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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

Celebrating the REAL Reason For The Season

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Luke 2:1 – 14, King James Version

Albeit an unusual Christmas season this year, it does provide another opportunity to focus our hearts and minds on Jesus and "be still and know that He is God." Set aside the overwhelming events of this year. Get your family together and read the Christmas Story from the Bible. Celebrate the true meaning of Christmas – the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Nashville Christian Family wishes for you and yours a Blessed, Peaceful and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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Sean Dietrich's stories of the South have earned him the moniker of "Sean of the South" and gained him loyal followers who love his heartfelt wisdom and inspiration built on a foundation of faith. See page 16.

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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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MIRACLE MOMENTS

Happy Birthday, Jesus!

It has been said that Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year, and rightly so. We celebrate our Savior's birth. This is also the time of the year when we allow ourselves to believe in miracles and open our hearts to impossibilities. I have to agree, this is a wonderful time of the year! Although, as Christians, we get to celebrate Jesus everyday – not just December 25. And in celebrating, we get to be awed by what this simple carpenter did when He came to earth.

Jesus' birth was the fulfillment of many prophecies that God ordained in order to have a relationship with mankind. Jesus was God in the flesh. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Jesus was the express image of God. The verse goes on to say that once Jesus purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Remember, this was all motivated by God's love for mankind. Jesus also told his disciples, "That if you see him, you have seen God". (John 14:9).

As a man, Jesus walked on earth and yet as God's son, he walked on water. He knew what it was like to be ignored, beaten and tempted, and yet, he also knew how to draw close to God. As a result, he could forgive, love, and live a perfect life. Jesus experienced how to be perfectly man and perfectly God.

We cannot fully celebrate the birth of Jesus without also celebrating his death and resurrection. When Jesus died on the cross, he made a way for us to live as Christ. It was the great exchange! He took our sins, sickness, and poverty and exchanged it for his righteousness, love, and eternal life! (I Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:5). Our time now on this side of Heaven should be spent renewing our minds and acknowledging all the wonderful gifts that Jesus has given us. In addition, we get to celebrate his birth!

Thank you God that you loved us so much that you sent the wonderful gift of Jesus so that we could live a victorious life on earth and spend eternity with you in heaven Thank you that you are love and everything you do for us is motivated by love. Merry Christmas Jesus and Happy Birthday! We celebrate you every day!

If you desire to know more about the gift of salvation or eternal life, feel free to reach out to me: rhondalsmart@gmail.com. Merry Christmas!

— Rhonda L. Smart



SPECIAL FEATURE

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Hugs For the Holidays

As we enter the Christmas holiday season, we share extra hugs for comfort, reassurance and hope looking forward to a new year. We look forward to Mom's pecan pie, the smell of a fresh tree to be decorated, gifts to share with others, snow on the ground, and staying up late to ring in the New Year. Fond memories of years gone by continue to flood our minds as we look toward the end of 2020. This year has thrown us many curves along the way, and families are struggling with the isolation this pandemic has caused. Families who have loved ones in communities are unable to spend time with them, and family gatherings are being down sized or moved to next year. People hope for a better time and the desire to see their family together again.

We all need hope. That's why Hugs for The Holidays a state-wide project, that is now being activated in several states, as well as Canada, began through a meeting over coffee and is now spearheaded by members of the Tennessee Caregivers for Compromise, a caregiver advocacy group on Facebook, that is working to help reduce barriers of isolation. We cannot always remove those barriers, but we want to be able to show support and hope to open up lines of communication in support of families.

In recent studies, social isolation significantly increased a person's risk of premature death from all causes, a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity. Social isolation was associated with about a 50% percent increased risk of dementia, per a recent report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (MASEM), <https://doi.org/10.17226/25663>.

How can you get involved? Families who will be away from their loved ones are asked to display bright pink ribbons around a tree, mailboxes, porch rails or other outside visible locations on their property. As people see bright pink ribbons, we want everyone to realize the ribbon represents family members who will be unable to see or hug their loved ones this holiday season. In addition, we are asking our communities to be involved and show Bright Pink ribbons at their homes, their businesses, churches, or automobiles. Simple in nature but this gesture brings strength and comfort to those needing support and encouragement.

The bright pink color was chosen to stand out among the typical holiday color décor. People are encouraged to purchase their hot pink ribbons at local florists, craft, or discount stores, both online and brick-and-mortar locations. For more information, contact Caregivers4CompromiseTN@gmail.com or the Facebook group—facebook.com/groups/TNCaregiversforCompromise.

— Theresa Law

Remembering Families We Served

Each year our funeral homes honor families we have served by hand painting an ornament and displaying them on Christmas trees in our lobbies. The ornaments are hung with care and know that with each name there are families in need for comfort during the holiday season. In addition to the ornaments, in years past, Williamson Memorial and Spring Hill Memorial have had a Candlelight Memorial Service to remember the families. Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these services cannot be held this year.

Why do we want to stir up old memories for someone grieving??? The answer is easy, we want families to know that not only are we here during your time of need but we know that the holidays will be a difficult time to bear. Holidays can create feelings of dread and anxiety in those who are bereaved. How does one celebrate the holidays when a loved one is so sorely missed? Creating new rituals and new traditions that pay tribute to the memory of their loved one is one way to survive...perhaps even embrace the holidays when a loved one has died.

We have a few suggestions for coping with grief during the holidays in addition to lighting a candle at a memorial service.

- 1.** Have a family meeting...list the things you ordinarily do for the holidays (sending greeting cards, decorating the house, holiday baking, going to parties, etc.) then decide what's important to each of you.
- 2.** Do some things differently this year...trying to recreate the past may remind you all the more that your loved one is missing. This year, try celebrating the holidays in a completely different way. Hang a stocking in your loved one's memory and have each family member to express their thoughts and feelings by writing a note then placing in stocking.
- 3.** Do other things more simply...you do not have to discard all your old traditions forevermore, but you can choose to observe the holidays on a smaller scale this year.
- 4.** Just do it...we all know that we should think positively, eat right, exercise more, and get enough rest but grief by its very nature robs us of the energy we need to do all those good and healthy things. Don't wait until you feel like doing it. Just do it!
- 5.** Expect to feel pain...plan on feeling sad at certain moments throughout the season and let the feelings come. Have faith that you'll get through this and that you will survive.
- 6.** Seek support from others. Grieving is hard work and it shouldn't be done alone. You need to share your experience with someone that understands and accepts the pain of your loss.
- 7.** Take good care of yourself...build time in your day to relax, even if you are having trouble sleeping. Get some daily exercise, even if it's just a walk around the block.



8. Pay attention to yourself...notice what you're feeling and what it is you need. It's okay to ask for what you need. Besides, doing a favor for you during the holidays may make someone else feel better too. Be patient and gentle with yourself and with others as well.

9. Give something of yourself to others... As alone as you may feel in your grief, one of the most healing things you can do for yourself is to be with other people, especially during the holidays. Caring for and giving to others will nourish and sustain you, and help you to feel better about yourself. If you can bring yourself to do

so, visit someone in a nursing home, volunteer your time at your church or at the local humane society. Do whatever you can and let it be enough.

On behalf of our family and staff of Williamson Memorial Funeral Home & Cremation Services and Spring Hill Memorial Park, Funeral Home & Cremation Services, we want to wish each of you a blessed holiday season.

— The Stephens Family



Standing: Chris and David Stephens
Seated: Casey and Pam Stephens and Mandi Marlin

SPECIAL FEATURE

Tis the Season to Reflect

Giving back is at the heart of who we are.

We use that phrase a lot around Lee Company. The good news is, we believe it. It's more than who we are; it's woven deep within our culture. If someone would have told us at the beginning of 2020 what the year would look like, would we have believed it? Probably not. But nevertheless, 2020 revealed itself in full swing.

What did it reveal exactly?

We've seen blessings in the midst of uncertainty and despair. We've seen teachers, first responders, and our medical community rise and tackle the many changes that the world offered this year. We've seen tradesmen and tradeswomen bravely keep this nation running. We've seen all sorts of essential workers show up each and every day, taking care of others, and being willing to adapt in an ever-changing world.

2020 revealed how creative our world can be.

We're grateful 2020 showed us that we, and our communities, are innovative. When classroom doors closed, people started teaching online. When restaurants couldn't remain open, to-go orders started trending. People volunteered to drop off prescriptions so those who were quarantined wouldn't need to leave their house, care packages were delivered, phone calls were made, musical instruments were learned, puzzles were put together, families went for afternoon walks.

2020 has been quite a year, but it's opened our eyes to the tenacity, compas-

sion, and innovation we all can offer. As we reflect on this year and celebrate in this season, our hope is that you recognize how we all came together in adversity.

Through all this year's reflections, most of all, we're grateful for you. Thank you for continuing to trust us to help take care of your homes and businesses. We are honored and delighted to be part of our communities, and your lives. Thank you and Merry Christmas. From your Lee Company family.

— Karol Hernandez, Director of Marketing and Communications,
Bree Barnett, Communications Specialist - Lee Company, leecompany.com



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Growth in Turmoil- With The Three “Rs”

Tumultuous. I cannot think of a better word to describe our current time in history. To say otherwise would be denying reality. It's a time when I hear a lot I hear a lot of “what ifs” being thrown around. I see many of my fellow brothers and sisters, those who I know know better, wandering into conversations that neither glorify nor edify. This only serves to create even more waves. While I cannot quiet the seas of the world I can call on my Savior to quiet the one raging in my heart.



Second, understand that we, as Believers, are in a constant state of **refinement**. When metal is heated the impurities separate out. Removing the impurities makes metal and me more useful for our designed purpose. Use this time for refinement avoiding allowing the current challenges to define you.

I am reminded of three “Rs” that would seem to serve me well in this time. First when confronted with conversations about the state of the union, the state of our world or that dreaded word, “politics” I try to **redirect** to what my Lord says in His Word and what I think He may be up to. Unfortunately I am naturally argumentative. This is really hard for me. I have to remind myself that anything that isn't in line with the Word is opinion and many opinions, especially my own, are based on what someone else has determined are “facts”. Be warned. The enemy is the author of lies and he is really good at his job. Redirect to the Truth of the Word. Avoid the “talking points” from the media at all costs.

Third regardless of where I am my Lord is seeking to **renew** his relationship with me. He is prepared to go deeper thereby creating a “richer life” at any given time. Now would be a great time for that. Growth in the midst of turmoil is not only possible, it's expected. Don't waste this time.

Merry Christmas!

— Kevin Anderson is the General Manager of 94 FM The Fish, Nashville's home for Christmas Music – 94fmthefish.com

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The Twelve Days of Christmas

If asked when and what are the 12 days of Christmas, most people would tell you it's the days leading up to Christmas. When someone mentions "The 12 Days of Christmas" the song is the first thing that comes to mind. The 12 days actually lead up to Epiphany, which is January 6th.

Most western traditions count Christmas Day, which would place January 5th as the 12th Day of Christmas. In some traditions the first day of Christmas begins on the evening of December 25th with the following day (December 26) being considered the First Day of Christmas. In this case, January 6th (Epiphany) would be the 12th Day of Christmas.

Observed on January 6th, the Epiphany is a celebration of the three miracles that manifest the divinity of Christ. The name "Epiphany" comes from the Greek word Epiphania, and means "to show, make known, or reveal." The celebration originated in the Eastern Church in AD 361 as a commemoration of the birth of Christ. Later, additional meanings were added, the visit of the three Magi, Christ's baptism in the Jordan River, and his first miracle at the wedding in Cana. These three events are central to the definition of Epiphany.

Legend tells us the song has a deeper meaning than the words tell us. Some say the song was written by English Jesuits in the 16th century. Each "gift" represents a tenet of the Christian faith.

My True Love = God. Each day is an aspect of the Christian faith that we should learn.

- 1 Partridge in a pear tree = Jesus Christ, the Son of God
- 2 Turtledoves = the Old and New Testaments
- 3 French hens = the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity
- 4 Calling birds = the four gospels, Matthew Mark Luke & John
- 5 Golden rings = the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch)
- 6 Geese a-laying = the six days of creation
- 7 Swans a-swimming = the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 8 Maids a-milking = the Eight Beatitudes
- 9 Ladies dancing = the nine fruits of the Spirit



- 10 Lords a-leaping = the Ten Commandments
- 11 Pipers piping = the 11 faithful disciples (minus Judas, who betrayed Christ)
- 12 Drummers drumming = the 12 points of doctrine in the Apostles' Creed

Although there is no hard evidence to prove the accuracy of this, does it really matter?

It seems the commercial aspects of "winter holidays" have become more prominent and we compact "CHRIST MASS" into one day. When I was a child, our Christmas tree didn't get displayed until a week before Christmas, but it stayed until after the first of the year. Now, it's not uncommon to see trees by the roadside on December 26th. (at least what few live trees we see now).

Even though December 25th is celebrated as Christmas in most cultures, January 6th is often the day for giving gifts. In some places it is traditional to give Christmas gifts for each of the Twelve Days of Christmas. Since Eastern Orthodox traditions use a different religious calendar, they celebrate Christmas on January 7th and observe Epiphany on January 19th. So, although most children think Santa

has to visit all the children on Christmas Eve, he actually has a few more days to complete his rounds!

This year, consider keeping the decorations up a little longer. Instead of just celebrating Christmas Day, use the entire season, from Advent to Epiphany to teach your children more about our Christian faith.

Begin with an Advent calendar. Advent is a time of spiritual preparation, the anticipation of Christ. Then, use the song as a tool to teach our children about Epiphany. Save a gift to open on January 6th. Use scriptures that explain each "gift" in the song.

— Durward Blanks is a professional Santa/St. Nicholas, speaker and life/relationship coach. For more information, you can contact him at 615.543.8728 or DurBlanks@gmail.com Facebook: The Woodlands Santa or Durward Blanks.

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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

A Path Beyond the Storm – a Post-Election Reflection

As the storm of perhaps the most polarizing election in our nation's history begins to wane, in its wake we are left with the wreckage of hyperpolarization and distrust among fellow Americans.

What have we become as people in this, the greatest country on earth? We are so hyperpolarized that we see only our differences rather than what we have in common. One only needs to look at the lives that have been so tragically lost during this pandemic to realize how much our focus has been placed on politics and ideology rather than the medical issue itself and human suffering.

How did we get here?

In his book, *Why We're Polarized*, Ezra Klein explains that the polarization is a result of the alignment of multiple identities, exacerbated by the media that deliberately takes advantage of our emotional, reactive and irrational selves.

Where should we go from here?

A journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step. The first step in overcoming polarization is to find common ground. Common ground is the cornerstone of resolving conflicts. More than simply a compromise, it generates a new vision of shared interests and values, discovered through collaboration.

Common ground gives us the best opportunity to identify and avoid the manipulation of our emotional selves by those who benefit from increasing our division. It allows us to focus on information and rational analysis rather than raw emotions and impulsive reactions.

Common ground reminds us that we all have a shared humanity on Spaceship Earth. Our opinions may differ, but we are not enemies. We need to separate the position from the person and policy from value in order to have more civil discourse. The Bible backs this up: "Treat your neighbor as you want to be treated yourself."

As a young man, I escaped China's Cultural Revolution, during which millions of youths were deported to labor camps for life without reason. I have come to appreciate the freedom and mutual respect we enjoy here in America, exemplified beautifully by this famous saying, "I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to my death your right to say it." Common ground allows us to stand in the shoes of others, and look at issues from their perspectives. We need to learn to speak in the language of the listener, since doing so will lead to greater understanding and empathy towards each other.



Each of us has a limited life experience and therefore, limited viewpoints. When we get along with someone who

has dissimilar views based on a different life experience, we learn and grow as individuals. In fact, we learn the most when we communicate with people who have views opposite our own!

Through a genuine, productive process of finding common ground, we will be inspired to change and become better human beings who are more willing to work cohesively with others. This is the key to navigating these tumultuous times and achieving the goal of America's motto: "E Pluribus Unum" (Out of many, one).

— Dr. Ming Wang, Harvard & MIT (MD, magna cum laude); PhD can be reached by email: drwang@wangvision-institute.com, or on his website:

www.drmingwang.com. He is a co-founder of the 501c(3) non-profit Common Ground Network (www.commonground.network), which is currently publishing *Common Ground Bible Study*, the first book of its kind about the concept of common ground for Christians.



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Be Happy Be Healthy Be Whole

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

It's the most wonderful time of the year – and now – let's talk about weight loss. Tough transition isn't it? You know, all of us need a cheat day, every now and then, during dieting – and it just so happens that this month has a lot of them.

But for the days, we aren't cheating – here's a few things to remember to help you avoid the glut-tony and the guilt that follows.

- Before you eat, ask yourself if you are truly hungry. If not, do something else. If you're bored, take a walk or exercise.
- Eat slowly, socialize and enjoy when you eat.
- Remember, all foods can fit, but moderation is the key.
- Be realistic: if you eat a lot of snacks, the following meal should be lighter.
- Focus on family and friends, not on the menu.
- Take a daily walk to burn calories and reduce stress.



- Modify recipes to be more healthy.
- Take small portions of food; wait before you go back for seconds.
- Remember, you are in control.

And with that, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and remember, if you need help on your weight loss journey, connect with the professionals that help me, Dr. Lodge and the staff at Cool Springs MD.

This monthly column is a two-way street. I would love to hear from you. 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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Planning for When You Cannot Perform

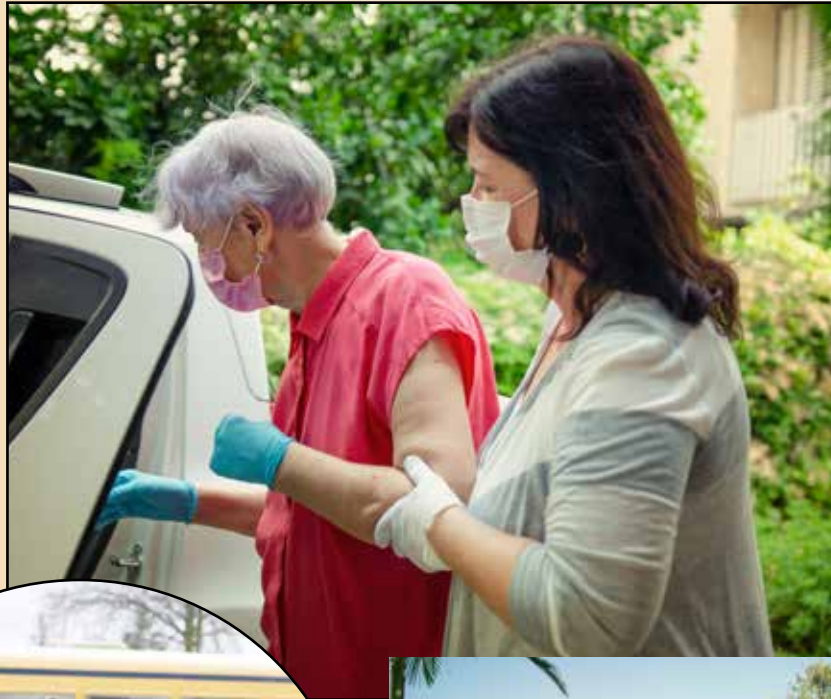
Caregivers are facing unprecedented challenges during this pandemic. As the holidays approach, staying centered can be a struggle, particularly when family dynamics can be strenuous. Caregiver health should be approached with the same sense of importance as other critical issues. But if there is one bright spot in this moment, it is that people are talking about caregiving more than ever before. This is our moment for action, for advocacy, and for planning for the future.

There are many parents and grandparents who serve as the caregiver for a child or grandchild who is living with special needs, mental health issues, physical impairments, or intellectual disabilities. They love their family, but this is not what they thought their life would be. The constant strain, the immense tiredness, and the feelings of being overwhelmed can be all-consuming. Jane tells her story like this. She became the caregiver for her grandson, Donnie, when he was just five years old. Donnie does not remember his parents, Jane's daughter and son-in-law. They abandoned Donnie when he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Through the years, Jane has done an exceptional job of caring for Donnie and giving him the best life, she could. Yet, she sees that she will not be able to keep up the pace, especially as Donnie grows. The sheer weight of Donnie's body, as she lifts him into her arms to move him from one place to another throughout the day is getting too much for her frail, 87-year-old body.

Then, there is Javin. He became the guardian of his son's 14-year-old daughter, Geneva, after his own daughter was killed in a car accident. Geneva's life is a good one, but Javin knows that Geneva's condition of autism will not give her the opportunity to live on her own, have a career, drive a car, or care for herself as she becomes an adult.

Lastly, Patricia shares her concerns over caring for her sister, Rachel, who developed mental illness in her 30's. Rachel does not trust anyone any longer. She is paranoid, has multiple severe health issues and has recently been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. There are times, Patricia states, that she does not think she can go on due to the insurmountable pressure put upon her in the care she provides her sister.

Each of these adults is dealing with a real-life situation that will not get any better over time. They are 100% committed to caring for their loved one,



their family member. Yet, they also see their limitations. They see how, in the future, they will not be able to perform at the needed level their family member requires. What can they do?

The first step to planning for the future is for each of these people to reach out and start seeking advice, suggestions, and potential solutions. Some will need medical advice while others will need financial advice, and some will need both. There is a way for the caregivers to set aside money for their loved one, the beneficiary. This money will be used to provide care and support now and when they can no longer do all of the day-to-day tasks required. The financial way is the establishment of a third-party supplemental needs trust.

Third-party supplemental needs trusts are designed to help people of any age who are living with a physical, mental, or intellectual disability. By establishing a special needs trust, the individual deposits money into the trust, for the beneficiary's use. This money is a gift to the beneficiary. Other family

members and friends can also contribute to the beneficiary's trust. Third-party supplemental needs trusts are an ideal estate planning vehicle whereby a grandparent, parent or other family members and friends can make financial gifts or leave an inheritance to a beneficiary. The money in the trust is exempt from being considered an asset for the individual, thus allowing the person to qualify for much-needed government benefits, the most important being Medicaid to cover healthcare needs. The money in the third-party supplemental needs trust can be used to pay for items or services the government benefits do not cover. These expenses are called supplemental needs.

The second step is to choose a financial trustee to manage the trust. There are many trust companies that are legal entities working as a fiduciary, agent, or trustee on behalf of a person living with a physical, mental, or intellectual disability. These companies perform management and administration of various types of trusts. When there is a need for a trustee, choose wisely. The trust company will help the beneficiary live a good quality of life and provide the family with peace of mind.

I invite you to join me in recognizing, celebrating, and thanking the caregivers in our lives. Their compassion and dedication are a source of inspiration.

— Darlene A. Kemp, MPH, MBA,
Vista Points Special Needs Trusts,
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Christmas Happens Here



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Sean of the South found himself visiting downtown Birmingham, Chelsea, Columbiana and Irondale, Ala. for the shooting of commercials for Alfa Insurance. The company chose Dietrich as a spokesperson based on his “down-home humor, love of all things Southern and celebration of everyday heroes.”

Sean of the South

WEAVES TALES OF SOUTHERN LIFE & FAITH

Sean Dietrich tells his stories of the South with an accent as thick as honey. The stories- ones of Southern people, places, and values- have earned him the moniker of “Sean of the South” and gained him loyal followers who love his heartfelt wisdom and inspiration as much as they do that thick accent.

Dietrich’s stories can be found on his website, where he writes a blog entry every day; the stories are shared on his Facebook page, which has more than 100,000 followers, and on his popular “Sean of the South” podcast. His most recent book, *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?* (Zondervan), is a memoir that evidences the power of faith and the human spirit to overcome a difficult background that included his father’s suicide.

One episode in the book tells of a newspaper editor’s now-ironic suggestion to Dietrich: “I’m gonna give you some free advice that nobody gave me. Nobody wants to read stories that are about happy things. That isn’t how you sell books, newspapers, or magazines. People like things that are gut-wrenching... more blood and guts, less romance.” Dietrich’s own testimony is a testament to the fact that people do, indeed, need happy stories.

A Born Storyteller. Dietrich came by his storytelling gift honestly. He remembers hearing stories from many members of his family, and then started writing his own stories in elementary school. “Maybe it’s our generation, but we had storytellers around us. I can recall my mother, grandmother, grandfather telling stories. My mother was chatty and could start a conversation with anyone,” he said. “When I write, I think about that older generation that taught me the value of a good story.”

Dietrich, born in Missouri, moved to Florida when he was just 12 and dropped out of school at 14. Although he loved writing at a young age (and still remembers the fifth-grade teacher who encouraged him), he didn’t discover it again until he was an adult. “I was self-educated, so I read a lot, and I didn’t go back to school until I was in my 20s,” he said. “I did construction, hung sheetrock, jobs like that, but then I discovered that writing was what I really loved. It’s what connects me to other people.” The odd jobs eventually sent him to community college, then a semi-profession-

al musical career (he still sings and plays guitar during speaking engagements), and ultimately to writing. His path also led him to wife Jamie (a native of Brewton, Ala.), whom he met at a church potluck in Destin, Fla. “I grew up Southern Baptist and always played for Wednesday and Sunday night singings. And at the time I worked part time playing for a little Baptist church,” Dietrich said. “I met this cute brunette at a potluck, and we got married six months later. We’ve been married for almost 17 years.”

Dietrich laughingly said that getting to where he is right now has been “a big, long train of fortunate events” and often expresses disbelief in his success. “I remember being on the road coming home from a speaking gig one night and I realized this is what I love,” he said. “I like to make people feel good, even if it’s only for a few minutes. I really have no idea what I’m doing, but I love doing it.” These days he’s one of the most prolific writers you can imagine, producing 900-word columns or blog entries every day and adding in more work on book projects. “It’s sort of compulsive,” he admitted. “I’ve written 3000 words a day for almost 8 years.”

A Loyal Following. Dietrich’s stories come from a variety of experiences- from meeting a stranger in a cafe, to eavesdropping on a conversation between two children on a creek bank; from what it means to be patriotic to what it means to show kindness. And the stories come from throughout the Southern states; they can be based on his own experiences or be inspired by others’. His posts on Facebook typically get around 5,000 shares and make the rounds on social media. “Stories find me,” he said. “It started as a blog, kinda on a whim. I wanted to write about the people and places in my region, and I didn’t have any higher desire for it. But things went really well. People keep reading, and I keep doing it.”

Will the Circle Be Unbroken braves some more serious issues, tackling his father’s death and the broken family he grew up in as a young child. The book also introduced his writing to a larger audience and built his fan base. Before the coronavirus pandemic hit, Dietrich was on a multi-city book tour throughout the South. The night before the tour was shut down, he stood in lines in Nashville greeting fans and friends. The next day he was in

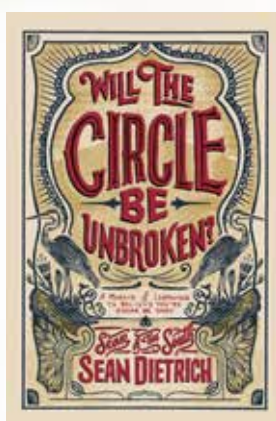
Birmingham, saying good-bye to the tour and re-treating home to Florida. “That night in Nashville, there were 400 people standing in line, hugging necks, telling their own stories,” he said. “And then it was over.”

Dietrich has changed since the pandemic hit, writing with a clearer focus and separating from the busy-ness of book tours and marketing efforts. “I was overworking myself, and I’m grateful now that I’m able to see that,” he said. “We’ve been doing a lot of virtual stuff, but we’ve mostly stayed home and haven’t seen many people.” The one exception was when Dietrich spent time filming commercials for Alfa Insurance in Alabama. The invitation to be an Alfa spokesperson came soon after Covid appeared, and he was taken aback by the company’s interest. “I told them they had the wrong guy,” he laughed. “I have a face for radio.” The commercials have brought even more attention to Dietrich and his storytelling.

A Legacy of Faith. Underlying so many of Dietrich’s stories is a belief in the goodness of people, and in the importance of faith and religion in so many lives. Some of his recent columns include “Church Lady” (an ode to the women so many Southerners relied on), “Holy Cow” (a tribute to a “possible angel” who helped after a car broke down), and “Tight Knit” (a story of prayer shawls and other “holy” knitted objects).



Sean's wife Jamie is a trained chef, but now works as her husband's manager. They'll celebrate their 17th anniversary on December 19.



Will the Circle be Unbroken? is Sean Dietrich's newest book. Its title comes from the hymn played at his father's funeral when Sean was just 12.

In the South, he said, there’s no way to separate faith from everyday life. “That’s one thing I really love about Southern culture. It’s just part of our lives, and it’s not compartmentalized,” he said. “Everyone has an experience with church. If you have the flu, well Miss Anne’s gonna come check on you. You’re gonna be brought deviled eggs or a casserole. It’s about people and community.”

“I’ve visited other regions where people can separate religion from the rest of their life,” Dietrich said. “Down here, it’s ingrained, even in the phrases we use. ‘She needs Jesus’ or ‘Bless your heart.’ It’s part of us.” On a personal level, Dietrich said that faith has helped him through some of the lowest points in his life. Of course, the way he explains it is pure “Sean of the South.” “I’ve known a lot of people who didn’t grow up in a church setting like I did. Those people can call faith a crutch,” he said, “and if you ask me, that is the perfect description. Because without it, I wouldn’t be able to walk.”

— Cheryl Sloan Wray

Wray loves to tell her own stories --but nothing like Sean!-- as a freelance writer and book author. She's married with three daughters and six grandchildren and lives in Hueytown, Ala.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a pink shirt, a blue surgical mask, and pink gloves, is cleaning the inside of a white microwave. She is holding a blue sponge and a spray bottle.

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Romans 10:9-10

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.

¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

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The Truth About Fasting, Part 3

For this installment of our fasting series, we will talk about some other proven benefits of fasting. Up first, the digestive system.

Millions of people suffer from some sort of digestive system issue. When we give our digestive system a rest period, we allow it to recover which combats symptoms consistent with irritable bowel syndrome, etc. “Fasting appears to have a positive influence on gut health.”¹ Fasting also seems to have a better effect on weight loss and other issues even better than if we were to reduce our daily calories and eat every 2 hours. “In humans, intermittent-fasting interventions ameliorate obesity, insulin resistance, dyslipidemia, hypertension, and inflammation. Intermittent fasting seems to confer health benefits to a greater extent than can be attributed just to a reduction in caloric intake.”² Not only is it better for your gut to not eat constantly, but it also appears that fasting actually allows for greater results

But what about athletic performance? Depends on the type of fast you partake in. If it is several day fast, your performance may suffer some because you are not used to having fasted that long. But intermittent fasting is a great way to keep a balance, while still being able to perform athletically. Also, note that many attribute fatigue and a drop in performance because they eat less during the days they do intermittent fasting. Thus consuming less energy.

When one first starts fasting on a regular basis, their performance may decline slightly. But as you are accustomed to exercising in the fasted state, your body becomes efficient at burning fat for energy. Hormonally, fasting can aid in energy production and muscle building. “Over a five-day fasting period growth hormone secretion more than doubled.”³ Growth hormone is key in muscle preservation and building. This could help immensely in the building of muscle if the fast is done at the right times. The real key here is to fast for your goals, so for most of us simply trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle of gaining lean muscle, intermittent fasting can help. If you are one that

has a hard time gaining weight and may even be underweight, fasting is not necessarily the way to gain the amount of bodyweight you need. But if you are trying to lose fat while maintaining muscle, fasting could be perfect.

What about cognitive abilities? Well, have you ever eaten a big lunch and then tried to get some work done right after? If you like most of us, it's easier to nap afterward than be productive. The digestive system demands an enormous amount of blood flow and energy to break down our food. It diverts this energy away from other areas in the body in order to function efficiently. We tend to lose focus after a meal because our body diverts energy away from our brain and down to the digestive system. Fasting can enable us to have a better focus by allowing us to divert all of the blood flow we need to our brain.

“Dr. Geyelin was the first to document the cognitive improvement that could occur with fasting.”⁴ The body's level of focus and cognitive ability is greatly affected by what we eat. You will likely feel more energized and alert after a lunch of chicken breast and veggies rather than mac n' cheese with a soda.

Key Takeaways: Fasting can be helpful for digestive health, muscle preservation, and cognitive ability.

— Ashton Tate is the founder of Glory to Glory Fitness in Franklin, Tenn. His passion is helping leaders use their health as an asset to do all that God has called them to in every season.
www.glorytogloryfitness.com



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BEST BOOKS

For the Love of Big Balooka

After months of neglect and abuse, Josh is rescued! The summer is ending and rising fifth-grade scholar, Meg Wilson, prays to be kind to those classmates who taunted her in third and fourth grades. Most of all she prays for a “powerful purpose” this school year. As Divine providence would have it, her purpose unfolds when she steps off the school bus and witnesses a crime against a neighborhood canine named Josh.

A South Florida blustery night, a frightening confrontation with the dog's abuser, and parental objection, propels Meg into action. With the help of her younger brother, Ryan and two best friends, Lindy and Alex, Meg is determined to make things right. Her young faith is put to work to forgive, even the likes of Josh's abuser. In a twist of fate, the mistreated canine, lovingly renamed the Big Balooka, becomes the hometown hero

For the Love of Big Balooka by Kathleen M. Barrett introduces the amazing pencil sketch work



of up and coming artist, sixteen-year-old, Phoebe Yablonski. Phoebe sketched the book's cover, taking thirteen hours to create a striking image of the real life, Josh. Read her inspiring bio on page 135 and see her colored pencil sketch of the dog's collar on the last page.

You may find the book on Amazon and through all Barnes and Noble locations, order internationally from your favorite bookstore or contact the author by email, kethybarrett222@yahoo.com. ☺

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These gifts and you will be appreciated and remembered. Who thinks of giving a service that helps reduce fire, carcinogens, rodent visits and more? Jack Rabbit Clean Choices (JRCC) is a local service that cleans items for those who may not have time, expertise, or desire to clean. Specialty cleaning includes BBQ Grills, Dryer Vents, bathroom vent fan/motors, Mattresses and more – visit www.jackrabbitcleanchoices.com & www.bar-b-clean.com/nashville for detail. Marc, the owner emphasizes that JRCC exists to help extend the life and usefulness of **grills, dryers, mattresses, fan motors, etc.**

Giving a service gift can be more thoughtful than many other options. Cleaning a dryer vent is more than it appears – you are extending the life of a dryer and enhancing its drying time and performance. You are helping assure that the lint does not get trapped and overheated potentially causing a fire. Dryer related fires are a top cause of home fires. Many of us do not think of cleaning the dryer vent given we do not see it or think about it until it is too late – either the dryer died or the clothes do not dry properly, or worse we wait for lint smoldering or flame. Big concerns, big results. Maybe it's the right time to provide a cleaning gift for the BBQ grill that may be full of grease, carcinogens, rodents, and deliver poor quality BBQ results and more. We use a process learned in California where grill cleaning is scheduled at least yearly for many folks. Extending the life of the grill and making it perform as designed is a big result. You will be remembered as a thoughtfully creative person who cares about making life easier and safer for the recipient.



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Ask Marc about:

- (1) bundled pricing when buying more than one service
- (2) gifting services to a friend or family member
- (3) Why it's almost impossible for most folks to effectively clean a grill or dryer vent (training, process, equipment, experience, and more).

— Marc Tepner, 615-594-9052 (call or text for pricing/scheduling)

Marc is owner operator of www.jackrabbitcleanchoices.com which includes www.bar-b-clean.com/nashville, JRCC Dryer Vent Cleaning, Hygienitech Green Mattress Cleaning/Sanitization for middle TN., and other special Yard/Home Services. 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 constantly energized by his amazing wife Elise, son Cole, and their Church and Life Group Family.

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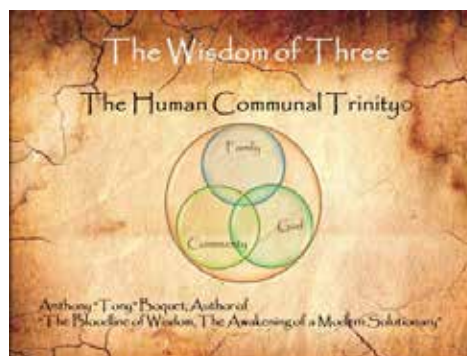
AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Tis The Season

Most people enjoy this time of the year with much anticipation. The holidays are meant to be festive, bring us closer to one another and are intended to fill us with love for one another. Here in the United States, the “holiday season” begins with Thanksgiving; ending with New Years. In between we have multiple religious holidays that highlight the oneness of our human existence. Once more it is through the Power of the Wisdom of Three that God showcases the union between Him and his people by forming societies around the Communal Trinity; our family, our community and our God.

We are each born into a family and most of us are nurtured to maturity within the same nucleus of people. Some, shortly after birth, are given an opportunity explore multiple “family experiences” before finding the one they are meant to have. Sadly, some will feel they never had a true family but they, like each of us, are given the ability to create or expand the one we have from those whom we meet along the road of life. In all cases, we will experience the fact that everyone that makes up a family craves to be loved regardless of their flaws; including ourself.

The community, or in some cases communities, that we become involved with will also play an important role in how we view, participate and grow during our holiday experiences. It is through our involvement with the community that we are first exposed to contradictions to the moral and ethical beliefs taught to us by our family. These contradictions will either solidify those principles or drive us away from them; shifting our life's journey with new moral or ethical values. When our virtuous values are steering our



actions, inevitably some in the community will anguish over them. Our challenge is to respect one another regardless of our opposing views while striving to stay honest and accepting with each other. These actions will elevate you as a respected member of any community, fostering examples of ethical and moral truths. The reason this is so important, is that when a society's ethical and moral limits deteriorate so does the legal boundaries. No one can benefit from a unethical, immoral or lawless society.

The final entity of this amazing trinity of our humanity is our God. As the Christ of the Christian church stated when He walked among us, “You must love your God with your whole body, mind and soul; and love your neighbor as yourself.” This is especially true during the holiday season, with the many events that bring us together as a family, a community and as worshipers of our God. In most religions, it is commonly believed that God created all things. Like I have written, “God said, let there be nuts; and mankind was made.” So, as this crazy year draws to an end, let's not take life too serious and fret over holiday gatherings. Instead, I hope that we look for reasons to love more deeply, laugh more freely and forgive more completely.

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”



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Secrets From the Studio

The year 2020 has been filled with challenges for most of us. As we approach the holiday season many are filled with expectancy and caution.



While the holidays may look different for many, the reason we celebrate, and our love for family and friends does not have to. As believers in Christ the focus of the holiday season is celebrating the birth and life of Jesus Christ. With faith filled hearts we celebrate His birth with our families, friends, and the community of faith.

The challenges of 2020 do not have to diminish the sacred beauty of the Christmas season. We can find ways to celebrate safely and make memories with our families and friends. I still remember the first Christmas season of the Bridges show. We lined up guests to share their holiday traditions and family memories.

Didn't Remember Last Year's Gifts

When a family of ten shared their commitment to stick to their budget and make holiday memories rather than go into debt it made perfect sense. They highlighted their point by asking this question: how many of you remember the presents you received last Christmas? I paused. I didn't remember. I tested their premise by asking my co-workers and a few family members. Most people (even children) didn't remember last year's Christmas gifts.

That moment on the Bridges set changed the way I thought about Christmas gifts. From that moment forward I focused more on making memories during the holiday season. This is one of many secrets I learned in the studio.

Make Christmas a Sacred Holiday

Perhaps that focus would benefit us in this challenging year of 2020. It may be that some gatherings will need to be smaller, or travel prohibited, but what can we do to celebrate our faith and make memories with those we hold so dear? Just as the family of ten made the intentional decision to stick with a budget and focus on making memories, what can we do to make this Christmas a sacred holiday?

While this holiday season may be riddled with challenges we can choose to focus on the sacred. We have our faith – our families – our friends – and our community of faith. We can choose to celebrate our faith and make moments with our family and friends the highlight of our holiday season.

There are many Secrets from the Studio over the last 25 years but focusing on faith and family during the holiday season is one of my very favorites.



— Monica Schmelter is the General Manager of WHTN, Christian Television Network and host of daily television show Bridges.
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Surrendered to God

Totally Trusting

Ben and Ermeda Chapman in Smithville, Tenn. are an example of what God can provide when Believers walk by faith...even when that faith is all to hold onto. Married in April 1964, "their story" as founders of Lighthouse Christian Camp on the shores of Center Hill Lake also includes how Ben was saved when in his late 20s and then was called to preach within a few weeks.

Early one morning while lying in bed, Ben woke and felt the presence of God; leaving him with a sense of being paralyzed. Ben recalls, "I literally could not move...hardly able to breathe...but heard the voice of The Lord in my soul with the word: PREACH. I told my church pastor about God's call on my life.

"The pastor told the congregation, "If Ben has been called to preach...he'll preach here tonight." I was shocked and scared. But that night, I shared my testimony and four people responded to accept The Lord."

Here is Ben and Ermeda's story in his own words. "Being a native of South Carolina, I graduated in 1963 from Clemson University and took employment with the Nashville District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ermeda is a native of Nashville. After serving at Cheatham Lake and Lake Cumberland, I was assigned to Center Hill Lake near Smithville.

"I patrolled all access areas around the lake including a launching ramp and small picnic space and campground on Holmes Creek, formerly part of the Atnip family farm. On one of my inspections, I struck up a conversation with a caretaker. While expressing my admiration of the beautiful farm adjoining the campground, the caretaker said, "Why don't you call Casey Vaughn, the owner, he might sell it to you."

"Well, I called Mr. Vaughn and we met the following Saturday, walked over the property for several hours and he agreed to sell...giving me 30 days to get financing in order. Ermeda and I made many attempts to get a loan...all with no success because we literally had no significant collateral.

"The day arrived when the 30 day option was to end. We met with Mr. Vaughn and his wife Elizabeth...and shared our sad story about being unable to get financing. He responded, "You both have good jobs. I don't understand." He and Mrs. Vaughn talked it over and agreed to sell...making a personal note with its maturity in seven years.

"The farm included two mules, two wagons, two hay rakes, mowing machine, disc harrow and two hillside turning plows. We had our day jobs and then had to manage the working farm...with us putting in long hours. We built a home on the property...a small brick house with 864 square feet. Later that year we added another 1,000 square feet. Barns were also constructed and we began breeding Thoroughbred race horses. I wanted to race in the Iroquois Steeplechase in Nashville.

"I became a bi-vocational pastor. While on my knees praying one day, The Lord spoke to my heart...and nudged me to turn the property into a FREE



camp for disadvantaged, abused and neglected children where they could have the experience to enjoy God's creation and come to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord.

"God's faithfulness has grown the camp to include the Sing for Joy Widow's Homes, Lighthouse Pastors Retreat Home and Lighthouse Boys and Girls Ranch for orphaned, abandoned and homeless children and much improved facilities such as two swimming pools, dining hall, tennis and basketball courts, soccer field, horse barn and riding ring and multiple cabins and amenities for housing children, full-size gymnasium and numerous support facilities."

Over 800 children attended camp FREE this past summer through support given by businesses along with interested individuals and families. Support also comes from outside Tennessee including volunteers who plan vacations to help with all necessary logistics for putting on the camping experiences.

For more information about Lighthouse Christian Camp, call (615) 597-1264 or go online www.lighthousechristiancamp.com

— Ralph E. Vaughn

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COVID-19 and Our Ideas About Control

When the COVID-19 pandemic began sweeping across the U.S. in March, plans for the foreseeable future were wiped. Students found themselves finishing the semester online, work became remote, travel became virtually obsolete, events were postponed or outright canceled, and many milestones -- graduations, birthdays, anniversaries -- were spent on lockdown. For a while, plans for even the next day did not feel promised.



This was incredibly frustrating for me. It helped that this was a collective experience, but as a planner, I struggled. There was no concept of the future -- just a never-ending now. A waiting. Stillness. Unfortunately, a pandemic has no remorse for preparation or exciting plans or the fact that you are going into your final year of undergrad.

Scripture especially has put COVID-19 and the better part of this year into perspective for me.

Here is what a pandemic has to teach us:

We cannot stake our claims in the future

The book of James warns us against such self-confidence. It reads, “Look here, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there for a year’... How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow?” (James 4:13-14). This summer especially, when asked about my plans to study abroad, I would say, “Well, I was supposed to go to Costa Rica this May...” Lately I have corrected myself, explaining, “I had planned to study abroad.” I recognize now that it was never in God’s plan. I try to avoid claiming plans for the future with certainty.

Ultimate control has never been in our hands

I immediately think of the popular proverb, “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps” (Proverbs 16:9). There are several things in life I can control: what I say, how I treat others, the way I react. God is ultimately sovereign. I can strive all I want, but what is meant to come to pass, will, and what is not, will not. As the book of Isaiah reads, “The Lord of Heaven’s Armies has spoken -- who can change his plans? When his hand is raised, who can stop him?” (Isaiah 14:27)

We are not meant to navigate life on Earth alone

Verse after verse details God’s desires for our lives. One that struck me recently was Exodus 33:14, which reads, “The Lord replied, ‘I will personally go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest -- everything will be fine for you.’” Another -- “Only in returning to me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength” (Isaiah 31:15). He longs to make our burden easy and our yoke light (Matthew 11:28-30). I can accomplish an impressive amount in my own strength, but I was not meant to. Life-- a pandemic -- does not have to be as hard as I make it.

What Wrapping Paper Can Be Recycled?

After the biggest gift-giving week of the year, we’re willing to bet you’ll soon have a mountain of wrapping paper littering the living room floor. What are you supposed to do with all that festive, used-up paper? A lot of it can be recycled, but not all of it. Here’s what to consider when deciding whether certain wrapping paper is recyclable.



Non-Recyclable Gift Wrap

It’s a common mistake for families to assume that because gift wrap is made of paper, it’s automatically recyclable. Here’s how to spot non-recyclable wrapping paper:

- Glittery, metallic, foil, or textured wrapping paper is automatically non-recyclable, so be sure to keep it out of the recycling bin.
- Bows are made of a plastic-paper composite that makes them non-recyclable. The glue that sticks bows to a gift makes it even more of a no-no. Make sure you pull bows off recyclable wrapping paper before tossing it in your recycling bin.
- Ribbons are even more harmful to the recycling process than bows. Pulp-ing equipment can screen out a bow, but a long, curly ribbon is more likely to wrap around the equipment designed to separate cardboard from other items. The entire recycling facility may need to shut down for workers to clean ribbon (and plastic bags, twine, and other long, stringy objects) from the equipment.
- Tissue paper is made from low-grade paper and is not recyclable in most communities.
- Gift bags often contain non-recyclable plastic coatings, ribbons, cords, or adhesives.
- Shiny, glittery, or embossed Christmas cards are the same as fancy wrapping paper—non-recyclable.

Wrapping Paper That Can Be Recycled

Most wrapping paper is recyclable—as long as it’s plain paper. As a test, crumple up a wad of gift wrap in your hands. If it stays bunched up, it probably doesn’t contain foil and is most likely recyclable. Don’t worry about removing all the tape before you toss it in the bin.

Other gift trimmings that can go straight into the paper recycling bin include:

- Plain paper Christmas cards
- Brown paper gift bags
- Wrapping paper tubes

Of course, all those cardboard boxes that presents come in are also recyclable. Every ton of reclaimed cardboard saves 17 trees. Just remember to break the boxes down flat so they don’t take up too much room in recycling trucks.

Need a little extra help cleaning up after the holidays? Contact your local Molly Maid at 615-794-0200 or 615-603-3766, today www.mollymaid.com/s-davidson-williamson-maury-counties/about-us

— Ashley Farrar

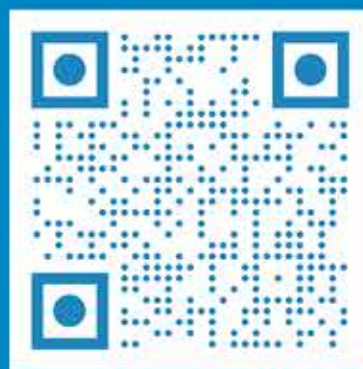
— Jenna Costanzo, Intern with the Center for Modern Family Dynamics
Jenna is a senior psychology major, public relations minor at Belmont University. She is originally from Knoxville, Tennessee.



FIND HOPE



88.7
89.9



LISTEN
NOW!

THE HOME FRONT

Open Vented Crawl Space = Cold Floors

The open vented crawl space debate. To vent or not to vent

Years ago, I remember the crawl space vents would be opened in the summer for air to flow and ventilate the crawl space. Then we would close them in the winter to help keep some of the cold out, you know to protect the pipes from freezing and critters from getting in to stay warm. What we were never taught is how bad this is for the home and our family living in it.



The structure breathes from the bottom up. When we add that ventilation in the bottom, we are creating a vacuum effect that pulls that outside in and under the home.

Crawl space ventilation problems

- High humidity and condensation on crawl space surfaces.
- Damp, sagging fiberglass insulation.
- Visible mold stains on crawl space surfaces.
- Musty, moldy smells.
- Rotted wood.
- Cold floors upstairs during winter months.
- High heating & cooling costs.

Cold Floors

The air will get inside the air ducts and any holes in the floor and filter through the home. The cold air against the warmer floorboards is how we get those drafts and cold floors all winter. We worry about attic insulation and wall insulation but then leave the rolled insulation between floor joist under our homes expecting it to do the job. Over time the insulation gets wet, dirty, starts falling, provides living space for unwanted critters, and our homes continue to get draftier. Fluffy stuff will fail. Fiberglass insulation installed between crawl space joists will eventually absorb moisture and fall on the floor, causing problems for your crawl space. Wet, sagging insulation is a serious problem. In addition to creating a soggy mess, this wet material creates conditions that are ideal for mold colonies to form on your home's wood framing and elsewhere in the crawl space. There is another way, a better way, a permanent solution. Completely seal the crawl space from the earth and outside air and your home will be much healthier. By eliminating the cracks and holes both cold air and critters stay outside. Plumbing or HVAC lines are no longer exposed to the weather conditions.

Three "target areas" for new crawl space insulation

1. Rim Joist.
2. Walls
3. Floor

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HOMETOWN HERO

Translating Passion Into Action

Jena grew up with a mother who lived by the Golden Rule. With her mom as a role model and the love of her family, Jena's lifelong passion became caring for others. This young professional lives out her passion of serving others through volunteering, so Doing Good celebrates her as this month's Nashville's Volunteer of the Month.

Her earliest memory of volunteering is with Key Club in high school. These hands-on and leadership experiences laid the foundation for her to choose a career in service. Soon after college, she served as an AmeriCorps Member – like the Peace Corps, but within the United States. The climax of her experience was serving as a first responder to the catastrophic EF-5-rated tornado which tore apart Joplin, Missouri in May, 2011. The experience revealed her skills and mindset for crisis management.

Her career goals mirrored her personal passion – to serve others. She has now worked in nonprofits over ten years. Notably, each position has involved directly or indirectly managing volunteers. Today she has worked more than three years with Nashville CARES and is the Community Engagement and Volunteer Manager. She passionately says, “Everyone has a cause, something dear to them,” and she views volunteering as “an easy way to translate” that passion into action. Through work, she reminds volunteers they are not simply completing a task, but “also becoming an advocate for the organization!”

In her free time, this all-American makes time to volunteer for Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRCC) where she teaches English online and bakes for bake sales which benefit TIRCC and The Equity Alliance. She also volunteered earlier this year for Hands On Nashville when the EF-2 tornado ripped through the community. Her prior tornado experience and training allowed her to help create organizational systems, processes, and trainings for volunteer leaders to support the Hands On Nashville staff.

Whether it's the unique skill of leading on the edge of trauma or teaching her native language, “I just want to know I'm being effective and helping out.” This is an understandable desire for most volunteers, and her genuine heart for others is the reason she is celebrated. Everyone has something to offer, and as Jena says, “Everyone has a cause, something dear to them.” Fortunately, sometimes it is as simple as the Golden Rule. Regardless, Nashville's Volunteer of the Month celebrates those who are able to define the passion and take action through volunteering. To nominate someone for this or another recognition, email director@doinggood.tv or visit www.doinggood.tv.



Jena posing with her summer bake sale cakes, to raise money for Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition.



Jena organizing volunteers at her work, Nashville CARES, distributing holiday meals with Meals on Wheels



Jena with her mother, Linda, a big influence on her perspective on the world. She had a very giving nature!

— Megan McInnis

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BIBLE TRUTH

God keeps us balanced in a world of unbalanced forces.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

Psalms 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

HANDS-ON EXPERIMENT

Utensil Balance

INGREDIENTS

- Plastic Spoon
- Plastic Fork
- Toothpick
- Glass of Water

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1: Connect the plastic spoon and fork by forcing the bowl of the spoon into the tines of the fork creating a wide V-shape.

STEP 2: Using the toothpick, balance the spoon and fork on the rim of the glass of water. Provide evidence of the effects of balanced and unbalanced forces on the motion of the spoon and fork.



EXPLANATION

The utensils balance since there are multiple forces acting on the spoon and fork, which give zero net forces on the utensils.

BIBLE CONNECTION

Balanced forces keep the utensils from falling off the rim of the glass of water. God's force field keeps us balanced in a world filled with unbalanced forces.

— Jason Lindsey, STEM Certified Educator, Science Multimedia Journalist, Host, and Digital Meteorologist EMAIL: jlindsey@hookedonscience.org WEBSITE: www.hookedonscience.org



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God's Plan For Service Doing What Is Right

Last month we talked about KNOWING WHAT IS RIGHT. We follow that with this month's DOING WHAT IS RIGHT. We must first know what is the right thing to do before we can start doing. The more precise we are in knowing what is the right thing to do, the greater the results can be from our efforts. Think about what to do before acting.

This month let's talk about doing what is right. Most of us want to do the right thing. Typically, our first thought when wanting to do the right thing is to ponder what do we want. Wrong approach. This would be an egocentric approach. The right questions to ask, in the proper order are a) what is God's will, b) what does the situation require and c) how can I make a positive intervention? Start by looking outside of yourself, not inside.

First, what is God's will? Our greatest temptation here is to confuse our will with God's will. We think about what we want and then rationalize that this must be what God wants. Wrong approach. Seeking God's will starts with submission of self to prayer. Earnest prayer, not God please give me what I want. Sometimes it takes time. When we feel we have God's will, even if it makes us uncomfortable, we need to act upon God's will.

Second, what does the situation require? Doing the right thing requires understanding the situation, knowing the setting, getting a feel for what is happening, perceiving what is required under the circumstances. This requires looking outside of self. It requires being observant of what forces are at work and the direction they are taking as well as a perception of not only the cur-

rent situation but also what the situation is changing into. Observe people, what they are saying and what they are doing. What are their concerns? What would make the situation a happy one? Understand the dynamics of the situation.

Thirdly, what part of my gifts, talents, education and experience can I draw upon to make this a positive intervention? This is a matching process. Each of us has a range of abilities. We can be happy or we can grieve. We can urge action or urge caution. We can motivate or we can calm down a situation. The point is that to intervene positively, we must adjust ourselves to our understanding of the situation and not try to make the situation fit what we want the situation to be. Only after we do that, can we help steer the situation toward a positive end point. Understand and then act. Don't act and try to understand later unless the building is on fire.

Once those steps are taken, we must muster up sufficient courage to actually do what is right. We started this discussion last month with KNOWING WHAT IS RIGHT. Now it is a matter of DOING WHAT IS RIGHT. Doing the right thing at the right time, in the right way with the right resources still requires courage. If this is God's will, there need be no hesitation unless God tells us to wait. To follow this three step approach, we must begin by thinking outside of ourselves. Focus on God's will and the situation around us. Then, and only then, we should focus our courage on doing what is right.

— Kenneth Oosting, Ph D



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ONGOING

NOTE: The event below is subject to the COVID-19 Federal and State Guidelines

Tennessee Christian Chamber of Commerce Monthly Luncheon –

Last Tuesday of every month except December have resumed. Connection Groups - Networking/Leads Meetings held in these locations: Brentwood, Cool Springs/Franklin, Hendersonville, Mt. Juliet, Murfreesboro. For meeting locations, times and dates or for more information about the Chamber and events, visit www.tnchristianchamber.org or email rstringfellow@yahoo.com.

FASCINATING FAITH FACTS

Songs of Faith

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Exhausted and spiritually depleted by the bloody horrors of the Civil War, Philadelphia rector Phillips Brooks knew he was in serious need of rest and renewal. Earlier in the year, he had given the funeral message for President Abraham Lincoln, a most sobering experience.

Brooks felt it would help his state of mind to spend Christmas in the Holy Land in the winter of 1865. The streets of Jerusalem were clamoring with tourists, and Brooks wanted some quiet time.

Then an idea seized him. On a borrowed horse,

he set out alone across desolate countryside. Locals had warned him that he might encounter thieves, but he was determined.

Just as evening was upon him, with a clear sky full of stars above, Brooks entered the little village of Bethlehem. As he rode through the streets, he felt overwhelmed with awe, realizing that he was in the place where Jesus had been born.

Back at home, he had difficulty putting his experience into words for his congregation. But three years later, while preparing for the Christmas Eve service of 1868, the words of “O Little Town of Bethlehem” came to him – he says almost ef-



fortlessly. He shared the poem with his church organist, Lewis Redner, who wrote the melody for the Sunday school children's choir.

Phillips Brooks is now recognized as the greatest American preacher of the nineteenth century. The first volume of his collected sermons sold more than two hundred thousand copies in 1878 and is still read and studied today.

The Lord says, “Bethlehem, you might not be an important town in the nation of Judah. But out of you will come a ruler over Israel for me.”

Micah 5:2 NIRV ☪

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Lifest Music City is a new family-friendly music festival being held July 29-31, 2021, at Hideaway Farm in Bon Aqua, TN.

Hideaway Farm, a short drive west of Nashville, is the former home of Johnny Cash. With its serene woods and bubbling brooks, this scenic piece of land was the center of Johnny's universe for over 30 years.

What is Lifest? Lifest is an annual event and is one of the largest Christian music festivals in the nation, held in Oshkosh, WI. The event features nationally known artists and speakers, and offers camping, activities, seminars, and more. Lifest is expanding to Tennessee! Since being founded in 1999, Lifest has grown to become a highly anticipated yearly event for thousands of families to worship together, deepen their faith, and strengthen relationships with family and friends.

It is very exciting to expand and bring the Lifest family-friendly experience to Middle Tennessee. Lifest is a "Party With a Purpose," and that purpose is to join others in the gospel and unite the body of Christ through music.



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