attached to the vine and drawing on it for what is needed. We wither when we don't do this. (I reluctantly note that my arm strength has withered, even as my legs have remained strong from walking.) Jesus tells us that if we remain connected with him we will bear much fruit (John 15:5). It's not a one time event he is talking about, but an ongoing connection that grows until we become fruitful.

This is true in the ministry. I meet with people who come looking for a quick fix, the one thing that will restore their marriage or relationship. Rebuilding damaged trust takes consistency over time. Transformation requires mind renewal, according to Romans 12. When we do what God asks today, tomorrow and the day after, even when we don't see immediate results, it changes who we are. This is true in handling finances, in parenting, in marriage, in ministry and in our mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

One of my spiritual disciplines is keeping a daily devotional journal. I write the date of each entry. Often, when I finish, I write the date of the next day. It helps me keep track of progress and anticipate doing the same the next day. I also look for opportunities to share what impacted me with others. It is a way of walking with them.

In Colorado I did that with Carlos. We walked and talked in Boulder Mountain Park, in downtown Boulder and in Vail. Together we not only got exercise, but we shared hearts with one another. As we went deeper it strengthened our heart connection with each other.



“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”

I John 1:7

In the process we were drawn to not only walk with each other, but to walk with Jesus in the midst of our challenges. It had a purifying effect.

I'm continuing to walk, even though I've met my resolution goal. It's helping me physically, emotionally and spiritually. Why wouldn't I?

What resolution will you keep in 2025? Join the 9 percenters!

Prayer Requests:

Mary is adjusting to her medications, but the side effects are challenging. She is waiting for test results to see what progress she has made with all the treatments for breast cancer so far. Pray that the tests will show good progress so that the level of medication can be reduced.

We completed our Loving Well course for couples on November 11. It was a challenging group and it exposed deeper needs. Pray that these couples will keep on working at strengthening their relationship with their spouse and with the Lord.

On December 14 I will lead a training for Growth Group leaders at our church. I am looking forward to sharing with them some things Michel Hendricks shared with me when I stayed with him in Boulder. He wrote a book called “The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation”. It is highly relevant for our small groups. Pray that we would be able to develop an environment that contributes to spiritual transformation.

Finally, pray that we will continue to do what strengthens our attachment to Christ so that we can bear much fruit in this season of our lives.

We are forever grateful for your continued prayer and financial partnership in this ministry. We have so much reason to be especially thankful this Thanksgiving!

“For in Him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:28

Grateful for you,

Mark and Mary Bonham

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Donations to Shepherd's Heart at the above address support this ministry.
