



# Victory Foundation

7012 Ogden Road SE

Building a heart in the heart of Calgary



**Pastor  
Don Delaney**

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## THE CAPACITY OF A DESTINY

As an inner-city ministry, we have had our challenges in the areas of capacity. Six years ago, in Victoria Park, it felt like we were a four cylinder car trying to do the work of a semi truck! Back then it was our capacity that was the biggest hindrance. Outgrowing our building and having limited housing for the homeless was beginning to threaten the growth of our organization. It left us with two options; either increase capacity, or duplicate what we had. Both of these options require dedicated trained individuals and resources. The first option meant a bigger facility that would house everything under one roof. A lot of time, resources and research would be needed so that option was sidelined; although we did begin a building fund for a larger facility in the future.

The second option of duplicating our present ministry in another area of the city would relieve considerable pressure and was something we felt we were ready for. What made us ready were the unique individuals who had been with us for years. They understood the heart and vision of our ministry, and were willing to shoulder the responsibility of helping the poor. Without these individuals, our organization would not have been able to duplicate. We looked for members who would be willing to leave Victoria Park and go to Forest Lawn to start another Outreach Centre. Twenty-three people responded and, under the leadership of Pastor Pat Dennis and (the late) Bill Dennis, they started the Eastside Victory Outreach Centre. Today, they have three houses for the homeless and a congregation of one hundred and seventy-five people (made up of formerly homeless and recovering addicts). Today, they too are beginning to have their own capacity challenges.

Meanwhile, back in Victoria Park in 2007, our rented houses and facility was facing demolition. This was the fate of many inner city neighborhoods across North America dealing with urban change. Not only were we not able to increase our capacity, but now our very survival was being threatened. We searched relentlessly for a new home and put in offers during a red hot real estate

market. This became a roller coaster ride of hope and disappointment. Five signed deals fell apart for reasons beyond our control. We became so desperate that we were ready to settle for anything. That was never more apparent than when we put an offer on a building that was used as a doggie day care. The place stunk, was not zoned for housing, and would definitely be a step backward. But we felt the location was good and we could maybe start getting houses in the community again.

The Board's reaction was mixed but they realized how desperate we were and were willing to approve the purchase. I was still a little hesitant and decided to call a former Board member who was in another city who could perhaps give a little objective perspective. After explaining our tumultuous journey over the past year, his response was; "When you look at this building can you say 'this is our destiny?'" I knew the answer was; "No!!".

We decided to cancel the deal and continue looking. The very next building turned out to be our new home that more than met all of our needs. With our church and commercial kitchen on the main floor (and now with the room renovations complete), we will have more than doubled our housing capacity to sixty rooms.

Once again committed quality people made it possible to not only grow in capacity to house our programs, but to also expand the organization. In September, 2011 Tom and Louise Maxwell have taken on the responsibilities of pastoring the church in the Victory Manor. This has allowed me to become the full-time Executive Director of the Victory Foundation and focus on the growing needs of the organization as a whole. Tom and Louise have faithfully given of their time and resources over the past twelve years and, like Pastor Pat in Forest Lawn, are quality people that make it possible to expand our capacity and create a destiny for the homeless. With this leadership on board, our future looks bright.





Pastor Tom Maxwell

*“Great works are not performed by strength, but by perseverance.”*  
-Samuel Johnson



## PERSEVERANCE

A persevering character takes time to develop. Without it we have no chance of succeeding with our goals in life. A persevering character can only come from a determined, bulldog tenacity that says; “In spite of obstacles and hardships, I will not give up.” Without this dogged determination, we will end up abandoning our goals at the first sign of difficulty and hardship. If we do that, then our lives will end up becoming lackluster and bland. We will get to our middle age in life and have a great crisis by looking back and saying; “If only I would have.....” or, “I think I should have.....”

Life is meant to be an adventure. Stepping into the unknown and reaching out to things that are bigger than ourselves will always give us a sense of purpose and destiny. It takes courage to do this and, only those willing to take risks and overcome their fear of failure will ever discover their full potential. Life can only be lived once and if we don't embrace the adventure of it, we will end up dying long before our time. I think the statement that sums it up the best is a line by the actor, Tim Robbins, in the movie “Shawshank Redemption”. After being wrongfully accused of a murder he did not commit, Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) tells “Red” Redding (Morgan Freeman) that, in spite of life's circumstances, a person has to decide to; “Get busy living, or get busy dying.” It was this positive attitude that kept him going from day to day and never giving up hope that, one day, he would be a free man in

spite of the life sentence imposed on him. It was this “bulldog” determination to never give up that built in him a persevering character as he slowly dug a tunnel to escape. His attitude to never give up is what kept him alive with hope and purpose.

Years ago, I remember reading a story of two men who decided to canoe the complete length of the Yangtze River in China. At 3,988 miles, it is the longest river in China and third longest river in the world. A daunting task to say the least; and not one that would be accomplished over night. It would take a persevering quality in a person's character to have any hope in accomplishing the goal. As the men started the trip, they canoed about one hundred miles the first day, one hundred miles the second day, and about ninety miles the third day.

At this point they became very discouraged and lost their enthusiasm for the journey. For the first three



days they had been counting down from the total number of miles they needed to travel. After three days, they realized that they still had about 3,700 miles to travel and they became exhausted just at the thought of the journey ahead. After discussing the situ-

ation, and being ready to throw in the towel, they decided that they had the wrong perspective. Instead of looking at the remaining miles to travel, they decided instead to focus on a short-term daily goal. Ninety miles per day was a reasonable amount to shoot for and, over the next seven days, they found that they continually beat their daily goal. This buoyed their spirits and before they knew it, they had finished their course. A persevering character was developed in them as they focused on the many short-term goals that would lead them to succeed in accomplishing their ultimate goal.

Samuel Johnson, an English poet and writer in the 1700's, wrote that; **“Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance.”** I have found this to be true as we have worked over the years in first purchasing (and then renovating) the Victory Manor in Ogden. By focusing on many short-term goals over a long period of time, we developed a persevering character that has brought us to a place of nearing the end of this leg of our journey. By the end of December, we will have the building entirely renovated on the inside. Our goal of having the building renovated for its Centennial Anniversary in July, 2012 is now in site.

It has been a task that has caused us to develop a persevering character. Accomplishing this task was done the same way a person eats an elephant - one bite at a time.



## THE BLESSING PROJECT

By Sherry Loewen

Sometimes we feel that the blessings are found in the 'big things' in life. But I have learned to see the incredible blessings in the small things; specifically the small groups that I have been involved with at the Eastside Victory Outreach Centre.

I am a member of Royal Oak Victory Church in Calgary, and am part of a group within our church that is actively involved in reaching out to the needs of individuals in our congregation and the communities around us. Many members of our church are currently involved in outreach projects at the Eastside Victory Outreach in Forest Lawn, and the Victory Outreach Centre in Ogden. This is how I became involved with the Eastside Victory Outreach Centre.

In January, 2011, Pastor Pat began a group entitled 'From Striving to Thriving'. This small group focuses on the needs of single mothers and their children in the community. Each time the group meets, a dinner is made for everyone followed by a short teaching and then some fellowship. I had really wanted to be a part of this small group although, at the time, I was co-leading a 12-step codependency group. Co-leading this group taught me so much about myself. I was very surprised when, through this group, I identified many codependent behaviors in myself. I ended up being an active participant when I thought that I was only going to be a silent observer. It helped me to relate to the women we were ministering to at the Eastside Victory Outreach.

When I suggested to Pastor Pat the idea of doing a small group on codependency at Eastside, she suggested that we first begin with a small group discussing the topic of boundaries. My friend Maria and I began a 'Boundaries' group in August and had an average of twenty-five people attending on a regular basis. We helped individuals to understand that healthy boundaries are vital in our relationships with others. Through a short teaching and much sharing and prayer, we all grew together. We studied the book "Boundaries" by Dr. John Townsend & Dr. Henry Cloud and relied on the Lord to show us the focus that He wanted the teaching to take. We would often use teachings from the Word of God to apply to what we were learning from the book. Often, during preparation, we sensed the focus was to be on understanding how God looks at each one of us.

Understanding how God sees us is a foundation to building healthy parameters with those around us.

I met incredible people through this group as we shared our similar struggles with setting boundaries in different areas of our lives. More importantly, we journeyed together through God's Word to develop tools we can use to develop healthy boundaries. I was continually humbled by the way God would use each one of us in the group to speak encouragement and practical applications of His Word in our lives. Upon completion of this group, Pastor Pat and I felt the next step was to offer a group on codependency and go even a little deeper. We are currently leading this group together.

Helping individuals struggling with addiction issues is a vital focus of ministry at Eastside. But what about those who are living with a person struggling with addictions of drugs and alcohol. These people may often find themselves in a mess due to codependency. Being codependent leaves us feeling crazy because it stems from attempting to be in control of others or situations that we have no business trying to control. We cannot control others and we do not have to allow others to control us. Codependency usually stems from being in environments where we feel the need to have to control things. It is often found with people involved in the helping professions. We can be codependent with our spouses, our children, our boyfriends, our girlfriends, people we work with, people dear to us and people we barely know. It is also seen in the children from families where emotions were not expressed or expressed in unhealthy ways.

Codependency is defined as a disease because, when it is not addressed in a person's life, the tendencies remain and most likely will become worse over time. The first step is recognizing what we exhibit as codependent behaviors. The second step is acceptance, and the third step is to learn different ways of coping. The good news is that God has provided a way out of these dysfunctional tendencies. In His Word, we find practical ways that help us to live healthy lives that are totally reliant on Him. We see that, with God's help, we only have the power to change one person; ourselves. The Word of God takes primary importance but we can also use resources from researchers and others who have walked the path to freedom from codependency. These resources can help us to develop new behaviors.

Small groups are so important in our lives and for our healing. We all need each other. Small groups are vital to establishing life-changing community. We all need each other in the family of God and we have an amazing and awesome family here in Victory. When we come alongside others, God can really do some amazing work amongst us. In John 13:35, Jesus says; "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Love and acceptance is what we experience in our small groups. It isn't always easy to look at ourselves and our tendency to walk down the codependent path. However, when people come back every week to share personal experiences and support one another, Christ's love is displayed and we all find the strength to accomplish that to which He has called us to do. It is then that we are able to live life abundantly.

It is all about relationship. Our relationship with God and our relationship with others. Everything will flow from that. That is why it is my desire to be involved in something to bring others closer to Him and each other.

So what have I learned from this experience? Showing Christ's love is, above all, the highest call for us as Christians. Being involved in small groups is one of the ways He is able to show His love through us and to us. Paul speaks of the importance of our acts of love in 1 Corinthians 13:8 when he says; "Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away". Love never fails. Yet there are things that can hinder us from showing God's love and even receiving it. Codependency is one of those things. Our codependent behaviors will affect our lives in adverse ways and affect our ability to give and receive the love of God. He is calling us to come closer to Him and others. We do this by sharing what we have learned with others. We do this by reaching out to someone in need and by a extending a random act of kindness in His name.

I am currently in the process of developing my topic for my thesis in order to complete my Master's in Christian Counseling. I feel the call of ministry on my life and am looking forward with such excitement to see what God has for me. My desire is to know God and help others to know Him too! He is calling each one of us to join him on a journey of relationship with Him and others.

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