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OUR MISSION



Nashville Christian Family® exists to provide Christians and the community at large with ways to strengthen and grow as a part of the Middle Tennessee Christian Family. This local monthly publication is designed to promote positive living by sharing with readers of all ages relevant and timely news and information related to health, faith, parenting, youth, finances, Christian entertainment, missions, church leaders, and much more GOOD NEWS!

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Our country is going through some of the most trying times in our recent history, please pray for our leaders and for a healing for a nation through a return to putting God first in everything that we do.

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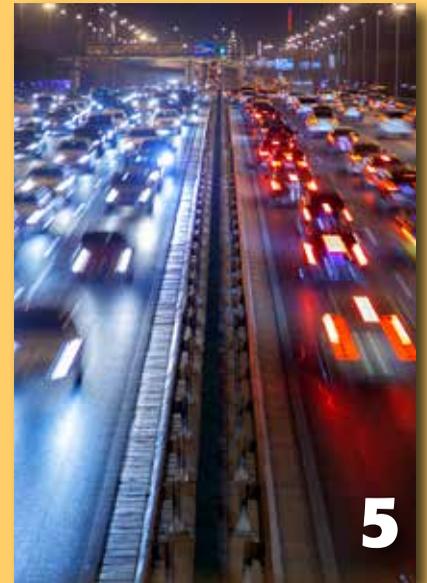
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Staying In Your Own Lane

The word NO is comprised of just two letters ---- and yet it can be so hard to say and so easily misunderstood.

At WHTN we've had to say no to a number of potential Bridges guests over the years. The NO wasn't necessarily about the quality of the guest or even my interest level of the subject. Most of the time the no was just because that subject wasn't a good fit for the Bridges show. For example, we've never done a Bridges show in support of a political candidate or party. Of course, I vote and pray for our governmental leaders – I just never made that a part of the Bridges show.

No One is Beyond Redemption

I made an intentional decision when the Bridges show launched – to focus on the hope we have in Christ. I want Bridges to be a show that encourages everyday people (like me) to boldly live out their faith in Christ. I want to open the conversation to include tough topics like adultery and addiction – and loudly declare that faith in Christ changes everything. Because of Christ no one is beyond redemption – and no one is left alone without hope. In order to accomplish that on Bridges sometimes that two letter word no had to be a part of the conversation. It isn't necessarily easy to say no---- but it is necessary to say no. I like to think of it as “Staying in My Lane”.

We all have a lane – a place that highlights who we are and accentuates our God given unique gifts and talents. We live in a world filled with choices and opportunities. There are many good options readily available but finding your lane is about what's best for you. Finding your lane starts with knowing when to say Yes and when to say No.

Way Over My Head

It's usually not good when we say yes – and we should have said no. For example, I had a guest on Bridges once whose specialty was Biblical Prophecy. Clearly, there is nothing wrong with Biblical Prophecy. I enjoy studying Biblical Prophecy. The issue is that I am not an expert on the subject. Much of what my very learned guest said was way over my head. Plus, my expert guest did not want to share his personal faith story. Instead, he wanted to focus only on his book. I put myself in a position where I was out of my lane – and it showed in the interview. My bad choice taught me lots of lessons about finding and staying in my lane.

Find what you're good at and do lots of it. If it's outside of your expertise or interests– say no and move on. The word no may be hard to say or even misunderstood but sometimes it's just necessary. There is a lane that's just for you. You will find that lane when you learn when to say yes and when to say no.

Today's Secret from the Studio – Stay in Your Own Lane.

— *Monica Schmelter is the General Manager of WHTN, Christian Television Network and host of daily television show Bridges. Bridges is a safe place to talk. No topic is off limits – and the Bible is our guide. You can watch Bridges on demand at www.monicaschmelter.com*



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Jesus Is Not Religious

This title alone could conceivably offend the most faithful church goer. Many of us first heard of Jesus inside a church, perhaps in Sunday School. However, when we examine the greatest Christian leader that ever walked on Earth, we will see that He was turned off by religion. Many of the religious folk did not even recognize Jesus when He first began his ministry. They were looking for an affluent king that would reign from a worldly throne. Instead, an easy-going guy makes his entrance, laid back riding on a donkey. Anything but conventional.

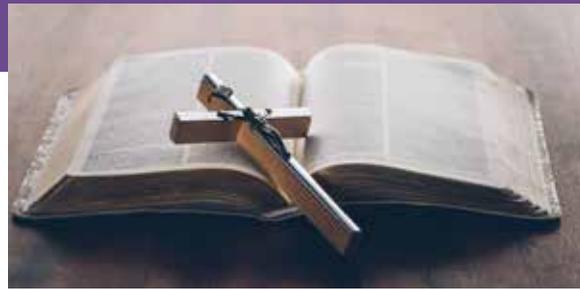
Jesus was often found hanging out with the social outcast and the unpopular everyday people. He breaks the Sabbath often and rather than following the rules, He gets called out by the sanctimonious religious leaders. They could not see Jesus' heart because they were so bent on the "dos and don'ts". Even Jesus' very lineage was made up of all types of unconventional people, including Rahab, the prostitute. (Matthew 1:5).

Religion likes to keep everything in a neat little package. Not Jesus! He often went head-to-head with demons. When He meets a naked man, living

in the tombs, screaming at the top of his lungs, Jesus pointedly casts out the demons that possess this man. He was not afraid to get dirty. The next time we see this man, he is dressed and just "simply hanging out" with the Son of God.

Jesus was not the least bit upset when his home meeting gets interrupted. You remember the story, several crazy guys decided to tear up the roof and lower their friend down so he could be healed. Not only did Jesus heal their friend but He was highly impressed by their actions. He didn't lecture them on protocol. In addition to healing the man, He also forgave him of his sins! This all happened right in the middle of the living room -- not in a church building. Of course, the religious leaders had a heyday with this one. Instead of being excited for this person that was miraculously healed, they found fault in the method Jesus used.

Jesus' message is love – not rules! In John 13:35, he said, "Everyone will know we are Christians by



our love for each other", not by the list of rules we follow. Jesus warns us against acting godly or religious but denying the power. (2 Timothy 3:5). There is arguably so

much more to this "Christian lifestyle" than keeping score. It is vitally important that our lives are changed from the inside out. Our actions should be a result of what is inside our hearts. Certainly not acting a certain way and holding on to a pious dogmatic behavior. Of course, sin must be confronted but love must be our motivation.

The next time we become indignant when we see someone not "acting right" remember it was the religious people that crucified Jesus.

What is your motivation when serving the Lord? If you have gotten lost in your religion or have missed the heart of Jesus, please email me. There is a clear path back to Him!

— Rhonda L Smart
rhondalsmart@gmail.com

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Brought to you by: **Mark Koch, First Hour For Men**

So Are You Happy Or Joyful?

Happiness. Everybody wants to be happy, right? I mean, that's what we're all chasing, isn't it? Our culture is obsessed with, "Finding the Thing that Makes You Happy." Magazines are filled with self-helps articles like "10 Ways to Find Happiness," and, "25 Ways to a Happier Life." Even our Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776 stated a right to "the pursuit of happiness."

But how long are people happy once they obtain the thing that makes them happy? Getting a new car or house may make them happy but then trouble hits at work or in a marriage and they aren't happy anymore. People may want happiness, but what they really need is joy.

Joy is a person's "internal" state of being whereas happiness is an emotion affected by external factors such as a promotion, a new car, a relationship, a breakup or a death. Happi-

ness comes and goes depending on circumstances. Joy remains even in the most challenging of times.

Why? Because joy comes from God. We know because Galatians 5:22 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Joy is the result of God "working in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

But what is the source of our joy? Grace. God's grace extended to us through Jesus Christ is the source of our joy.

Think about this, apart from God's grace, we all stand in judgment before God having violated His law. He created us and established how we are supposed to walk in relationship with, and worship, Him. But on our own, we don't and won't without His intervention. The Bible says we are enemies of God, and

we can't do anything to fix the problem. But God, out of His love for us and while we are sinners, graciously sent Jesus to take the punishment we deserve. That's grace; getting what we don't deserve (forgiveness) rather than what we do deserve (eternal punishment).

Jesus dying in our place so that we can worship God changes everything. We are forgiven! We have new life! We are restored to have a personal relationship with our Creator! Our condemnation is gone forever! That's the Good News of the gospel. Like the Apostol Paul rhetorically asks, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). The unshakeable reality of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection is the foundation for our bottomless, endless joy, regardless of our circumstances.

So today, are you chasing happiness or resting in joy? Your response will help clarify how you will view everything else in your life.

— Mark W. Koch is an Author, inspirational and Hollywood Film Producer. To order a Free Copy of, "The First Hour" for Men 30-Day Journey, Visit www.thefirsthour.com and use promo code NCF





Can What I Say On Facebook Cause Me Legal Problems?



“I can’t believe I was fired from my job over simply expressing my personal views about outcome of the election,” exclaimed a client who recently called our office to inquire whether her employer could really get away with this.

Presently our firm represents several individuals in five states, all of whom were terminated from career-long positions over comments they posted on their private Facebook pages. We could never have predicted such an influx of cases even three years ago.

Platforms like Facebook, Twitter and other social media have become the modern public square in which individuals freely express often diverse views on public issues affecting their local communities and the nation. The Supreme Court, in *Packingham v. North Carolina*, recognized that social media, like all forms of free speech is protected by “a fundamental First Amendment principle” that all persons have access to places where they can speak. But *Packingham* addressed whether government may restrict access to social media. What about private employers? May they impose such restrictions on their employees who seek to exercise this right during off-duty time?

Many employers today have social media policies that broadly proscribe certain types of expression by their employees, even during their off hours. Unwary employees are increasingly finding themselves ensnared by these policies, particularly when their comments run counter to the prevailing mainstream narrative on a given issue. The following are just a few examples of employees whom we are representing that lost their jobs over Facebook posts:

- A nurse in North Carolina commented “All lives matter and BLM is a political trick to upset a group of people to riot and terrorize!”
- An anesthetist in Florida remarked on her Facebook: “These acts [referring to Antifa] are not all about injustice and racism. The devil incarnate is out in the form of rioters and assaulters.”
- A state employee in Tennessee criticized a state policy calling for the early release of drug offenders in response to the Covid-19 crisis by stating: “The Governor is forbidding parole officers to put parolees in jail for unlimited drug abuse.”
- The director of a library in Kentucky was fired for posting: “The concept of race is not biblical. There are not higher races and lower races of people. There is only ONE race, the human race.”

In many of these cases, the employer would never have known of the employee’s Facebook post had others, who negatively reacted to it, not contacted them. The practice of attacking another on the basis of one’s disagreement with their social media remarks is called “doxing”. Doxing is defined as the act of searching for and publishing private or identifying information about a particular individual on the internet, typically with malicious intent of bringing about their termination.

If you or someone you know has been impacted by their comments on social media, we encourage you to contact an attorney. To receive an initial free consultation, you may contact our firm at www.crainlaw.legal

— Larry L. Crain



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SENIOR SCENE

First Time Caregivers: You Are Not Alone...

Through the years, I have consulted with countless families and family members stepping up to care for a parent or grandparent. Everyone ages, and there comes a time when older or ailing loved ones need help. If you're one of those first-time family caregivers, you are not alone.

If you're caring for a grandparent, parent or other loved one for the first time, there will be both challenges and rewards in the months ahead. It can be difficult, and you might not even be sure where to start. Here are some tips to help you through the challenging months ahead:

- Familiarize yourself. Learn as much as you can about your loved one's medical conditions. Know what to expect as they grow older and the conditions progress. It's vital to be able to make informed decisions about the care your loved one will receive and whether it will require outside help.
- Share the responsibility. Don't try to go it completely alone. Enlist a network of friends and family who can help with some of the many responsibilities of caregiving. It doesn't have to involve major tasks. It could mean helping out with mundane duties like preparing a few meals a week or doing the grocery shopping.
- Consider respite care. You're only human, and you will need to take a break now and then. Consider the feasibility of hiring a professional in-home caregiver through a certified, reputable agency to relieve you for a few hours each week in order to run errands or just spend some quality time relaxing.
- Join a support group. It's easier to deal with the challenges of caregiving if you have someone to talk to. Consider joining a caregiver support group. This will let you discuss frustrations and problems with people who understand where you are coming from because they have been there too.
- Lean on technology. Human memory is fallible, especially in busy or stress-



ful circumstances. There are smartphone apps that can help with daily caregiving tasks by providing medication and appointment reminders, helping create schedules with family members or professional caregivers, or taking notes.

Self-preservation is critical in this role. As a caregiver, absorbed in the task of caring for a loved one day in and day out, it can be hard to remember your own needs. Eventually, this can damage your emotional and physical health as the toll of exhaustion and stress mounts.

Watch for the signs of burnout. But it's even better to set boundaries and care for yourself from the start. Make sure to eat healthy, get enough sleep, enjoy hobbies and downtime and, as the pandemic fades, socialize when possible. Remember, hiring a professional agency to assist can benefit not only your aging loved one, but yourself as well.

Whatever else happens, don't forget that your loved one is an individual with their own wants and needs. Involve them in caregiving decisions, especially those that involve their health, living situation, or finances. When it can be done safely, allow them the independence to perform the daily tasks they are capable of. Give them a say in their own affairs. It will make the process smoother and reduce frustrations on both sides.

In the end, be patient with yourself and the loved one you are caring for. Prioritize your own health and don't try to do everything yourself. Enjoy your time with your loved one and don't despair. Help is available if you ask for it. Amada Senior Care provides complimentary consultations with a Certified Senior Advisor (CSA) to help you determine the best path forward for your family situation. They serve all of Middle Tennessee and their number is 615-933-7494. Give Amada Senior Care a call today, their staff is ready to serve and assist. Be well and enjoy the journey.

— Kevin B. Fehr, CSA, CDP, President & CEO, Certified Dementia Practitioner, Amada Senior Care Nashville, Amada Senior Care Bucks/Mont. Co. – www.amadanashville.com

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— Ben Davis, CSA, Director of Outreach Select Pointe, LLC



Alexis Proliferates God's Love and Joy



Meet Alexis. Alexis is a spunky and adorable 6-year-old girl. Her life suddenly changed in 2019 when she was diagnosed with a femur fracture. It was eventually determined that the femur fracture was a result of Gorham-Stout Disease, a rare bone disorder characterized by progressive bone loss (osteolysis) and the rapid reproduction (proliferation) of lymphatic vessels.

Alexis underwent a partial amputation of her left leg to remove the diseased bone in 2020. Her leg was then reconfigured through a surgery

called a Rotationplasty. Her Rotationplasty surgery was very specialized and involved removing her entire femur and then reshaping the top of her tibia and rotating it 180 degrees so it could be inserted into her hip socket. Her ankle joint now functions as her new knee joint and she recently traveled to Dallas to receive her prosthesis. Despite her challenges, Alexis continues to thrive with a proliferation of resilience and joy.

In anticipation of her Rotationplasty, Tucker's House completed modifications to the house of this family to ease their transition home from the hospital. With the help of some of our generous community partners like Brasfield & Gorrie and Hiller, Tucker's House retrofit her bathroom with a zero-entry

shower so that she can safely access the shower whether she is using crutches or a roll-in shower chair. We also poured a concrete pad at the back of the house where the family enters from outside, installed a ramp, and widened doorways in their house to provide safe access for Alexis.

Alexis' mom, Anna, reports that "Alex's diagnosis put our family on a path we didn't expect. There have been years of ups and downs, disappointments, joys, and sorrows. Through it all God has continuously shown His love and care through the people He has placed in our lives and the doors opened and closed. Tucker's House, along with the many individuals and businesses involved in the organization have been an incredible part of Alex's story and loved her and our family. Alex has continued to bring joy to those around her as she has smiled and sung through so many hard things." The family has set up an Instagram page (@alex_fearfullywonderfullymade) if you would like to follow the poignant story of this special family.

Tucker's House is a 501(c)3 non-profit in Middle Tennessee that serves families who have children with disabilities by making their homes safer and more accessible. We receive no state or federal funding and our ability to perform services for children like Alexis depends on the support of our Middle Tennessee community. Your continued support goes to help children like Alexis and their families have safe and accessible homes.

— *Graham Honeycutt, Executive Director of Tucker's House, to learn more or to donate visit www.tuckershose.org.*



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Is Critical Race Theory Compatible with the Bible?

Revelation 7:9 describes a diverse yet unified multitude from every nation, tribe, peoples and language, worshipping God in heaven.

Harmonious relationships have always been God's desire for humanity. In fact, the Bible has a lot to say about topics like diversity, inclusion and other aspects of critical race theory (CRT).

While some CRT terminology is new or redefined, the ideology behind it has been around for a long time.

Christianity teaches there is no favoritism with God. As a follower of Jesus, I am called to pursue peace; love and forgive unconditionally; seek justice for all; and treat everyone with dignity and respect. Since every life matters and is of great value to our Creator, they should all matter to us as well.

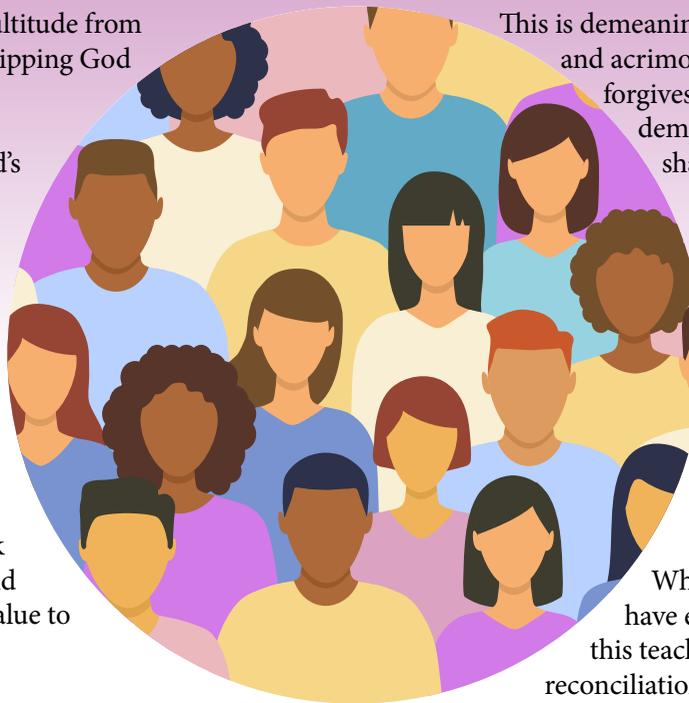
Scripture condemns discriminating against others based on outward appearances and identifies it as a symptom of a much deeper problem. Engaging in the sin of partiality makes us "judges with evil motives," as the apostle James put it.

And therein lies my problem with critical race theory: It is based on inherently racist and unbiblical assumptions, viewing virtually every historical or present-day event through the lens of race and oppression.

Far from promoting constructive dialogue and seeking common ground, CRT divides along racial lines by creating negative stereotypes rather than seeing people as individuals made in God's image.

Criticizing or even questioning CRT is considered racist, and nothing but acquiescence is permitted. CRT essentially condenses power into a small group of social elites who typically oppress and cancel those who disagree with them.

No one can look into the mind of another person to see if he or she is a racist, yet CRT advocates claim to have the ability to know the unknowable. White people are judged as a homogeneous group of racial supremacists and everyone else as victims of systemic racism.



This is demeaning to all races and creates widespread mistrust and acrimony. Jesus taught His followers to forgive as He forgives, but with CRT there is no forgiveness or redemption; rather, there is endless condemnation and shame.

The theory (some would say agenda) also ignores decades of progress in racial relations and the many achievements by people of color.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of the day when his children would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character, has turned into a nightmare of segregation and victimhood.

While many well-meaning Christians and churches have embraced CRT, they miss the deceptiveness of this teaching. The Bible moves us toward systemic unity, reconciliation and healing. CRT is built on the framework of atheistic Marxism and seeks to normalize systemic disunity, turmoil and pain. Jesus told His disciples they would recognize false teachers by their fruit. The fruit of CRT is division, destruction and lack of forgiveness.

Certainly there have been many horrible acts of racism in our nation's history—as there have been in numerous parts of the world—and slavery was a sad reality that resulted in civil war.

I don't know of anyone who denies these acts, claims there is no racism today or believes we don't have more work to do in race relations. But CRT is not the way forward.

The truth is that humanity has a systemic sin problem, and racism is one of its symptoms. If we want positive change instead of more division, we must address the real problem rather than its symptoms. Only Jesus can change the heart of a racist. The good news is that salvation is an equal outcome for anyone who places faith in Him.

— Don Beehler is a retired public relations consultant who has worked with faith-based organizations throughout the nation. He lives in Franklin, Tenn. (This article originally ran June 29 online in *The Tennessean*.)

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What Has God Called You To Do?

This is a big question we all ask. There are many sermons and books to help us navigate this all-important question. As you read, you will see a big announcement that you can all be a part of and join in a calling we all have.

The biggest and most important calling is what Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-39, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul”, and he said this was the greatest commandment, then the second like it, “Love your neighbor as yourself”. When Jesus himself says these are the two greatest commandments, then if you based your life and your work around these, then you will find your answer.

Yet is this a calling or a lifestyle? He has given us several life callings, go and make disciples of men, serve each other, give, take care of the temple (your body) that God has given you. Studying the Bible one can find many things God is ‘calling’ you to do. What you do in life can come in many forms, some work just for a paycheck, and that is ok, some are in ministry, and some give their lives to a dream. Never stop dreaming! You know, I heard from a friend that was privy first hand to a famous businessman who answered a simple question from a young boy, ‘What do you do?’, the man answered, “I sell chicken”, now that doesn’t sound very exciting but the man continued, “I sell Chicken to be able to spread the gospel of Jesus”. Chicken was just a means to an end. Chick-file-A has sold more than 13.7 billion in 2020.



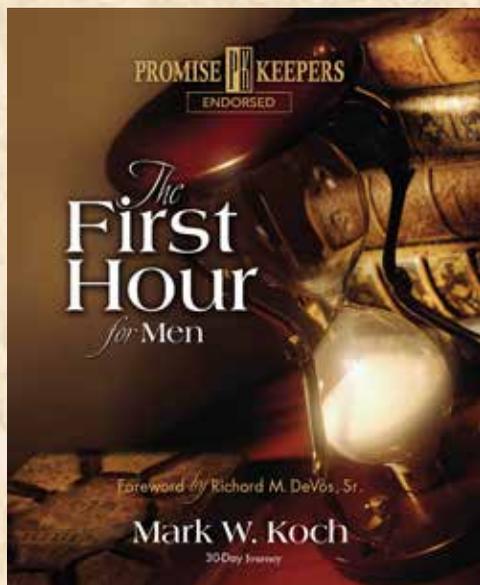
I help people take care of their body by offering an air purifier with NASA technology that practically eliminates bacteria, viruses, mold and allergens from surfaces and air. (my1link.me/mediaconsultant) This is staying in the ‘taking care of the body’ directive. But as much as I wish people to breath clean, virus free air, I wish to spread the gospel as well.

God calls us to tell others about Him, well, there is a new family and faith streaming global network being built right here in Middle Tennessee. World Inspirational Network Television. World Inspirational Network Television (WIN TV®) is a Tennessee

Non-Profit LLC. It is a free streaming network designed to educate, entertain, encourage, and evangelize on a global front. It will be a not-for-profit, family-friendly, and faith-based network, member and donor supported. There will be a wide variety of channels on the network including news, sports, education, children’s programs, movies, music, teen channels, and live programming, to name just a few channels. We need conservative television that is not ashamed of biblical truth and standards. WIN TV needs your prayers and support in this building stage, go to www.wintv.world to learn more and how to support this viewer and donor backed network. Philanthropists, businesses, churches are all welcome and channels will be available to lease.

— Michael Carnes

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Question & Answer With Darlene Kemp

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— Darlene A. Kemp, MPH, MBA-HCM – Executive Director,
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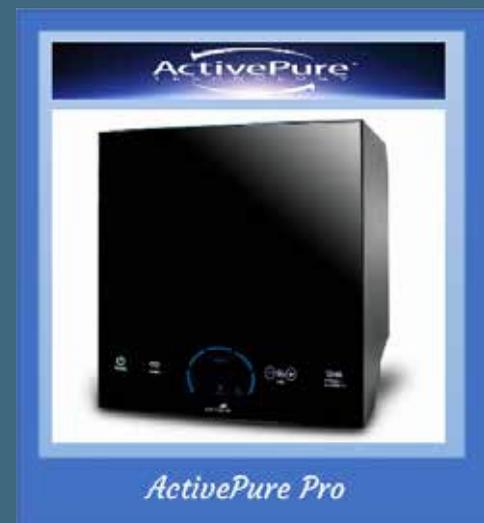
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Jasmine Brady

A Musical Family Legacy

Perhaps music is in Jasmine Brady's blood. It's certainly in her heritage, including her mother Candy Hemphill Christmas; her grandparents, Joel and LaBreeska Hemphill; and her maternal great aunt and uncle, Vestal and Howard Goodman of the Happy Goodmans. However, as Jasmine experienced, having such a robust musical heritage does not mean automatic entry into musical success.

Jasmine retells the story she has often heard: "Soon after I was born, I was part of the group traveling on the bus with my mother and family and grew up singing such songs as 'He's Still Working on Me.'" As a child, Jasmine began singing and writing songs while appearing on several Gaither Homecoming videos and in the Gaither Homecoming Kids' video series. As a young teenager, she started writing songs and leading her youth group in worship, and later, leading worship around the country.

Jasmine advances her story: "Worship leading became a vital part of my life as I began to feel the call of God. After graduating from high school, I went to Lee University and became part of the A Cappella Ensemble—the Voices of Lee—a world-renowned vocal ensemble. During this time my parents started a church, Regeneration Nashville; the call to worship grew strong in my heart. After two years, I left the Voices of Lee and began traveling home on the weekends to lead worship for my parents' church."

In her late teens and early twenties and while leading worship, Jasmine pursued a solo career. She was writing more than ever and knocking on every door that could possibly offer entry. No matter how hard she tried to advance her personal career, every door stayed bolted. Jasmine couldn't understand. She knew God had called her to music, so why wouldn't He want her to use the gifts He'd given her? Why wouldn't He want her to carry on the family's legacy?



Jasmine was on the precipice of an incredible life lesson arranged by God. She continues, "What I didn't realize is that everything must come in God's way and His time. God wasn't interested in how good I could sing or write; He was after my worship."

When every prospect for her music resulted in a definite no, Jasmine learned she "had to lay every gift that God had given me at the foot of the cross and submit my life to His will."

God's greatest lessons often come through His word when individuals slow down enough to listen. "The Lord spoke two scriptures quietly to my heart: but seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33) and trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

JonMichael Brady, also from a Gospel music family—Dad Keith Brady of "The Bradys"—started playing drums on the worship team at Regeneration Nashville. In due time on June 7, 2009, Jasmine married that wonderful man, and the couple now has two of God's greatest gifts, children Cooper and Adele (ages 9 and 5, respectively). Jasmine beams: "Cooper loves to sing, and he plays a drum called the cajon next to his dad in our worship band every Sunday. Adele loves to sing and worship the Lord, too. She's always singing and writing songs. Music is in both of them for sure!" Could their music legacy be shooting out another branch?

When Jasmine was sixteen, her mom, Candy Christmas, founded the Bridge Ministry, a non-profit homeless outreach. Shortly after she married Jon-Michael, Jasmine went to work for the Ministry and is now a staff member of The Bridge, Inc. Almost every Tuesday night she is under Jefferson Street Bridge leading Nashville's homeless and poor in worship to Jesus. She continues to lead worship for Regeneration Church Nashville, pastored by her father Rev. Kent Christmas. Jasmine continues, "Although I was leading worship weekly, I had completely stopped writing songs and pursuing a personal music career. I decided that if that kind of career were God's will, He would do it His way in His time."



Peace, peace, Shalom." For the first time in almost nine years, I wrote a song. God began giving me worship music which I introduced to our church.

"Over the last year, while walking through the pandemic and my husband's joblessness, I've stayed at Jesus's feet in worship while songs like 'Faith Arise' and 'God is in Control' have come pouring out of my soul. Soon, our church and online viewers asked where they could purchase my music. We decided to do a project so these precious people could sing these songs over their situations as well. My latest album, 'Shalom,' came into being."

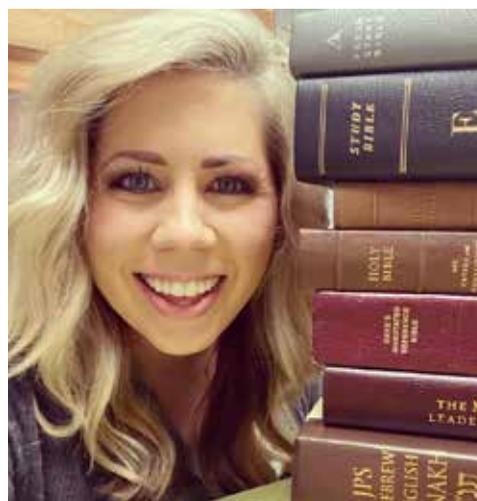
Over the last several years, the Lord has emphasized to Jasmine that "worshipping Him is what we people were created to do. We should worship Him in our jobs, in cleaning our houses, in raising our kids, in driving our cars, and in personal prayer. I think that if my career had taken off when I wanted it to, my life might have become about fame, money, writing ability, and success." She recalls, "one time when I was praying, the Lord spoke to my heart, saying, 'If you never sing professionally, will I still be enough for you?' I sat praying on the floor, stunned, and through tears and anguish told the Lord, 'Yes.' Honestly, I never planned on singing or writing professionally again. I had to learn to worship Him under the Bridge with the homeless and in our little church, and that had to be enough—because He is enough."



Today Jasmine stands back and looks at the goodness of God. The Bible says, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit (John 12:24). "Everything from the Lord must come to a place where it dies so He can bless it, break it, then multiply it. What I see now is that my ambition, pride, and self-centered mentality is what had to die. My dreams of fame died—His glory rose up in its place! My music died and His worship resurrected—to God be the Glory; great things He has done."

Jasmine recalls three more painful experiences: "In March of 2020, a tornado hit Nashville and ripped through the middle of our city. The place under the Jefferson Street Bridge where we serve on Tuesdays was hit directly, and we weren't sure how to move forward. The following week "stay at home orders" were issued, and the COVID-19 pandemic was in full swing. Our world felt more uncertain than ever before. Then, a few days later, we got a call that JonMichael had lost his job of fifteen years in the music industry, and we were shaken to our very core.

"The only thing I knew to do was worship. As He had reminded me years ago, I knew to seek Him and all other things would fall into place (Matthew 6:30). I knew to trust Him and He would direct my path (Proverbs 3:5-6). So, I sat down at the beautiful baby grand piano that my grandmother had given me before she passed away. It was the piano that she and my grandfather sat at and wrote so many inspiring songs. I didn't know what to say, but I touched the keys and the Holy Spirit gave me the words "Peace, peace, be still and know that I am God.



Jasmine is grateful for every step of her journey. She is grateful that she is able to lead God's people in worship to their King and that He loves her enough to change her into the image of His Son, not leaving her in selfishness and sin. She is grateful that God has given her opportunities to speak and sing to the body of Christ in many different churches and at ladies' events across the country.

Jasmine Brady testifies that she has "learned that everything is possible when I seek Him first and His Kingdom; then, everything else falls into place."

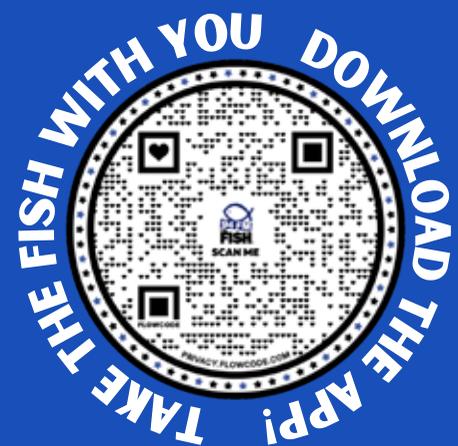
It's a cooperative relationship with her Savior. Truly, it's worship.

— Sheila E. Moss: author of *Living to Matter: Mothers, Singles, and the Weary and Broken; Interrupting Women: Ten Conversations with Jesus; and international publications from teaching Bible and Christian ethics in Africa, Ukraine, and Venezuela; teacher of Bible classes for over 35 years; mother of three daughters and two sons; and grandmother of eleven grandchildren.*



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Be Happy, Be Healthy, Be Whole

A monthly column on diet, exercise and my weight loss journey.



Is summer your favorite season? That answer could depend on how old you are. One report I read says that 20-30 year olds list summer as their favorite season, while the over 50 crowd says it's their least favorite. For me, the challenge of summer is the heat and how that is something I easily use as an excuse to exercise less. So if that's you too, here's three things that can help in your weight loss journey that don't involve sweating.

STOPPING THE MUNCHIES

If the munchies are sabotaging your healthy eating, serve up two eggs daily. It could banish cravings and help you shed pounds. The eggs shut down the production of a hormone that makes you hungry.

HERB IT

If you are trying to lose weight, eat more green stuff. Harvard scientists found that women who upped their intake of produce and herbs by two servings a day were 12 pounds leaner than those who didn't eat their vegetables.

SPICY MUSTARD

To burn more calories without moving a muscle, spread hot mustard on your next sandwich. Studies show hot condiments such as cayenne pepper sauce and mustard temporarily pump up your metabolism, so fat melts away 25 percent faster for up to three hours.

Of course, another big help in weight loss is accountability and NOT going it alone! I attribute my weight loss success to Dr Lodge and the staff at Cool Springs MD. From nutrition counseling to personal trainers and more, you won't have to go it alone with Cool Springs MD. Dr Lodge and his team are ready to help you with their stated goal for everyone to be "Happy, Healthy and Whole"

What has helped you lose weight? Any tips you would like to share? I welcome your feedback, thoughts and ideas and look forward to sharing them in a future article.

— Doug Griffin

You can email me at Doug@94FMTheFish.net or feel free to call me during my live radio show, weekdays between 3 pm – 7 pm on 94 FM The Fish. (800) 826-3637



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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Unifying the Nation

Whether we are building a team, a company, or a family; the blueprint has existed for millennia and was once well known for just as long. It has only been over the last few decades that these truths have been ignored. These rules also apply to every Country on earth. For societies to thrive, the citizens must come together as a cohesive group. The people want to work side by side with their neighbors. As a whole, we uniformly desire peace in our streets and have a shared willingness to co-exists with a manageable level of communal strife.

Today, some question whether we are still building a united Country or are we seeing living evidence of a fractured Nation. Turn on your computer, the television, or read the news; do people seem to be getting along as a society? One might say we are more distant as a society than the pilgrims were to the British.

Think of our Country as a solid beam of wood. Many different elements can cause splinters to form and once they do, with very little additional pressure, they can break off; severing from the strength of larger whole. Once splinters separate from the beam, they can never be re-united into the solid mass. If enough splinters are forced from the beam, the loss of their mass will weaken the integrity of the entire plank of wood. When any Nation's citizens begin to splinter away from the community it is because they feel a disconnect with what the Nation stands for. They peel off, seeking unity by embedding themselves inside groups that they feel has a closer relationship with their purpose or beliefs and values.

Nature gives us the answers to understanding the powers that create or

destroy relationships. There are three connections for a strong relationship; Shared Environment, Shared Purpose, and Shared Beliefs or Values. The Framers of our Constitution laid bare all three; as they professed a great understanding in the natural laws.

“We the people, in order to form a more perfect Union...” “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Later the Pledge of Allegiance would further clarify. "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." As we grow in population, we become more diversified. This diversity can be good, as long as the majority of the people assimilate into what the nation as a whole believes. As an example, we were once a Christian nation; with 75% of the population. When you include Muslims and Jews who worship the same God as the Christian's it was upwards of 88%. Today, the percentage of the United States population who identify as Christian, Muslim, or Jew is below 60%. Our purpose and the values we hold dear matter.

If this is my last post, I want all to know there was only one purpose for all that I have written; to have made a positive difference in the lives of others.

—Anthony “Tony” Boquet, the author of “The Bloodline of Wisdom, The Awakening of a Modern Solutionary”

BUSINESS TODAY

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Together Still Works

There is a lot being written about those who work in offices finally returning to those offices. Many wise companies have evaluated or are in the midst of evaluating their needed “office footprint”. I did this well before the onset of our pandemic challenge due to the expiring of a five year lease. My decision to reduce my office size was purely financial. The timing was right. Proper stewardship demanded it. It was an easy decision at the time.



One truly useful “lens change” that has come out of our COVID experience is our view of work, primarily where it can be done. Roles that heretofore were non-negotiable “onsite” roles have been transitioned to a “hybrid” or even to a full “work at home” option. Technology combined with “necessity” allowed us to think differently.

My question is, “What took us so long?” Why did it take a pandemic to rethink where we work? Steadily increasing commute times should have forced us to do this years ago. We have found efficiencies that I, for one, am unwilling to let go. The cost of the lesson was just too high.

With all great “sea-changes” we must remain aware of what can happen on the “backside of the wave”. We, as leaders, must help our teammates avoid isolation by, in some cases, compelling our team to get together in person. Certainly follow all protocols and guide-lines but a once a week in office “team day” may be a good answer. Some of your teammates may not appreciate it at first.

That’s okay. Leaders are not always meant to be liked but we must always have our team’s best interests at heart.

We are meant to be together, to live “in community”. I realize that if your company is in Chicago and you work in Nashville that running up the road once a week may not be feasible. I also realize that for many of you your current workmates may not comprise the “community” of which you wish to be a part. If this is the case find a new job. You spend a lot of your valuable time interacting with these people. “Not liking them” is not a mature choice nor a solid way to build your “witness”. It certainly isn’t a long-term career builder. In the end just remember we are meant to be together. Together still works.

— Kevin Anderson,
General Manager of
Salem Communications Nashville





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HASSLE FREE ZONE

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3 Ways To Save Time At The Grocery Store



We all know that grocery stores can be incredibly busy, especially during the weekends. So, Molly Maid has put together these simple time-saving tips to help you get in and out of your grocery store with ease.

1. Keep an ongoing shopping list. Making a list of items as you discover you need them

can help ensure that you don't end up short on the essential items and then have to make extra trips. Lists can also help prevent you from overbuying. Bring a pen and cross off the items as you load them in your cart, or use the note application on your smartphone.

2. Pick your route. Knowing the layout of your grocery store can make your shopping a whole lot quicker. Also, if shopping with your spouse or significant other, divide your shopping list between the two of you. If you have kids, leave them at home with supervision and do your shopping solo. Some Moms even recommend heading to the store after the kids are in bed.

3. Shop during off-peak hours. Shopping early to mid-week can be a great

way to avoid crowds at the grocery store. Mornings are a great time to shop if you are able. Shopping late at night is another simple way to avoid lines. If not, waiting until after dinner to do your shopping can help you avoid post-work crowds. If you can't avoid shopping on the weekends, get to the store before noon. If you have to make multiple trips to the grocery store, try going on your lunch-hour and keep a cooler in your vehicle to keep items cold when you head back into work.

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— Ashley Farrar

MS. MOLLY FOUNDATION

A portion of Molly Maid's sales support victims of domestic violence in the communities we serve. To date, Ms. Molly has proudly raised more than \$3 million – and we are not slowing down! This non-profit organization aims to increase public awareness of domestic violence and to provide victims with support. We believe everyone deserves to feel safe in their homes. The Ms. Molly Foundation strives to empower communities to end the cycle of violence in the home. It's our goal to help give victims of domestic violence a second chance at happiness.

MIGHTY MEN

Good Deeds Honor God

We are told in Scripture that God's Word will never return void. Acts of kindness by us will honor Jesus. He made it plain that we honor Him by doing for others; even to the least in our circle of influence. Also, The Lord Jesus told us that only God is Good. So, our expressions of "good" are subjective. God is The Absolute Goodness.

Whether we are aware or not...each day we make impressions on others; good, so/so...or not so good. We have the power of choice in making an effort. This month I want to reminisce about a friend whose legacy still impacts my life even though he passed away several years ago.

Many in Middle Tennessee, especially we senior citizens, probably either met or heard stories about Tommy Martin of Murfreesboro. He became a legend. Whether in business, church or community circles, he was affectively called "Mr. Murfreesboro"; all because of his kind and gentle personality, his love for The Lord and the way he was always looking for opportunities to help others by doing "good".

A successful insurance agent, he was one of the most positive people I have ever known. The glass was always half-full and every cloud had a silver lining. Every day to him was like Christmas...and

every meal was a feast. He would give thanks and recognition to God when reminding others that the sun always shines. It depends on a person's altitude. In Tommy's mind... attitude determines altitude.

Being a friend, I always enjoyed hearing his stories about how God had blessed him beyond Tommy's wildest imagination. He was reared in modest means growing up in Athens, Alabama. He made his way to Murfreesboro to manage a supermarket which led to later becoming an insurance agent.

One story in particular I liked...and there were many... is while driving to an appointment one day, he spotted a lady stranded on side of the road. This was before Interstate 24 was completed... and Highway 41 was noted as The Dixie Highway; route from Chicago to Miami. Tommy stopped and offered to help. A little reluctant to accept a kind offer from a stranger, she almost brushed him off. But he persisted in wanting to help. Tommy's sweet and charming personality obviously showed through because she accepted the help.

The problem was solved, although I don't remember what the automotive issue was at that time.



Tommy Martin was honored by Middle Tennessee State University with a Chair of Insurance in his name where millions have been raised for teaching insurance principles.

Keep in mind that Tommy always had pencils or other advertisements in his coat pockets promoting his agency. At any rate the damsel in distress turned out to be an heiress of the Mars Candy Company, traveling south, presumably to Florida.

She later remembered Tommy, and purchased his first \$1,000,000 life insurance policy. He went on to become a record-setting insurance agent for the next 50 years and was recognized as one of the company's all-time Legends.

As Christians, we are reminded that everyone needs The Lord. Sometimes mission opportunities are in our backyard...in addition to thousands of miles on the other side of the world.

I learned many valuable lessons from my late friend Tommy Martin. One lesson in particular: Ask am I serious about serving The Lord? Or am I satisfied; content to just meander through life thinking only about myself? Maybe each of us could ask that question every day. Tommy Martin did.

— Ralph E. Vaughn

BODY & SOUL

Structuring Your Health Like Jesus



What do you usually think of what you think of someone being healthy?

- Huge muscles
- Super lean
- Goes to the gym a lot
- Eats chicken and broccoli
- Lots of energy

Most people define health as what someone does/looks like on the OUTSIDE. Even if we don't mean to. Think about someone who you view as healthy. The Rock, Thor, Captain America... But the example that Jesus set for us was WAY different. We don't know exactly what he looked like. The Bible says He looked just like a normal man. There was nothing special about His appearance. But it didn't matter. Because healthy to Jesus wasn't about appearances and outward "actions" like everything was with the Pharisees. It was all about how He could be available and able to do everything the Father had for Him to do.

He rarely even talked about His physical body and its needs. It was usually the disciples that were

worried about all that. His main sustenance was to be able to do the things that the Father was leading him to do. Most of the time He had to put his body under submission and used it as the vehicle that it was to accomplish the things He had to do while on the earth. And boy did He accomplish them! As long as his physical body empowered him to do those things, He was good.

We don't know exactly how "fit" Jesus was, but we do know that He was a carpenter and that He traveled all over the region. That was a ton of walking and you would have had to be in pretty decent shape to move that much on a consistent basis. He didn't let his body have a hold on Him. Things like food, movement, rest etc... were just a means to be able to further the kingdom He was establishing in the hearts of men. If He hadn't taken care of himself and stewarded His body he would not have been able to accomplish and fulfill all He came to do. And for those of us who are followers of Jesus today, we wouldn't have our faith.

He was fully God and fully man. And still, He was a good steward of the body that would be broken and bruised for us.

2 Quick Lessons:

1. We let "health" be a burden to us rather than a vehicle. Health has become a burden instead of a life-giving resource that allows us to fully have the impact we are called to have. Use your body and health as a testimony and asset that allows us to fully serve God unhindered.

2. Being healthy is all about what YOU are called to do. Being able to use YOUR body to accomplish your calling in life. If having muscles and looking good come with that, GREAT! But those things are secondary, keep the primary things primary just like Jesus did. Structure your health based on what you need to be able to do to further the kingdom through your life. If it's climbing mountains to go do missions, Awesome! If it's staying loose and agile to be able to work at a desk, that's GREAT too. No matter what our calling is, we are called to steward the one and only body we get in this life.

— Ashton Tate | CEO, Glory To Glory Fitness
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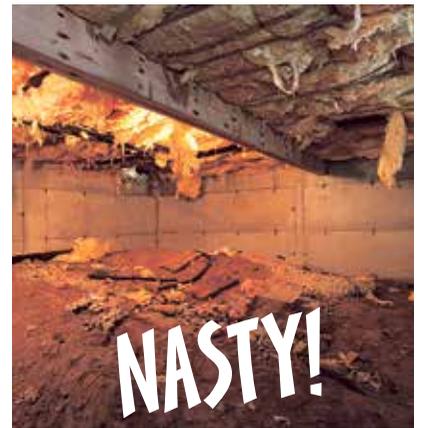
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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

GOD'S PLAN FOR SERVICE

The Devil Prowls

Did you know THE DEVIL PROWLs? 1 Peter 5 tells us about the devil prowling beginning in verse 6 which reads:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He might lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.



While we were created in the image of God, our human nature means that we are tempted to sin continually and, as a result, none of us is without sin (Proverbs 20:9, John 8:7). Since the time of Adam, man has been sinful. However, that does not mean we should just accept our sinfulness. We are offered forgiveness of our many sins if we but ask for forgiveness through the grace of God (Acts 2:38).

But let's go back to this Devil mentioned in 1 Peter 5:6-9. Why does the devil prowl? A prowl suggests a desire to be undetected. As a result, we make bad decisions thinking we did it all on our own without realizing the role of the devil in suggesting sinful behavior. We must know our Bible well enough to detect the difference between sinful behavior and God inspired behavior. When we know the difference and sinful options are put before us, our conscience will tell us the difference. But our conscience does not control the choice we make. The sinful behavior might look very attractive at the moment and all of us are capable of rationalizing which means finding numerous excuses for engaging in the bad behavior. The devil is very skillful in helping us find rationalizations. When we fall for the rationalization, it means the devil has been successful in his prowling around. The devil got you.

Now you might reason, this isn't me. I have not robbed a liquor store or committed any other crime so I have eluded the devil all day today. But think of the moment in which you were angry with someone or thing. Consider the remark you made that would not be considered kind or the commitment you made and did not keep. What was going on in your head during those events? Were you talking with the devil or not being on guard and thus letting the devil get too close to you? Where was God in your thinking when these thoughts entered your mind? What was your attitude like toward others, toward God and toward yourself?

The devil is never far away and is watching for the right moment to strike. What is the devil telling you right now? He might be saying, 'I don't prowl. I'm your friend. I just want you to have a good time.' Then if your "good time" gets you in trouble, what does the devil do? Listen to him laugh because you fell for it.

While you consider yourself a wonderful person, are there times when your guard is let down so that the devil might strike? Think about how to keep that guard up. Part of that is avoiding places where you will be tempted and avoiding the people whose influence on you is negative. The devil is on the prowl as we saw in 1 Peter 5. Don't let him get you.

Kenneth Oosting, Ph D

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OUR HOUSE

Why Is My Air Conditioner Making Noise?

After a spell in the sweltering sun, there's nothing like relaxing in the comfort of your cool, air conditioned home. But every now then, your HVAC system may start to make unseemly noises. We're not talking about the garden variety HVAC noise that comes with healthy functionality, but unusual noises that are cause for concern. When this happens, you can trust the HVAC pros at Lee Company to diagnose, repair, or replace the source of the problem.

Common HVAC noises (and what they mean)

- **HVAC noise #1: squealing or screeching**

The most common culprit of a squealing air conditioner is the fan belt in the blower. When you're experiencing this unseemly sound, it usually means that either the fan belt either needs to be replaced or the motor needs to be lubricated. These issues can be quickly handled by an HVAC technician.

- **HVAC noise #2: pulsating or "thwapping" noise**

If your air conditioner is making a pulsating noise (aka "thwapping"), it often means that an object is obstructing the fan. This is most likely the case if the sound comes and goes with the airflow. However, if the noise is audible from inside the home, the vibration may be caused by a loose part or panel. If this situation is left unattended, it can cause a substantial amount of wear and tear on your AC unit.

- **HVAC noise #3: rattling, buzzing, or banging**

If your air conditioner is making a rattling, buzzing, or banging sound, it is very likely that something is loose or broken. These types of HVAC noises can also mean that your unit's compressor is failing. If you're experiencing



any one of these sounds, we recommend that you shut your air conditioning system off until a qualified technician can conduct a full HVAC inspection.

- **HVAC noise #4: high-pitched whistling**

If a high-pitched whistling or screaming sound is coming from your AC unit you should shut off the power to the unit on your circuit

breaker immediately. This sound is typically associated with the compressor or refrigerant pressure. Contact our expert HVAC technicians immediately if your home's air conditioner is making this type of sound.

- **HVAC noise #5: hissing**

This type of sound could be coming from the compressor or a leaking air duct. If it's from the compressor you should switch the unit off and call a technician immediately. If the hissing is coming from a leak in your air ducts, it will need to be serviced but it isn't an emergency.

Routine HVAC maintenance is important

The HVAC noises mentioned are largely avoidable when you schedule annual HVAC inspections. HVAC maintenance is essential in making sure everything runs smoothly. Reducing the noise coming from your home's air conditioning system may require cleaning fan blades, lubricating bearings, isolating your compressor, removing clogs, or clearing your drains. If you'd like more information, visit us at leecompany.com today!

— Lee Company team



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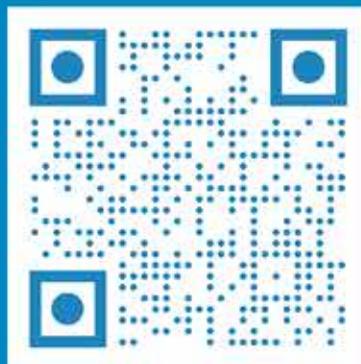




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Clothes Dryer Vent Safety Tips

Jack Rabbit Clean Choices (JRCC) is a local service that provides professional industrial grade specialty cleaning for BBQ Grills, Dryer Vents, and more, visit www.jackrabbitcleanchoices.com & www.bar-b-clean.com/nashville for details. Marc, the owner emphasizes that JRCC exists to help extend the life of BBQ GRILLS and DRYERS by keeping them clean and operationally safer.



Annual cleaning helps the dryer operate cooler, safer and last longer. Please share these tips with friends and family:

1. Dryers and vents should be professionally installed and serviced.
2. Clean lint filter and remove lint around the drum after each use.
3. Rigid or metal venting assures the right air flow and drying times.
4. Have a professional inspect the vent for air flow (remove lint, nests, dead rodents, birds, etc. they will heat up and light up).
5. Ensure outside vent flap opens when dryer is on.
6. Don't overload the dryer, use manufacturer's instructions.
7. Turn the dryer off when going to bed or leaving home.
8. Things that can burn easily like cardboard, flammable clothing, cleaning supplies etc. should be kept away from the dryer.
9. If you have a question, call us for our opinion and experience.

What else do we do? We professionally clean BBQ grills and carefully protect your patio. The grill like the Dryer Vent is about the flame. Professionally cleaned grills have better flames, safer cleaner surfaces, and amazing BBQ results for your family and guest. Our process and training places emphasis on industrial grade cleaning and protecting patios.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Schedule your next dryer vent cleaning - lets reduce fire hazards, utility bills and extend the life of your dryer.
2. Schedule your next Grill cleaning and let us refurbish the BBQ Grill - We remove rodent buffet carcinogens using special scrapers and power brushes. We clear the flame holes, remove grease/grime so the grill operates safer.
3. Extend the life of the grill and create amazing BBQ results - Metal last, utilizing industrial grade processes helps control rust and corrosion.
4. Remember it is all about the flame. Reduce the chance of fire in your dryer vent (visit u-tube dryer vent fires) and create the right cooking flame in the BBQ grill. Flames from grease, grime, rodents and carcinogens that may have been a part of old food particles is not the result you want.
5. Value pricing - Ask Marc about bundled pricing.
6. Gifting is an opportunity - Gift a professional dryer vent and or BBQ grill cleaning to a father, mother, friend, relative, or other person for whom you have found it difficult to find that right gift.

— Marc Tepner, 615-594-9052. Marc is owner operator of www.jackrabbitcleanchoices.com which includes www.bar-b-clean.com/nashville. Marc is a graduate of Abilene Christian University and brings a wealth of customer care experience from his time with Bridgestone, Schokolad Chocolate Factory, Greener Solutions Lawn and Yard, and more. Marc is energized by his amazing wife Elise, son Cole, their Church and Life Group Family.



KIDS KORNER

Erasing Sin

BIBLE TRUTH

God's forgiveness erases our sin.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

Matthew 18:21-22

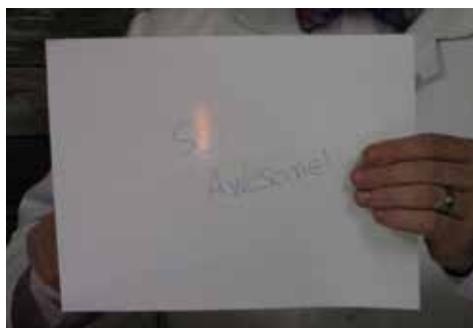
Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

HANDS-ON EXPERIMENT

Hot Ink

INGREDIENTS

- Sheet of Paper
- Pilot FriXion Erasable Pen
- Hair Dryer



INSTRUCTIONS

- STEP 1: Using the erasable pen, write a message on the sheet of paper.
- STEP 2: Holding the sheet of paper, between your fingers, apply heat, with the hair dryer, and observe.

EXPLANATION

The Pilot FriXion erasable pen contains a heat sensitive ink, when exposed to heat, the ink turns clear.

BIBLE CONNECTION

Just as the heat causes the erasable pen ink to disappear, God's forgiveness cause our sin to disappear

— Jason Lindsey
Hooked On Science | STEM Certified Educator, Science Multimedia Journalist, Host, and Freelance Meteorologist EMAIL: jlindsey@hookedonscience.org



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Concrete and Summer Months



In the summer months, a lot can happen to the concrete in and around our homes. And with more people out and about, concrete issues might feel more noticeable – and more annoying. From a sunken sidewalk slab to a cracked concrete driveway, the climate of the region has a direct impact on the soil and, ultimately, the concrete on top of it.

It's not uncommon for many regions to experience a lot of moisture in the early summer months. The rain saturates the soil and can soften it, making concrete slabs sink. Rain and water can also wash away the dirt under and around concrete. This erodes the support underneath the concrete, causing it to crack and drop.

Dry weather and the hot summer sun can also dry out the soil around your home. As the moisture in the soil evaporates, the dirt shrinks – or takes up

less space – impacting the stability underneath the concrete. Much like when dirt is washed away, the lack of support can cause the concrete to crack and fall. While it may only drop a few inches or centimeters, it can dramatically impact the safety and quality of life for those who walk on it.

While weather patterns might feel like a never-ending cycle of concrete problems, there are simple and permanent fixes. Our company has helped countless homeowners by lifting their sunken sidewalk slab, repaired their cracked driveway and, ultimately, restored their curb appeal and safety around their home. Contact us today for a free, no-obligation inspection.

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The Secret to Perfect Relationships



The one you love is going to hurt you. I know it's disappointing, because no one wants to be hurt by the one they love. But it's going to happen. Not because they're a bad person, but simply because they are human. Humans are flawed, have a propensity to think of themselves before others, and make mistakes. Scripture reminds us "There is no one righteous, no not one" and "all have sinned and fallen short." The one you love is going to hurt you.

Avoiding hurt in relationships is a hopeless proposition. The secret is that it's not about avoiding hurt. It is about knowing what to do when you are hurt. God knows all about being hurt by the one you love. He loves you. He loves me. He knows we have, and will continue, to fall short and hurt him. We hurt him by all the ways we choose ourselves over him, just like we hurt each other in relationship. But that doesn't stop him from loving us. What's more, he chooses the suffering of being hurt by the ones he loves rather than be without our love.

We hurt the ones we love in the same way our sin hurts God. He says our sin separates us from him. We know this is true from our own relationships with each other. When the one you love hurts you, you feel separated from them. There is a break or at least a fault in the relationship.

So, what do you do when the one you love is going to hurt you? The answer lies in this truth: Relationship wounds are healed in relationship. We long for the one who hurt us to redeem us. We want the guilty party to make us right again. Unfortunately, our flawed nature often turns to blame and accusation rather than repair and reconciliation. However, God, the example of perfect love, does something very different with us.

When God could have demanded for us as the guilty party to go first to make things right, he chose to go first. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God embraced his suffering instead of rejecting it. He went first to restore our relationship. And he calls us to follow his example with each other. True repair requires our longing to reconcile to be more important than our desire to blame. God's path to repair is this: love first, accountability second. In repair, we affirm our love before, during, and after accountability. Repair affirms my true importance to the one who hurt me. Leaning toward the one that hurt me reaffirms that, despite their mistake, they are still loved. As we grow, we learn the areas we injure each other. The perfect relationship is one where we protect the one we love from our weaknesses, and then repair well when we fail.

The one you love is going to hurt you. But that's okay. Because you love them. And they love you. So, pursue the perfection of relationship- in injury, repair, and joy. All it takes is some hard work. So lean in. Take a risk. Get help if you need it. Love is worth it.

For help in working through the process of repair in marriage, consider attending our 2 day workshop Created for Connection on September 25 & 26, 2021. Go to inrelationship.us/workshops for more information.

— Aron Strong, LMFT, is the director of Pathways Counseling in Murfreesboro and the co-founder of inRelationship, a company which offers marriage workshops, online courses, and a podcast.



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PLAN OF SALVATION

Has something in the magazine or something you have discussed with someone or some thoughts that you have had or something that you have heard, brought you to a point of realizing that you want and need to know Christ in the truest and personal sense?

If so, below is a simple outline for someone of any age who is not a Believer to act on their desire to accept Jesus Christ into their heart as their Savior.

God's Plan of Salvation

God created us to honor and serve Him

Revelation 4:11: "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist[b] and were created

Each of us has sinned against God

Romans 3:10: As it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one"
Romans 3:23: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God and Heaven

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Good works cannot ever earn God's forgiveness and Salvation

Titus 3:5: not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

God loves each of us

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place, paying the penalty for our sin
Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

We each must accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior

Romans 10:9: that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:13: For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

To accept Christ into your heart and life, pray a simple prayer along these lines - "Dear God, I know that I am a sinner and I am sorry for my sins. I know that Jesus died for my sins and the sins of the world. Right now, I ask Jesus into my heart and receive Him as my personal Savior. Forgive me of my sins, thank you for saving me through the blood of Jesus. Please Lord, help me live for you. In Jesus name, amen."

All scriptures are taken from The New King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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