

December 2021

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# Merry Christmas!

Today in the town of David a Savior has been  
born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:11



# NASHVILLE CHRISTIAN FAMILY®

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*Nashville Christian Family* is published monthly by Clarion Concepts, P.O. Box 463, Spring Hill, TN 37174. The phone number is 615-815-8765. E-mail [publisher@christianfamilynashville.com](mailto:publisher@christianfamilynashville.com). Reproduction of any part of *Nashville Christian Family* without permission of the Publisher is prohibited. Distribution of this paper does not constitute and endorsement of information, products or services. Views expressed in *Nashville Christian Family* do not necessarily represent those of the Publisher. Every effort has been made by *Nashville Christian Family* staff to insure accuracy of the publication contents. However, we do not guarantee the accuracy of all information nor the absence of errors and omissions; hence, no responsibility can be or is assumed. All Rights Reserved. Copyright 2021 by The Christian Family Publication, Inc.

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**Circulation and Distribution:** *Nashville Christian Family* is free and available at targeted, high traffic locations throughout the Nashville Metro Area and surrounding counties, Williamson, Wilson, Davidson, Cheatham, Sumner, Rutherford and Maury. Copies are available by subscription, \$75 for one year (12 issues). To subscribe, e-mail [publisher@christianfamilynashville.com](mailto:publisher@christianfamilynashville.com)

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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 me.” 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!!**

Robert Stringfellow, Publisher, 615-815-8765  
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And MUCH MORE!**

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Finding Holy In Our Holly, Jolly Christmas

I love Christmas. Christmas cookies. Jolly music piped in stores. Twinkling lights. Wreaths adorning doors. Did I mention Christmas cookies?

Last year was different, however. My husband and I mustered the Christmas spirit and even set up two trees. When our church canceled Christmas Eve services, it felt like the Grinch had come to town and stolen the Christmas spirit. Two years ago, my sister passed away, and I returned from the funeral on December 23. Some years it's dang hard to find the holly and jolly in Christmas.

Maybe it's because we seek the wrong things. What if we focused on God, more specifically his holiness? Could we take a *selah* moment to reflect on his character and stop racing to the next Christmas event or shopping mall? We can wrestle and ponder his holiness through solitude, relationships, and community.

Mary pondered Jesus' birth immediately after the shepherds reported the angel's message. She treasured in her heart the enormity of bringing the promised Messiah into the world. We can spend time with Jesus this season by meditating on his Word and character. As the noise escalates to buy this, get that, hurry here, attend this, charge that, ask God to speak louder so you can hear him talk to you.

After hearing the news from the angel that she would birth God's Son, Mary raced to see her cousin Elizabeth, who was also expecting. Can you imagine their conversations during those three months? What if we gave the people



in our family our full attention for one hour or one evening with no beeping or buzzing of electronics? Try gathering loved ones in front of a roaring fire or turn on the Christmas tree lights and read Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20, and Matthew 1:18-2:12 from your print Bible. Put yourself into the shoes of each character in the Christmas story. How might they have felt?

Since I was young, my family has attended Christmas Eve services. We've kept the tradition with our adult children. My favorite moment is when the congregation of weary shoppers sings "Silent Night." For one holy moment, the candles light up the sanctuary and overwhelm the darkness. I imagine the shepherds surrounding the newborn baby by a tired Mary and Joseph with only the moon or a star as their light. Together they worshiped and maybe even sang to Jesus. Community worship delights and honors the Lord.

Seeking the holly and jolly in this season is sure to disappoint. Sometimes we need to trim the excess, establish boundaries around our time, push back on the frenzy, and find time to reflect and ponder God's gift of his Son. Let's block out time this season to celebrate the most sacred of nights.

— Sally Cressman and her husband enjoy an easy rhythm of life as empty nesters. You can follow her on Instagram at @sacressman or read more from her at [www.sallycressman.com](http://www.sallycressman.com).



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## You Are Not Alone

Every Christmas season we usually plan a few special Bridges shows. Several years ago, we had five artists scheduled to come to the studio to do Christmas music. The entire WHTN team was excited to start the holiday season on such a festive note.

Just a couple of days before we were scheduled to film my family received some devastating news. My mother-in-law had become very ill, and the prognosis wasn't good. Of course, my family packed up as quickly as we could to get to the hospital in Michigan.

### The News was Grim

The doctors were kind, but the news was grim. We prayed and trusted our Sovereign God. In just a few hours my beloved mother-in-law passed away. We were thankful we made it to Michigan in time to give hugs and say our goodbyes – this side of heaven.

When I called the WHTN studio to let my co-workers know – they offered prayer, support, and condolences. The team was also quick to call our Bridges guests and let them know that the holiday filming in the studio was cancelled. Of course, our guests were gracious and understanding. They too, offered prayer, support, and condolences. I am so thankful for the support and strength of the community of faith.

Instead of the usual Christmas festivities my family was processing loss and experiencing grief. As I look back so many of the details are a blur. But what I remember clearly is the great outpouring of love. The phone calls, the texts, and the cards arrived at just the right time.

### Not One More Minute

Just when I felt like I couldn't handle one more minute someone would call or text. It was most assuredly a fulfilling of the scripture: *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.* Romans 12:15 ESV. Since that time, I am reminded that during the holiday season there are those who are grieving. There are also families who are struggling financially, others who feel forgotten, and many other scenarios that leave people unable to celebrate fully. Our love and compassion for others is a powerful witness. *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* John 13:35 ESV

As followers of Christ, it's our reasonable service to be considerate of others. It's an honor for us to pray for one another – and to help when and where we can. If you know of a family that is in need this season and you can help, by all means do so. This brings honor to God and fulfills scripture.

### We Need the Sacred Reminder

Of course, this doesn't mean we should forgo the Christmas festivities altogether. It's important to celebrate the birth and life of Christ. We need the sacred reminder that God is with us. *"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel which means 'God is with us.'"* Matthew 1:23 NLT

The good news is that God is with us. He is with us in our celebrations and in the hard seasons of our lives. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of and miss my mother-in-law. I am forever grateful that in our season of loss others took time from their Christmas celebrations to pray and offer support.

**Today's Secret from the Studio** – whether you are in a season of loss or celebration He is God with us and that is the best news at any time of year.

— *Monica Schmelter, host of Bridges on Christian Television Network, is a recovered fixer and people pleaser. Watch Bridges on demand at [www.monicaschmelter.com](http://www.monicaschmelter.com)*



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*Darlene Kemp  
MPH, MBA-HCM  
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# MISSION MAKERS

## From Being Served to Serving Others



Sheila and her daughter moved to Nashville from Atlanta and could never seem to get their feet under them. They lost their home and had to move to a family emergency shelter. One week later, more devastating news...Sheila was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Her doctor told her that it would not be safe to remain at the emergency shelter while going through chemo and radiation – that’s where The Salvation Army Supportive Housing

program stepped in. While in the program, Sheila was able to find a job that provided the flexibility she needed to have while going through surgery, chemo, and radiation treatments. She received support and resources from her case manager to ensure that she got the best care possible.

“When I came to The Salvation Army, I had no car, no job, and no clothes, with a teenage daughter,” Sheila added. “I knew God had me exactly where He needed me to be. I was going through something that could potentially take my life. But I had hope because of the people God brought into my life at The Salvation Army,” Sheila said.

Through it all, Sheila says “I had more hope than I had ever had before.” Through the program she learned life lessons like how to manage finances, save money and pay bills. And once she was ready, she and her daughter moved into their own home.

Five years later, Sheila is not only still surviving but thriving! Her cancer is still in remission, and she has been given the opportunity to become an advocate for those currently experiencing homelessness. First by serving on the Home-

less Planning Council in Nashville and then on the Tennessee State Task Force addressing homelessness across the state. Through these avenues, she helps individuals and agencies better understand the needs of those looking to leave homelessness behind through her real-life experiences.

Due to her high-risk status, Sheila had to leave her job during the pandemic and once again returned to The Salvation Army. However, this time it was as a member of the staff. First, by offering financial planning classes online for clients in our community, and then by joining the ranks of our Compassion Brigade.

The Compassion Brigade is a team of remote workers that helped neighbors gain access to financial assistance for rent, utilities, and other needs to keep neighbors in their homes with the lights throughout 2020 and 2021. The team was able to do much of the work virtually through online scheduling systems, phone meetings, and e-signatures on documents thus reducing the risk to staff and clients from Covid-19. In all, the team provided \$1.5 million in financial assistance in 2020 alone.

“I believe our city, Nashville, without The Salvation Army would be desperate, sad, and struggling” Sheila says. “The Salvation Army does not only do an amazing job on street outreach, but also the food pantry aspect, and financial assistance out to those who need it.”

If you would like to join The Salvation Army in their efforts and ensure Hope Marches On for our neighbors and to learn how you can give or volunteer your time, visit [www.SalvationArmyNashville.org](http://www.SalvationArmyNashville.org).

— Misty Ratcliff, Development & Communications Manager, The Salvation Army Nashville



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**The Christmas Truce**

In April of 1944, 12-year-old Fritz Vincken was living in the German city of Aachen when a bomb destroyed his home.

“My mother and I were sitting in the basement when the bomb went off and our home collapsed,” he said in a 1997 interview. “Suddenly we were homeless. I was twelve years old when the heavy bombing raid on the city of Aachen left my family homeless. My parent’s bakery had burned like a torch and together we were all evacuated out of the smoldering ruins to a village near the river Rhine, where we found shelter.” Not long after, his father -a baker for the German Army- acquired a military transport truck and drove through the night to move his wife and son to a lonely hut atop a wooded mountain in the Belgian Ardennes Forest.

On a bitterly cold Christmas Eve, Fritz and his mother, Elisabeth, were eating a makeshift Christmas meal of rooster and potatoes when they heard a loud knock at the door. Answering the door, Fritz’s mother suddenly stood face to face with three American GIs of the 8th Infantry Division, one badly injured. “My mother knew the penalty for harboring the enemy, but when she looked into the young Americans eyes and saw that one was badly hurt, she opened the door and let them in,” Fritz recounted. “We did not speak English, but one of the Americans spoke French to my mother and she could converse with him in French. We learned that the stocky, dark haired fellow was Jim; his comrade, tall and slender, was Ralph. Herby was the wounded one. We added more potatoes to our dinner and made extra places at the table.”

Suddenly, a tense situation became potentially deadly as the family heard a second knock at the door. Fritz held his breath, fearing that the second wave of guests were his own countrymen. Upon answering the door, his fears were confirmed- there were four German soldiers at the door.

Taking the initiative, Elisabeth stood firm and spoke to the German soldiers. As it turned out, they were lost and were seeking shelter from the sub-zero temperatures after days of wandering. She agreed to let them in, but under two conditions: accept her American guests and leave their weapons outside.

Agreeing to her terms, both the American and German soldiers were temporarily disarmed and permitted to stay in the shack. The icy demeanors inside the cabin began to thaw when one Wehrmacht soldier -a medical student before the war- began to patch up Herby’s wounds.

Sitting down for dinner, Elisabeth said a prayer, asking God for one night of peace and that all those seated at the table would survive the war. By the end of the prayer, all the soldiers were quite emotional. From then on out, things were different. For one night, there was no war. Only seven men and a family in a cabin, trying to stay warm, eat a hot meal and get some sleep.

By the time morning rolled around, the soldiers were re-issued their weapons, but not a shot was fired. The Germans helped created a makeshift



stretcher for Herby, handed a compass to the Americans and gave them directions to get back to their lines.

Knowing they couldn’t stay, Elisabeth and Fritz went back to the German lines with their fellow Germans, eventually reuniting with Fritz’s father. When asked what kept him alive, Fritz gave full credit to his mother.

“The inner strength of a single woman, who, by her wits and intuition, prevented potential bloodshed, taught me the practical meaning of the words: ‘Good will Toward Mankind,’” he said.

“Now and then, on a clear tropical winter night, I look at the skies for bright Sirius and we always seem to greet each other like old friends. Then, unfailingly, I remember mother and those seven young soldiers, who met as enemies and parted as friends, right in the middle of the Battle of the Bulge.”

Fritz eventually took his story to Unsolved Mysteries, a syndicated show that ran from 1987-2008. Thanks to assistance from the show, Fritz was eventually reunited with Ralph Blank, who was a Sergeant at the time of their first encounter. In 1996, the two were reunited at Blank’s retirement home in Maryland, one day after Blank’s 50th wedding anniversary.

“When he told me, ‘Your mother saved my life,’ it was the high point of my life,” Vincken said at the time. “Now, I can die in peace. My mother’s courage won’t be forgotten, and it shows what goodwill will do.”

— *Larry L. Crain*  
 Crain Law Group, PLLC  
[www.crainlaw.legal](http://www.crainlaw.legal)



## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### Either You Really Don't Know, or You Don't Believe

Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year! The birth of Christ fulfilled so many promises and the realization of prophecies that spanned over hundreds of years. The birth of Christ also ushered in a new covenant.

If we have witnessed anything in this last year – we have seen a world of chaos and fear gripping everyone. It is one thing for a non-believer to live in fear and torment but not for Christians. Due to the birth of Christ, and the fact that we are living under a new covenant, we should be walking to a different step, dancing to a new beat. There are over 7000 promises from God to man, found in the Bible. (Herbert Lockyer, *All the Promises of the Bible*, 1962). This is incredible!

Either we do not know the promises of God, or we don't believe. Where do you stand?

The ultimate promise of God is the birth of Jesus. We move from eternal death to eternal life. When Jesus died on the cross, He took away our sins and He closed the separation between man and God. When the angels declare in Luke 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men," – they are stating God has now been reconciled back to mankind. Jesus will take away the sins of the world.

This promise rocked my world. No longer do we have to live under an umbrella of religion that portrays God as an angry being waiting to strike us



down at any minute or mishap, instead we can experience true eternal life. John 17:3, "And this is eternal life, they may know the only true God". As a result, we can live each minute in the finished work of God, which includes all His promises.

If God has promised it, then we can believe it! 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For all the promises of God are yes and amen". Christianity should not make us "sin managers" but instead live a life of freedom experiencing His joy and abundance – free from fear and dread.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this year, may our lives be different because we experience all of God's promises!

If you have never experienced God's promises, please reach out. God's promises are not only for eternity but to be experienced today!

— Rhonda Smart

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## BODY & SOUL

### Live A Purposeful Life Filled With Healthy Margins

I'd like you to picture this with me. Imagine picking up this copy of *Nashville Christian Family* only to discover that there are no margins within it. From top to bottom, left to right, every square centimeter of each page has print on it.

If you are anything like me, your eyes would be lost. They wouldn't know where to start, nor finish. Everything would blend together. It would be an overwhelming mess. You see, the white space on this page, and throughout this magazine, matters.

White space and margins bring clarity, focus and comfort to your eyes. It helps you focus on the content and consume it in a meaningful way. Unfortunately, many of us live our lives without whitespace and margins. Our pages are filled with 'stuff' from top to bottom and left to right. Career. Family. Chores. Hobbies. Sports. Holidays. Volunteer Work. The list could be endless.



As a society, we have become busier than ever. Culture seems to reinforce that honor is found in busyness; that every ounce of white space in our life should be filled with something to do. It's of no surprise that we find ourselves overwhelmed, restless and tired. Yet, rest is one of the very things we are created for.

After creating, God rested. To the Israelites, God commanded rest.

Throughout the Gospels, we see glimpses of Jesus finding opportunities to rest. While we all have responsibilities to fulfill, rest is also one of the very things we were created for as well.

As we navigate another busy Holiday season, I challenge you to be intentional about creating white space in your life for rest. I challenge you to begin to create margins in your life that will help restore clarity and focus that has been lost through the pursuit of businesses.

Don't fill your pages with stuff just for the sake of stuff, rather create margins that help you enjoy and experience this Christmas season and coming new year in a meaningful way.

Don't allow the nobility of 'busyness' to rob you of the beauty of rest and the clarity of a purposeful life filled with healthy margins.

I leave you with this paraphrase of Jesus' invitation found in the Gospel of Matthew, "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." John 11:28-30 MSG

Grace and Peace.

— Kyle Froman, Company Chaplain, Lee Company  
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## MONEY MATTERS

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### Ask The Expert

**Q: My son has a special needs trust. I would like to use some of the money in the trust to pay for him to attend a school and major in art. He can draw very well. Is this an allowable expense?**



**A:** It is so great that your son wants to pursue an education and potentially a career in art. Yes, your son's special needs trust can pay for the tuition, at an art school. The trust can also pay for supplies, books, transportation to and from the school, and other special needs he may have.

For more information on Special Needs Trusts, please contact Vista Points, Inc. at [info@vistapoints.org](mailto:info@vistapoints.org) or call 888-422-4076.

— Darlene A. Kemp, MPH, MBA-HCM  
Executive Director, Vista Points, Inc.



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## MISSION MAKERS

### Tucker's House Partners With the Tennessee State Parks

The Tennessee State Parks ADA team has partnered with Tucker's House to help make our parks more accessible for visitors with disabilities. The ADA team is committed to making our parks more inclusive and it is an honor for Tucker's House to be partnering with them for this purpose.

Our initial meeting was conducted at Radnor Lake State Park in Nashville, Tenn. Tucker's House invited various families in the area to experience the park and provide feedback on how to make the park more accessible to persons with disabilities. The feedback provided at this and future meetings will help create policies and procedures for improved accessibility infrastructure throughout all the state parks across Tennessee. It helped that it was also a beautiful fall day! We even got to see the resident bald eagle.

The plans discussed in the meetings included items for day use including parking, restroom facilities, changing tables, and how to make walking and hiking paths more accessible. It also included discussion around overnight use and how to make the parks with lodging more friendly, supportive, and accessible. It was a great discussion that provided many insights and takeaways.



It is great to see that our Tennessee State Parks are taking a hard look at their facilities to continue to make their facilities places that can be enjoyed by everyone. We at Tucker's House are honored to be a part of this initiative and look forward to seeing the positive changes that come out of these meetings.

We consider it a privilege to be a part of stories like these and to help provide dignity and inclusion for children and young adults in our community. We have a core belief that every child should feel at home and this drives us in everything we do.

Tucker's House is a 501(c)3 non-profit in Middle Tennessee that serves families who have children or young adults with disabilities by making their homes safer and more accessible. We receive no state or federal funding and our ability to perform services depends on the support of our Middle Tennessee community. The average cost of a project is \$15,000 and your continued support goes to help families have safe and accessible homes.

— *Graham Honeycutt, Executive Director of Tucker's House, to learn more or to donate visit [www.tuckershous.org](http://www.tuckershous.org).*

# Medicare Open Enrollment

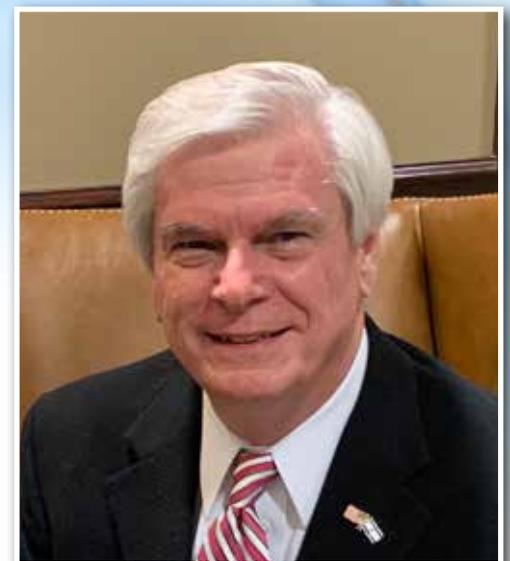
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## Tina Pierret: Career in Real Estate is Not Just a Job

My husband is big on gratitude, so let's begin there. What I'm most grateful for today is how I can look back and clearly see that God has always been at work in my life, and that Romans 8:28 really is true: "...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose". There have been some life challenges leading up to the very happy marriage I now enjoy, and the purposeful existence I get to have. As an example, one of my weekly joys has been co-leading children's worship at Harpeth Christian Church where my dance background is being used to encourage kids to trust and follow Jesus.

The most important thing for someone to know about how I do business is that, for me, being in real estate goes far beyond a career. A home is where people make meaningful memories, and at the end of every day, it should feel like your sanctuary. Guiding and helping them to make one of the most impactful decisions of their lives is an honor. My clients often become my friends, and I am privileged to join in celebrating many of their big life moments, as well as walking beside them through challenging times. Real estate just opens the door of opportunity to minister to their whole lives. And that's why I truly love what I do.

I'm a third generation REALTOR® and have been serving buyers and sellers in Middle Tennessee since 2004. My experience began in the Nashville luxury high-rise condominium market and has since expanded to sales of land, new construction, horse & farm properties, vacation homes, cash



flow investments, custom builds and pretty much anything else my clients need. I believe my success is the product of hard work and providing a referral-worthy experience to every client. And ultimately, I'm convinced all our rewards come from God who entrusts us with helping others and supporting His work. I'm currently taking on new clients and would be delighted to help *Nashville Christian Family* readers with all their real estate needs. They are welcome to reach out to me anytime at 615-335-3270 or Tina@LifeHappensAtHome.com.

— Tina Pierret, Realtor  
[www.lifehappensathome.com](http://www.lifehappensathome.com)



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[SalvationArmyNashville.org/red-kettle](https://SalvationArmyNashville.org/red-kettle)

### Is Coffee Consumption Safe For Seniors?

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to this question. From relishing that first sip of hot brew in the morning to lounging with a delicious combination of espresso and dessert in the evening, coffee is a staple for many older adults. But, believe it or not, coffee is one of the most controversial food topics circulating the aging community. Some people believe caffeine is bad for their health, while others believe it positively affects them. We know seniors love their coffee, but the question is, does it love them back? It is my goal to provide you with five positive attributes of drinking coffee, along with 5 negative responses that seniors may experience. You may then evaluate this information to make an informed decision for you and your lifestyle.



Positive benefit number one: coffee may be the answer to help prevent dementia. A recent study found that drinking 3-5 cups of coffee per day in middle age is associated with a decreased risk of cognitive decline at late-life by 65%. While this sounds great, it was only one study and no concrete conclusions can be drawn from it. Number two: coffee has been shown to increase energy levels and mood. Coffee is not just a morning-time beverage to start your day. Studies show coffee can help you feel more awake by increasing the levels of neurotransmitters in your brain. Basically, the caffeine in coffee stimulates the nervous system and makes you feel alert. So, if you are ever low on energy or feeling sluggish due to age, it may be time for some java iced up with cream and sugar.

Since coffee contains caffeine, a natural diuretic, research has shown that caffeinated coffee is 60% more active than water in stimulating movement within the colon, while decaf only makes up 23%. This means that benefit number 3 for aging adults looking for little relief should try drinking some black coffee in the morning to help get things moving along. However, if you have a loose stool, it is recommended to stay away from caffeinated beverages and sticking to decaf coffee. Benefit number 4 focuses on the potential to reduce Type 2 Diabetes. People who are overweight are most prone to develop type 2 diabetes. If you drink coffee, the caffeine decreases insulin in your blood by suppressing the release of glucose from your liver. So, pour yourself a cup of Joe, get off that couch, and hit that treadmill - it's scientifically proven and you'll thank yourself later on down the line.

Finally, coffee consumption may decrease the risk for stroke. Coffee has been found to reduce inflammation and can decrease the likelihood of myocardial infarction and stroke. In a collection of studies reported by the US National Library of Medicine, consuming 4+ cups of coffee per day showed a preventive effect on stroke. Coffee is also linked with a higher level of physical activity, which helps lower blood pressure and lose weight. Both are significant factors to decreasing the likelihood of a stroke.

While there are five potential benefits listed above for coffee consumption, I need to point out some adverse reactions that can occur with this consumption. First off, coffee can easily lead to dehydration. Simply put, the more coffee you drink, the more bathroom trips you will have which can lead to dehydration. Next, coffee consumption can cause heart palpitations as a result of the caffeine in the drink. If you notice an irregular heartbeat, you should avoid drinking caffeinated coffee. Another potential adverse effect is that while many seniors enjoy their morning cup of coffee, they should be careful not to drink it too late in the day. Why? Because caffeine can disrupt sleep cycles, leading to insomnia when consumed after 6 p.m. Seniors should pay attention to the time of day they are consuming coffee. The caffeine in coffee can help seniors feel more awake, alert, and focused for hours after drinking it. But too much of this stimulant can cause anxiety which is the fourth potential negative reaction to drinking coffee. The final negative physiological reaction may be an upset stomach. Our digestive system runs on acid, meaning we need acids to break down the food and beverages we drink throughout the day. The problem occurs when we have too much gastro acid in our stomach. Coffee is acidic, so when you drink coffee, it is adding more acid to your stomach.

I hope this information helps you make good decisions on your consumption of coffee. If you would like a further explanation or consultation please call Amada Senior Care at 615-933-7494 and ask for me.

— Kevin B. Fehr, CSA, Certified Senior Advisor President & CEO,  
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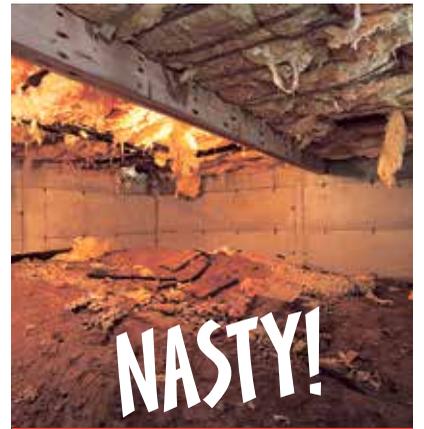
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# Singing Hope:

## Danny Gokey

### IN THE BEGINNING

A big family: two brothers and four sisters (Charles, Daniel, Angela, Janell, Gina, and Tracey). The fifth of these siblings, Daniel Jay Gokey, entered the mix on April 24, 1980 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Only the Lord knew where He would take this baby.

Saturated in music, the family sang in his Grandfather's church where Danny grew up. Despite singing all of his life, it was not until age 12, after an offhand comment from his father to his mother about how well he could sing, that Gokey realized he actually had a good voice. Danny recalls being shocked by his Dad's comment, but from that point on something settled in his heart about using that gift. He went on

to serve as worship leader of Faith Builders International Ministries during his mid-twenties, traveling between two campuses each week to lead. Ultimately, however, Gokey realized that serving through worship was the foundation, but not the calling on his life. Soulful Christian Pop has become his mainstay signature. Along with the soulful music is the testimony of life-wrenching times with stronger, better times seeping then soaring through.

### IN THE MOMENT

The power of music can provide purpose and direction, especially in the most trying times; that power has shaped Danny Gokey's life and driven his career. Probably few people more deeply understand music's power to feed the soul than Gokey. He learned to channel the inspiration he found through his music and his faith to make a difference in people's lives, including his own. He has learned to ask God to "keep me in the moment. I want to honor people by living in the moment. I desire to move the flesh out of the way to love."

On May 15, 2004, Gokey married his high school sweetheart, Sophia Martinez. Asking Danny to audition for American Idol was her repeated request. She had long been a fan and persuaded Danny to watch and consider auditioning.



Sophia was born with a congenital heart condition but for years the couple had no indication that her first surgery in infancy and second surgery at age seven were leading to a huge crash and burn. Then, in their early years of marriage came the random and extremely accelerated heart beats.

On July 9, 2008, four weeks before Gokey auditioned for American Idol, Sophia died from complications during the third procedure to treat her congenital heart disease, a routine surgery that was considered to be ninety-percent successful. Sophia was in the fateful ten-percent. Wanting to respect Sophia's desire for him to audition, yet falling apart emotionally during the process, Danny honored the commitment, ultimately finishing in the top three.

### IN THE GRIEF

Music sustained him following Sophia's death, and after the world discovered his talent on American Idol, propelled him up the charts. For his first album, Gokey gained a nomination for Best New or Breakthrough Artist at the first annual American Country Awards. Even after her death, Sophia influenced her husband to honor his God-given talent through ministry and music: Danny founded Sophia's Heart in her honor to help provide resources and shelter for homeless families. This later became Better Than I Found It,

a nonprofit established to support and encourage other organizations who are committed to making a difference in their own communities. He affirms that “friends and family have helped set up a scaffold so that real ministry can take place; they have rallied around me and encouraged me when there wasn’t a lot [already] established.” Gokey adds that “ministry can easily take over your whole body . . . such that you don’t see how it’s affecting your family. Ministry requires daily discipline.” It’s all about choice.

## IN THE AFTERMATH

Three-time Grammy Nominee, three-time K-LOVE Male Vocalist of the Year, two-time Dove Award winner, and eight-time Dove Award nominee, Danny Gokey has become a favorite of millions of fans. He released his first album, *My Best Days*, which debuted at number four on the Billboard Top 200 album chart. Among many others, he has released such notables as 2014’s *Hope in Front of Me* (which was inspired by his book, *Hope in Front of Me: Find Purpose in Your Darkest Moments*), award-winning holiday album, *Christmas Is Here* and 2019’s *The Greatest Gift: A Christmas Collection*, his second collection of seasonal music. “The Prayer,” his signature duet with Natalie Grant, was released as a single in 2018. Gokey has celebrated a series of number one singles, and reached the top of Billboard’s Christian chart again with *Rise*, his fifth full-length studio album in 2017, in 2019 with *Haven’t Seen It Yet* and 2021 with *Jesus People*. Singles “Tell Your Heart to Beat Again” and “Haven’t Seen It Yet” have both been RIAA Certified Gold. Danny has engraved his place on the radio charts with multi-week, multi-chart topping runs in the United States, Canada, and now Latin markets with his Spanish singles and hits in Latin America, including 2016’s album *La Esperanza Frente a Mi*. It all comes down to “Love God, Love People,” just like Danny’s most recent number one, and first spoken by Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:38-39).

With multiple awards, number one album debuts and number one singles, Gokey is excited about continuing to share hope and encouragement with his listeners. He has reached a sweet season in his music career and life. The climb, however, has been riddled with heartache and those things that most people—the church included—rarely speak of publicly, if at all. Cycles of depression have plagued him but have also provided opportunity for God to sing through him in true ministry. Danny has wanted to mix hope and entertainment in a way that would truly make an impact on hurting souls.

## IN THE EXPERIENCE

One recent testimony of hope drawn from his music comes through the quiet words of a young woman: “Danny Gokey is a true missionary. I thank him again for walking God’s path with confidence and wisdom.” She sent a special message to Danny, saying: “I am forever indebted to [you] for [your] song and video ‘Rise,’ which saved my life and countless others, like ‘Tell Your Heart to Beat Again.’” Despite chart successes, what better tribute could a songster receive than those words of life and healing—genuine appreciation and empathy through God-given music as God’s conduit.

## IN THE NEXT CHAPTER

Several years after Sophia’s passing, Gokey met and married Leyceta Peralta, a model, at a church in Miami, Florida. They currently live outside of Nashville with their four fabulous, rambunctious children: Daniel, Victoria, Gabriel, and Emanuel. Fans can get to know more about them and their family life, goals, and perspectives through their podcast, *Livin’ la Vida Gokey*. You can watch the videos on AccessMore, or listen wherever you find your favorite podcasts. Because of busy schedules and time on the road, Danny cherishes every moment he gets at home with his family. He knows how precious every moment is, and how life can change in the twinkling of an eye.

## IN THE WHOLE

A particular verse from God’s Word has directed Gokey’s life: “Now may the



God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Romans 15:13). Danny explains, “It is the believing that makes me abound in joy and peace of the Holy Spirit—believing in the right things, believing in what God says.”

Danny concludes with urgent words of wisdom for *Nashville Christian Family* magazine readers: “The greatest words resounding in my heart right now are that Jesus is coming again soon; we need to be more about keeping that at the forefront of our minds so that daily decisions are based on bringing people into the Kingdom of God because life is full of distractions. The Bible makes it very clear that when He comes, people will be eating, drinking, marrying . . . going about their regular lives. . . . Life will look very normal just as it did to the people in Noah’s day. ‘People were unaware’ until the day Noah entered the ark and ‘until the flood came and swept them all away. So will be the coming of the Son of Man’ ” (Matthew 24:38-40).

You “just haven’t seen it yet,” echoes one of Gokey’s latest songs. Keep your eyes open for the good things that are coming!

— 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.*

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 gluttony 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](mailto: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



# THE HOME FRONT

## Facts About Caring For Grass During the Winter

Cooler weather brings disappointment as once lush lawns fade to brown. Warm weather grasses around the Southeast enter a stage of dormancy during the fall and winter months. As a result, lawns become a less appealing brown. Most likely though, your lawn has not died, it's just hibernating.

### Why Does My Lawn Turn Brown When It Gets Cold?

Warm-weather grasses like Zoysia, Bermuda, and St. Augustine take the winter off, and their dormancy turns your lawn brown. Temperatures consistently below 65 degrees Fahrenheit move these grasses from caring for leaves to caring for roots. A simple test of pulling on your turf can determine if your grass has entered this phase. If you pull on the grass and feel resistance, then your grass is simply bracing itself for winter. On the other hand, if the grass comes out freely, you may have a bigger problem.

### Do I Need to Water My Lawn During the Winter?

Watering your lawn in winter is mostly not needed. Periodic rainfall is usually all your grass needs to survive winter and restart in the spring. Plus, overwatering in winter can cause your lawn more damage. The roots do not absorb as many nutrients in the winter since they do not need to support the leaves. As a result, too much water around the roots can cause mold which will prevent the grass from coming back to life in the spring.

### Do I Need to Mow My Lawn When It Turns Brown?

Mowing your lawn during its hibernation is unnecessary. Since your lawn focuses on caring for its root system, the grass part is not growing. That means that mowing it will not help it return to its green glory. In fact, you can cause harm by mowing your grass during its dormant period. Mowing grass spreads clippings in bunches on the grass. This blocks sunlight to the roots and holds water that can cause mold. So, mowing becomes a danger to your lawn. Instead of mowing, you can care for your lawn with regular raking. Raking eliminates piles of tree leaves and debris that holds water and blocks sunlight to the roots of the lawn. Creating a clean environment for those roots will help your lawn start strong in the spring.

### When Will My Grass Turn Green Again?

Between late March and early May, the temperature should rise and bring the green back to your turf. The higher temperatures tell the grass to produce leaves. The roots begin to draw more nutrients, and your grass begins to look like it should.

### Does My Lawn Need to Be Treated During the Winter?

Fertilizer in winter can be the most damaging thing to your warm-weather grass. The chemicals in fertilizer can hang around in the soil and burn the roots. Since the roots do not absorb as many nutrients, they do not need more food during this hibernation. Timing is everything with fertilizers. You should time a last fertilization right before cold weather sets in. This way, the roots are sure to have enough nutrients for winter and to sprout fast in spring. Weeds do not stop in winter. Some pre-emergent weed killers can be helpful in January and April. This will eliminate competition around your grass's roots. So, your grass will have a welcoming environment when it returns in spring without all those weeds.

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— *Meredith Boyd, Social Media and Marketing Coordinator - Waynes*



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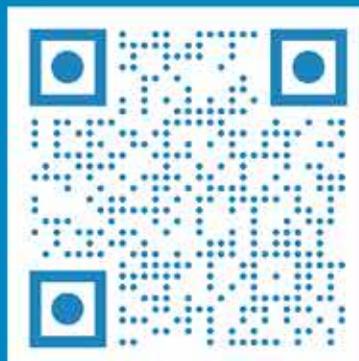




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## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### The When, What, and Why of Christmas

History matters because the experiences of others can and will create the first pillar of wise decision making. When we are faced with a problem or a circumstance for the first time, our mind tries to figure out, what should we do in this situation. The conclusion begins to form by drawing knowledge from things we have learned from trusted sources. The miraculous experiences from the history of others are a great source of societal knowledge and becomes the basis of our holidays.

We are entering the Christmas season. An important and memorable time of the year to hundreds of millions of people. The word “Christmas” is synonymous with the birth of Christ Jesus but the word itself is not mentioned once in the bible; the main source of knowledge for the Christian faith. Today, people worldwide celebrate this beautiful holiday; rich with family traditions. It commemorates the birth of Jesus, the incarnate Christian God yet throughout the rest of the year, many of these same people who take part in the celebrations, live a life void of religious beliefs. It is important to note that history speaks to who we were while our current lives transform the history for future generations. If we forget the lessons of the past, we stand to lose the truth that made our history so meaningful.

The word Christmas, was first used around 1038 AD. It’s actually a combination of two words...Christ and Mass. Though the word Christ is commonly used as Jesus’ name; it is actually a title. It comes from a Greek word that means “Anointed One”. The Hebrew word is “Messiah”; a term that Old Testament prophets used to describe the coming Savior. Many people get needlessly upset when the word Christmas is abbreviated Xmas but to better understand the historic meaning one must know that Greek is an important language in the early Christian faith. They were not taking “Christ” out of Christmas; they were using the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, (Χριστός) “X” (pronounced “kai” in Greek), and it has been used throughout history to represent Jesus’ title as the Christ.

The second word is Mass. In Middle English, masse, from Old English mæsse, from Vulgar Latin \*messa “Eucharistic service,” literally “dismissal,” from Late Latin missa “dismissal,” fem. past participle of mittere “to let go, send” (source N2 of the Etymology Dictionary, a source that explains what words meant at the time they were originally used.) Catholics still celebrate the service of the Mass in their churches and, most importantly, the Mass is the exact same service worldwide. The uniformity of the Mass was one reason the word Catholic was chosen for the first Christian faith. It literally means universal.



The Mass of the nativity of Jesus on December 25th started before we formally named the holiday Christmas. The first recorded religious midnight Mass on December 25th was in 336 AD, during the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine (the first Christian Roman Emperor).

There are many different traditions and theories as to why Christmas was originally celebrated on December 25th. The earliest Christian tradition places March 25th as the exact day when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would have a very special baby. The Feast of the Annunciation it still celebrated on the 25th March. Nine months after the 25th of March is the 25th December; the due date of Jesus’ natural birth.

Even more interesting, March 25th was the day the Jewish people believed that the world was made. It is also the day that Jesus died (Nisan 14 in the Jewish calendar). Tradition holds that Jesus was conceived and died on the same day of the year, thirty-three years apart.

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.

“Inquisitio veritatis”

— Anthony “Tony” Boquet, is a resident of Franklin, TN. For 34 years he has been happily married to Toni Ann. They have two children and three adorable grandchildren. His hobbies include writing and reading, playing guitar, instructing TaeKwon-Do and self-defense classes in HapKiDo, and riding motorcycles.



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## MIGHTY WOMEN

### The Sky's the Limit

"Miss Susan, I don't know what I want to do with my life..." A few years ago, Lauren was taking my work ethics class where we identify a career path right before graduation, which can be daunting with past criminal history and unexplainable gaps in employment. I was a little concerned Lauren might fall back into addiction if we did not find something to keep her excited and motivated. That is when it hit me. "Lauren, what about the field of aviation?"

She immediately latched onto that idea, so I invited Jim, a pilot friend and donor, to meet with her to discuss all aspects of aviation. It was in that meeting Lauren decided to become a pilot and Jim amazingly offered to help her get her license and loan her his own plane to do it. Jim even had a friend by the name of "Grumpy," with 32 years in the Air Force under his belt and an endless list of awards, who agreed to be her instructor.

This path has been anything but easy. Lauren has stretched herself beyond limits she even knew she had, and she has jumped through a million hoops to prove to the FAA that she is no longer an addict and can handle the responsibility and pressure of flying. Weaker individuals would have quickly folded.

Lauren has persevered through many tears, endless study, countless surprise drug tests, ridiculous

delays, multiple medical evaluations, and lots of sleepless nights. However, through it all, she has given God all the glory.

One of the greatest thrills of my life has been to see Lauren fly solo over the Blue Monarch campus. It makes my heart skip a beat every single time and it is so fun to see all the women and children run outside to cheer her on. Sam, our dog, goes nuts because he thinks he owns even the airspace over our property. Every one of those women walk back into the house believing in themselves a little more and I am convinced even the children begin to dream bigger in that moment. The impact is tangible and shows on their faces.

Last week Lauren finally got her pilot's license after nearly a three-year struggle, and yesterday I was honored to be her very first passenger. It was almost an out-of-body experience as the two of us flew over the Blue Monarch property and I was able to see the women and children run outside and wave at us - from Lauren's perspective this time.

Lauren's story will be a Blue Monarch legend. I see every day the impact her determination has on the



women of Blue Monarch - it gives them hope and teaches them to not give up, that their hard work and perseverance will eventually pay off. They absorb it and take it to heart.

As I watched Lauren so confidently maneuver the plane, manage all the many instruments and gears, communicate by radio in a cryptic language only pilots understand, and gaze across the sky as if she owned it, I could not help but think back on the woman who sat in my office and wept with overwhelming brokenness, and absolutely no hope, just a few years ago. My word, look at her now. She is not just a fighter. She is a warrior inspiring other warriors just like her.

I like to teach every woman at Blue Monarch "the sky's the limit!" But Lauren has taught them it is actually true.

— Susan Binkley, Founder and President of Blue Monarch - Long-term, residential recovery program for women and their children.

931.924.8900,

[www.bluemonarch.org](http://www.bluemonarch.org)



## BODY & SOUL

### Own Your Health

People often ask me how they can take control of their health in order to walk in freedom to do what God has called them to. I put together some practical ways to show you what taking ownership looks like in your health.

#### Here are a couple of symptoms of NOT taking ownership:

- Saying that our health is a priority, but our bank account, schedule, and focus prove otherwise.
- Not being able to do the things that God has called us to fully.
- Making excuses on how all of the external things in our life have determined our health, rather than OUR CHOICES.
- Not having PREDICTABILITY and CONTROL in our results and progress.
- Waiting until everything is "perfect" to start making changes. (There is no perfect season.)
- Doing a bunch of "diet" research on the first page of google because we feel guilty about how we ate over the weekend.

- ONLY getting free tips and tricks from people on social media.

- Thinking that just because we don't have any health issues we don't really need to be proactive.

#### Here are some examples of taking full ownership of your health:

- We are able to FULLY do what God has called us to do in every season.
- Our bank account and schedule clearly reflect that we make our health a priority. Anyone could take a look without even knowing us and see that clearly. (Where our treasure is there our heart will be also).
- We feel in full control of our progress and results because we have proven frameworks that work long term. There is no more confusion and discouragement.
- We take imperfect action and slowly progress toward our goals even through tough seasons.
- We lead our family and set a good example in our health. Our family feels at peace and doesn't have to worry about us.

**WE GET HELP.** Instead of trying to do our own



research and go in alone, we allow someone we trust to give us a proven system AND keep us accountable to that system.

#### We are PROACTIVE, instead of being reactive.

When things come up, we look to what we want our health to look like in the future and structure our actions to help us get there.

We don't just focus on "Getting by" in our health. We are intentional; at being excellent and using our health as one of the greatest assets we have.

Take some time to reflect today. Which one of these areas do you need to change to start taking full ownership in the way you steward your body?

— Ashton Tate, Founder, Glory to Glory Fitness, 615-488-8203



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## PARENTING POINTS

### The 12 Days of Christmas Co-parenting

As a co-parent who has shared two decades of holidays, here are a few ideas on how to plan ahead when sharing children between mom's house and dad's house. These ideas can help keep Christmas at the center of what can be a difficult time of sharing the kids.



Before sharing Christmas, plan to have...

- a Coparent T.E.A.M.M. Meeting
- 2 Cars Awaiting
- 3 Face Times
- 4 Christmas Meals
- 5 Transitions
- 6 Marco Polos
- 7 Cousins Caring
- 8 Grandparents Waiting
- 9 Special Sayings
- 10 Gifts for Aunties
- 11 Freeing Phrases
- 12 Nighttime Notes

Try to remember that more than anything, kids need the emotional freedom to love everyone in their life, no matter how far or close they live and no matter whose side of the family they are on. Try to be as kind and compassionate about the "other family" as possible so your children don't feel like they must pick a favorite.

If this is your first Christmas after a divorce, it will be difficult. Try not to go through it alone. Reach out to a close friend who may be a few years ahead of you in the experience. Ask for them to be your 3:00 AM friend so you can reach out anytime you need to talk and get some stable support.

Be wary of those friends or family who add "gas" to the fire and can't help but say hurtful things about your child's other parent. Sometimes they can't see objective and they end up making it worse for everyone. Those people would be best at a distance, verbally and emotionally.

Do you know someone who is hurting this season and may need some extra encouragement because they recently divorced? This time of year, it can be a joyous celebration of Jesus' birth and yet for those who have had a significant loss it can be one of the hardest times to manage. Maybe consider inviting them to have a meal with your family or see a fun movie this season?

I am coming up on my 21st Christmas of co-parenting and every year has been a unique blessing to celebrate the life of Jesus and the beautiful daughter that was the greatest gift I could ever have asked for. This year she will have been married for just 13 days and beginning her new life as a Mrs. What a joy for all of us who love her – she has four parents and six stepsiblings who will all have just witnessed her big day. The goal has always been to allow her to live free between our two homes with one whole and thriving heart... Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!

— Jay and Tammy Daughtry, MMFTs are Founders of Co-Parenting International and the "One Heart, Two Homes" Digital Resource. Jay and Tammy are a blended family of four with two son-in-loves and four beautiful grandchildren.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Santa Meets “Goober”

I suspect almost everyone knows who Goober is. Maybe not the given name of George Lindsey, but when one hears “Goober”, they immediately think of the Andy Griffith show and the loveable gas station attendant and mechanic wearing the pointed beanie hat.

George had many roles other than Goober, but he will forever be known as that loveable, goofy character. Santa’s encounter with George was at The Mall at Green Hills located in Nashville, where he made his home for many years until his passing on May 6th, 2012.

It was an early morning in November and Santa had just walked onto the photography set. The stores had just opened and there were very few shoppers roaming the mall. Santa has encountered many “stars” throughout the years and some are less recognizable in their daily walk than when on stage. Goober was easily identified, even in a sport coat and no hat.

As George walked by, Santa waved and said, “Hi!”. George stopped and started a conversation. He asked me about all the children that visited Santa. We talked about the challenges of my role and then his career. Although forever known as Goober, George Lindsey appeared in many films and TV shows. A little-known fact is that he was Gene Rodenberry’s first choice for the role of Spock in the original Star Trek. George turned down the role and Leonard Nimoy became famous for it. The conversation turned to the Nashville life, then family life and then our faith. George, at times was rather colorful in speech but not offensively so. He also seemed to be a man of strong faith and put his trust in Christ. George then said he had to go as he was headed out to Georgia to “do a Goober show”.

Santa asked, “George do you ever get tired of Goober?” George paused, sighed and said, “I get so tired of Goober sometimes, I can’t stand it”. Then, the next comment is what stands out. “You know, sometimes I do get tired of Goober, but so much of my blessings have been because of Goober.



Goober is an American Icon, along with the other characters of that show. Because of what I’ve received as a result, I have no right not to give them Goober!”

As I went about the day, visiting with children and families, the light from the camera constantly flashing, those words remained in my head.

On my drive home that night, the words of Jesus in Luke 12:48 came to mind. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Most of us are familiar with that verse. But, that night, it came to life for Santa. When I first put on the red suit, it was because of another person not showing up. So, with a school waiting for Santa, that left me no choice. The suit and the beard were mine. That first day in 1984 was stressful but so much fun! I had no clue that this was a defining moment in my life. After a few years, and a lot of Santa education (I now have a Masters in Santa Claus from The INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SANTA CLAUS), I came to realize that this was a plan that God had for my life. This is a ministry, just as a pastor is called into a church role.

There are days that, like George, I feel a little weary. Then, God brings ol’ Goober and our parting conversation to mind. When God calls one to serve in a particular role, as HIS children, we are obligated to serve in that role until He releases us.

You may be a teacher, doctor, police, sanitation worker or anything else on this earth. There are days you want to give it all up. On those days, remember Goober and his conversation with Santa.

The amazing thing that happens on those days that Santa is down? God puts someone or something in my path to let me know this is where I belong. The last 2 years have been challenging for many of us. We have been financially and emotionally drained and there are days we just can’t see past tomorrow. Rest assured our God will see us through.

And remember- when we are in HIS will, He will bless us and others through us.

— Durward Blanks has been a professional Santa Claus/St. Nicholas for over thirty years. He is a motivational speaker and writer and enjoys sharing his many life experiences with others. As a follower of Christ, his mission is to share God’s love with as many as possible. You may contact Santa Durward at [DurBlanks@gmail.com](mailto:DurBlanks@gmail.com) or phone 615.496.1368

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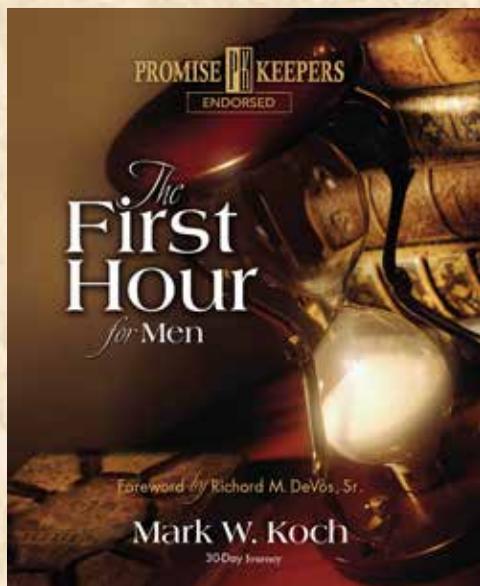
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**PLAN OF SALVATION**

*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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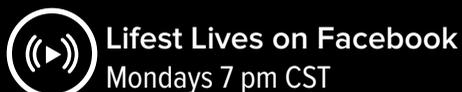
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