

May 2023

COMPLIMENTARY

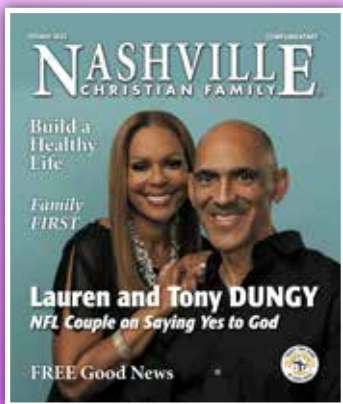
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YEARS

of Good News!





“Whoever Wins the Next Generation, Wins!”

Benny and Marilou Proffitt, Co-Founders
First Priority Global Ministries

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Mark 16:15

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Learn more about how you can be part of reaching the next generation for Jesus in every nation around the globe.

(Over the next 12 months we will be sharing amazing stories from different countries)



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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 Mothers!

Mother's Day is a celebration honoring mothers and motherhood, maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society. It is celebrated on various days around the world, most commonly in March, April or May. The actual designation of a holiday for Mother's Day began here in America. It is not directly descended from the many celebrations of mothers and motherhood that have occurred throughout the world over thousands of years, such as the Greek cult to Cybele, the Roman festival of Hilaria, or the Christian Mothering Sunday celebration. Despite this, in some countries Mother's Day has become synonymous with these older traditions.



The modern holiday of Mother's Day was first celebrated in 1908, when Anna Jarvis held a memorial for her mother in America. She then began a campaign to make "Mother's Day" a recognized holiday in the United States. Although she was successful in 1914, she was already disappointed with its commercialization by the 1920s. Jarvis' holiday was adopted by other countries and it is now celebrated all over the world. In this tradition, each person offers a gift, card, or remembrance toward their mothers, grandmothers, and/ or maternal figure on Mother's Day. Various observances honoring mothers existed in America during the 1870s and the 1880s, but these never had resonance beyond the local level. Jarvis never mentioned Julia Ward Howe's attempts in the 1870s to establish a "Mother's Day for Peace", nor any connection to the Protestant school celebrations that included "Children's Day" amongst others. Neither did she mention the traditional festival of Mothering Sunday, but always said that the creation was hers alone.

In 1912, Anna Jarvis trademarked the phrases "second Sunday in May" and "Mother's Day", and created the Mother's Day International Association. She specifically noted that "Mother's" should be a singular possessive, for each family to honor their mother, not a plural possessive commemorating all mothers in the world.

Here are a few Scripture passages referencing Mothers, perhaps you have others. Proverbs 31:25 "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come."

John 16:21 "A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world."

Proverbs 31:28–29 "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 'Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.'"

Proverbs 31:26 "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue."

Proverbs 31:31 "Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate."

Isaiah 66:13 "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you."

Robert Stringfellow, Publisher, 615-815-8765
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May 2023

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President and CEO of Awana
and MUCH MORE!

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She Didn't Stop Praying

She was nervous about being a guest on Bridges, but agreed to share her story with the hope that it would encourage other Moms.

Mary's "mom" story is filled with prayers and adversity. While she prayed for a happy, faith-filled family, her oldest son struggled with depression and anxiety. Despite the loving and supportive family, Blake felt like an outcast. Sadly, by his teen years he regarded himself a lost cause. This didn't stop Mary from praying. They got Blake into counseling, took him to church regularly, and prayed relentlessly. Even with these diligent efforts life grew darker for Blake and his family.

He Overdosed More than Once

Blake turned to alcohol and drugs to cope. He overdosed more than once. He was hospitalized several times and arrested in high school. Despite near fatal accidents, and various health issues, Blake just couldn't stay clean. He would do okay for a while and then relapse. As I sat with Mary on the Bridges set, I learned many lessons. I saw a gracious mom that never stopped praying. She admits she didn't always know what or how to

pray – but she just knew she couldn't afford to stop praying. There was also a point in our conversation where I saw her faith and frailty come together in a way that can only be described as supernatural. Without pretense, Mary shared there came a time in her son's journey that she made God a serious promise. She promised God - even if my son doesn't make it – even if my prayers aren't answered in the way I want - I don't want any of this story to be wasted. That's quite a prayer of surrender – and it's beyond what any of us can do on our own. While every mom's story is different – one of the most sacred things we can do is surrender our lives – and the lives of our children to Him. We surrender to Him by faith in His Word, by faith in His goodness – and by faith knowing His ways that are higher than our own.

Nothing More Could Be Done

Even after Mary prayed this very brave prayer the battle continued to rage. There came a point that Mary and her family realized they had done all they could possibly do. At this point Blakes parents had to ask him to leave their family home. It was only after Blake was asked to leave the family home that he decided to seek treatment. Blake reached out to Derek Faulker, Director of

Renewed Life Ministry Outreach (RLMO) and was granted admission. RLMO is a Christian residential program for men. Blake recommitted his life to Christ and found freedom and learned a new way of life at RLMO. Thankfully, God answered Mary's fervent prayers with miracles. Blake has been clean and sober for 8 years. Before Derek Faulker passed away, he selected Blake as his predecessor at RLMO. Blake now helps other men find freedom from addiction through faith in Jesus Christ. Blake is also a husband and father to two beautiful children. On Mother's Day – I say a special prayer for every Mom that's standing in faith for her child/ren. Whether the battle is addiction, or some other life controlling problem nothing is too big for God. Whatever you do don't give up and don't stop praying.

Today's Secret from the Studio: Whatever is happening in your child/ren's life: Don't Stop Praying.

— Monica Schmelter, host of Bridges on Christian Television Network, is a recovered fixer and people pleaser. Now, chocolate and grace fill her happy space. Watch Bridges on demand at www.monicaschmelter.com



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MIGHTY WOMEN

Acosta Using MBA from Trevecca to Excel in Corporate and Nonprofit Work

As vice president of brand strategy for Delta Dental, Missy Acosta oversees all aspects of communication and marketing, both internal and external. She had earned a college education years earlier and had served in multiple high-level positions before moving into her current role in 2007, but as time passed she believed there was a way to become more effective at her job. She decided an MBA degree would best serve that purpose.



option, which was something I really wanted. The fact that it was a Christian university was the icing on the cake.” Acosta believes going back to school after 20 years in the field was a benefit because experience gave her a solid grasp on the practical application of many of the skills and concepts presented in the classroom.

“I chose the MBA because I wanted to be better able to read and understand financials,” said Acosta. “I’ve also been in the executive ranks for a few years and I was at the point in my career where I was looking for greater opportunities, and I knew more education would help me.”

She went about the process of choosing a school methodically, gathering information from graduate programs throughout the Nashville area before making her decision. “When I started looking into MBA programs, I made a spreadsheet of all the different opportunities in and around Nashville,” Acosta said. “Ultimately, Trevecca was affordable and convenient. It also offered an in-person

In the years since she earned her MBA, she’s been able to see the big picture more clearly. That’s helped her as a leader and as a strategic thinker. Today, she still looks at situations through the lens of marketing and communications, but she’s also equipped to see what’s in the best interest of her company beyond her area of expertise.

Acosta has used her skills outside the workplace too, volunteering as the president of Cable, a women’s networking organization. In that role, she has helped a number of professional women adapt to a post-pandemic world. She is also the immediate past chair on the board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee, where she worked to give ‘bigs,’ ‘littles’ and their families a voice on the board and in the future of the organization.

Recently, Acosta’s determination, talent and leadership landed her on the Nashville Business Journal’s 2023 Women of Influence list. In her view, that is a confirmation that she is making a difference in both the corporate and nonprofit worlds.

“The notification about that recognition was one of those emails I had to read a couple of times to make sure I was understanding what I was reading,” said Acosta. “I am at a point in my life where accolades are not as important as feeling like I’m making an impact, but this recognition is validation that the impact is there.”

She believes her MBA has been important to her recent success, and she advises those considering it to think long term and take the leap. “My advice to those considering an MBA is just to do it. I made a spreadsheet and did all kinds of analysis, and if I had waited until I felt completely sure I was going to have the time or the opportunity, I would still be looking at that spreadsheet,” Acosta said. “Find the program that works for you, whether it’s online or in person, and then stop thinking and just do it.”

— Rebekah Warren



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sarah's story

As a second generation REALTOR®, Sarah Milligan knows the ins and outs of the real estate business.

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KIDS KORNER

Teaching Kids The Truth

Do you sense the shift of truth in our culture? Barna collected data in 2021 showing that 73% of parents wanted their children to have a healthy relationship with spirituality. Yet, a LifeWay study showed the number of kids walking away from the truth is increasing. How do we teach the truth? How do we counteract the culture in biblical ways?

Daniel in the Bible provides us with an example. After exiling Daniel and his friends to the Babylonian empire, King Nebuchadnezzar tried to indoctrinate them in the pagan ways of Babylon. The king intentionally worked on reprogramming the exiles by teaching them foreign literature and languages and enticing them with rich wines and foods. He even changed Daniel's name. The king determined that Daniel and his friends forget about the God of their forefathers. Despite all the king's efforts, Daniel resolved to obey God.

As the culture tries to retrain, rename, and readapt our kids to an unbiblical way of life, we must act intentionally and proactively. Kids need to know the foundational truths. Remind them that God is Creator; God is Holy; God is Love; and God is Sovereign. Our identity is founded in Jesus and what the Scriptures say, not our fickle feelings. If you have a curious child, try understanding what prompts the questions. Always point back to Scripture. They may not understand all the nuances of the Bible, but you're building a spiritual foundation.

Teach your kids the heroes of faith. Peter floundered and flourished. The disciples doubted. The minor prophets spoke unpopular truth amid hostile



backlashes. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, yet God used him for His good purposes. None of these heroes perfected their faith. They all failed, got back up, and stepped out in faith again. Our kids can too.

Work on training your child's heart, not his behavior. Pray for a radical change of heart. Show your kids what walking with Jesus looks like. Confess your sins. Pray aloud and often. Act on God's Word. Help

a neighbor. Let them see the power of the Spirit working through you—not through your strength or intelligence.

Step out in faith. Yes, it's uncomfortable, and you may feel unequipped, but kids need to see what active faith looks like. They need to see us stumble in our faith walk while simultaneously holding onto Jesus.

It's a weighty job, this parenting thing. We didn't know what we signed up for when we brought kids into the world. But God has equipped you for such a time as this. With God's help and wisdom, you can train your kids to live like Daniel in a corrupt and cancel-culture world.

— Sally Cressman writes about faith, family, and home on her website, www.sallycressman.com. You'll receive FREE "31 Biblical Affirmations for Mom" cards when you sign up. Connect with her on Instagram at @sacressman.

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9 Benefits of Upgrading to Energy-Efficient HVAC Systems

From your morning omelet to the gas in your car, it seems like everything is getting more expensive these days. And despite your best efforts to live a frugal lifestyle, rising energy costs can be difficult to escape. However, energy-efficient heating and cooling (HVAC) systems can offer you a way to reduce monthly energy bills and maximize your hard-earned money, all while improving the comfort of your home!



It may seem counterintuitive as an initial expense, but this investment can add significant savings over time and bring nine fantastic benefits your way! If you're ready to open your monthly energy bill and feel relief instead of dread, here are 9 reasons to consider upgrading to an energy-efficient HVAC system.

1. Lower Energy Bills
2. Tax Credits and Rebates
3. Improved Indoor Air Quality
4. Consistent Temperature Control
5. Quieter Operation
6. Better Humidity Control
7. Longer Lifespan
8. Increased Home Value
9. Enhanced Comfort

By investing in an energy-efficient HVAC system, you don't just get cost savings and enhanced home value. You also get improved comfort levels, making spending time at home even more enjoyable!

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— *Brandon Cox, Service Manager of Home Services*
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Tithing Your Time!

*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark,
Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a
solitary place where He prayed.*

Mark 1:35

It's interesting that in the Bible, there is only one thing that we are allowed to test God on, "Tithing," giving Him the first fruits of our income. I believe with all my heart that Tithing our time, giving Him the first fruits of our "Time" falls into this same category and is probably just as important to Him, after all He is our Father, and what Father doesn't yearn to spend time with his children.

Secondly as Christians with a desire to strive to be more like Jesus, the above scripture clearly shows that Jesus did just that... "Tithed His Time". He started His day off early in morning in prayer and intimate conversation with our Father.

The Bible tells us that God wants to bless our lives in ways that we cannot even imagine. As our heavenly Father He wants to fulfill His dream for our lives. So many times we miss God's best because we don't give Him the opportunity to guide and direct our lives on a daily basis!

With all the challenges us men face as husbands, fathers and providers, the stress can be unbearable at times. There is an enemy whose sole purpose is to rob us of our peace and Joy. I call the enemy Jr. "Joy Robber" because that's exactly who he is and is his entire M.O. Although many of us do not realize it, we're always wrestling against the unseen powers in the spiritual realm. There is an unending struggle and prayer is the weapon that will turn the tide! "Stay alert. Watch out for your great enemy the Devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8

People that know me are very familiar with two of my favorite slogans, "Armor up, or get slaughtered." *Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand against everything the enemy throws your way.* Ephesians 6:11

The second is "There's power in the Hour". Spend your first waking hour "Tithe your Time" in prayer and reading the word of God and watch your life drastically change!

God has a pre-planned destiny for you and a perfect plan for your life. Spend time with Him at the beginning of each day, pray to Him, seek Him and ask Him to help you be the son He wants you to be. Talk to your Father each and every morning and Watch Him bless you with peace and joy in a way that you could have never of imagined. I challenge you to take the test!

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

MONEY MATTERS

Spring Gardening- Prepare Your Home To Sell!

Spring is here and the real estate market is in full swing. Many people are getting their homes ready to sell and most will focus on the inside of the home to stage it for a quick sale. Home staging and preparing your home to sell is extremely important to get top dollar but don't neglect the yard. If your landscaping looks tired and is in need of some TLC what will this say to a potential buyer?

Now is the time to take note of the things you need to do to maintain your yard and invite the home buyers in! Spring is an important time of the year to get this started for a full season of color and a beautifully landscaped property. Plus who doesn't love to be in the garden this time of year? Here are some areas to focus on outdoors:

1. Start by spending some time doing a good clean-up. Pull out any plants that didn't make it through the winter. Remove weeds and rake up any leaves or debris left from last season.
2. Treat your grass for weeds and fertilize. Nothing says spring like green grass! Some due diligence on your lawn goes a long way.
3. Trim up any trees or shrubs that need attention. Remove dead limbs and cut back any branches that are in contact with the house. Did some of your shrubs not make it through our December freeze? Now is a great time to replace.



4. Divide your perennials. Now is the perfect time of year to divide your perennials. Use the divided plants to fill an empty place in your garden or share with a neighbor or friend. Plants always make great gifts!
5. Lastly, plant annuals and vegetables to enjoy throughout the growing season. Use raised beds or a sunny spot in your yard to plant a garden. Plant annual flowers by your front entry and use in colorful containers.

Happy Spring!

— Sarah Milligan, 615-545-1133
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As a second generation REALTOR®, Sarah Milligan knows the ins and outs of the real estate business. She is a top producing REALTOR® helping buyers, sellers, and investors in and around Nashville since 2007.



SPECIAL FEATURE

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Honoring Mother's Day

And standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and the sister of his mother, Mary the wife of Clopass, and Mary, the Magdalene. Jesus, therefore, seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing by, said to his mother; "Woman, behold thy son." Then, he said to the disciple: "Behold thy mother." And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. John 19:25-27.

Sentenced to death by Roman crucifixion, in a political mock trial, beaten and flogged, then fastened with nails through his wrists to a rugged cross beam, his legs twisted in an unnatural position and nailed grotesquely in place, stripped of all human dignity and despised by onlookers. There were no words in the English language to describe such torture and agony, and so a new word had to be invented. Excruciating literally means "out of the cross".

Yet, in the midst of this indescribable anguish Jesus gives us a divine example of love and veneration toward his earthly mother, Mary. Christ loved and honored his mother. He fulfilled the fifth commandment as perfectly as he fulfilled them all. He also took responsibility for his earthly duty to see that his mother was cared for in her old age.

Mary would have been near age fifty at this time, and by contemporary standards, would have been considered an elderly widow.

Why did Christ commit his mother's care to John the beloved disciple? Why not his own brothers? We are told in John 7:5 that "his brothers were not believing in him." There is no record of their presence at the cross. They became believers later after Jesus rose from the dead. Acts 1:14 records that they were among the group meeting for prayer in the Upper Room when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost: "These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers".

Honoring parents was considered a virtue in the Roman world. But Rome did not create a legal obligation to care for parents, and a child who refused to do so could not be compelled by the courts. Unlike the Romans, Jewish tradition placed great responsibility on adult children to care for their aging parents. The Torah states three times over that children should honor and revere their parents to honor, especially as they become



physically or mentally frail with age.

Jesus' example of providing for the care of his widowed mother is regrettably not echoed in our system of laws today. In the U.S., requiring that children care for their elderly parents is a state-by-state issue. Many states do not impose any obligation to care for one's aging parents. Currently, 27 states have what are called "filial responsibility" laws. The term "filial responsibility" refers to an adult child's duty to support his or her parents. In recent years, as Medicare and other federal regulations affecting the elderly have become increasingly more complex, a new area of legal practice has emerged known as "Elder Law."

Crain Law Group is dedicated to providing legal advice and assistance to families in caring and "honoring" their elderly, dependent or disabled parents.

— Larry L. Crain,
Crain Law Group, PLLC
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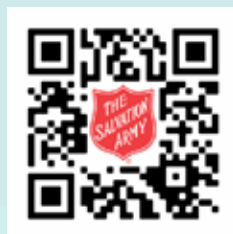


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MISSION MAKERS

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The Salvation Army, Nashville
www.salvationarmynashville.org



Lives Changed Through the Programs of The Salvation Army: Meet James

James was among the estimated 570 veterans experiencing homelessness who resided in Tennessee. After returning from fighting for his country, he returned home disabled and disenfranchised. James struggled to find employment, and then he struggled to find a warm place to sleep as he became one of the many experiencing chronic homelessness in Nashville. Then, James found The Salvation Army's Supportive Housing program.



The first thing James and his case manager worked on was re-engaging with primary healthcare support to assist with his disability. From there, his case manager worked to get him to multiple interviews in hopes of securing his first job in a long time. All the hard work and perseverance paid off when James successfully landed a job at a high-end dining establishment, providing his first steady income in several months. Within a short time of entering the Supportive housing program, James had his healthcare under control and a full-time job. Now all he needed was a home. Less than 2 months after entering the program, James got his wish a permanent subsidized house of his own.

However, a fire has now been lit in James. He is no longer content with simply a job and home...he wants to thrive and grow! He made the decision to go back to school and purchased his own personal computer to help him be successful when he starts college classes. To learn more about the programs of The Salvation Army visit www.SalvationArmyNashville.org.

— Misty Ratcliff, Development and Communications Manager,
 The Salvation Army, Nashville Area Command
www.salvationarmynashville.org



ASK THE EXPERT

Brought to you by:
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Special Needs Trust and Mental Illness

Q: How do you answer those who say, "My mom's dementia isn't the issue for our family. It's not something we need to worry about. After all, we have other issues related to how mom is acting that we need to deal with."



A: This question lets me know that the family IS in need of help. The mother's dementia is affecting the family because they do say there is an issue. Instead of giving guidelines for the family to follow, I ask this question. "What do you believe you need?" I can step in, depending on the family's situation and offer suggestions on how a special needs trust may benefit their loved one.

— Darlene A. Kemp, MPH, MBA-HCM, Executive Director - Vista Points Special Needs Trusts, www.vistapoints.org - 888-422-4076



VistaPoints
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SPECIAL FEATURE

Mother's Day – Looking Back, Rejoicing Forward

8,530 days ago, I became a first-time mother when God blessed me with a sweet little girl named Angelia Grace. She was perfect – her eyes, her nose, her skin and her toes! There are no human words that can fully express the joy of being a mom and how my heart and soul seem to “grow” as she grew... from her first smile, her first word, her first giggles to her first steps, her first day at school, her first skinned knee.

Motherhood is so many things – it's listening, it's snuggling, it's protecting and it's anticipating – always wanting to be sure our child is loved and cared for in a way that matters. I am so thankful that God allowed me to have this beautiful bundle of joy that is now 23, married and working full-time in ministry. It seems like it all went by so quickly and some days I would give anything to rewind the time and simply visit again the memorable moments of ballet and dance class, school choir, Awanas, and volleyball. The first and last day of school we had traditions of getting coffee before school, taking a carload of friends to lunch after school and doing something fun to commemorate the day. Those hundreds of common moments are all stored inside, many were captured in photos that reside in the cloud and a few were printed along the way and hung in frames or put in albums. When I think of Mother's Day I rejoice for the irreplaceable, unique and uncommon gift of my little girl, now a wonderful married adult woman.



I am deeply grateful for her strong, Christ-like husband who cares for her and believes in her and cheers for her now from the front row of life. And though we are separated by six hours, we continue to have a loving and connected relationship that feels like “home” across the miles. I rejoice at her future – of being a wonderful wife, a writer, a leader, an advocate for young people and as she continues to grow forward, I rejoice!!! I sometimes find my heart reminiscing and wandering around in the past memories and I smile from deep inside – and then I look ahead at the everchanging adventure of life she and her hubby are on and I raise my hands in praise! “Thank you, God, for allowing me to mother this precious gift and I rejoice because I know that no matter how much I love her, you love her even more and you have amazing plans for her next 8,000+ days!”

— Tammy Daughtry, MMFT, Founder, Coparenting International and The Center for Modern Family Dynamics
www.CoParentingInternational.com



CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

World Changer

As Christians, I am sure we are somewhat familiar with Moody Bible Institute. It is one of the leading evangelical biblical institutes in America and was founded in 1886 by Dwight L. Moody. Many of the literary works published by this institute claim that D. L. Moody was perhaps the greatest evangelist of the 19th Century. As Christians, we have benefited greatly by his conversion and impact, probably in ways we may not even know.

One of his famous quotes, “Christians should live in the world, but not be filled with it. A ship lives in the water; but if the water gets into the ship, she goes to the bottom. So Christians may live in the world; but if the world gets into them, they sink.” This is such a great word picture.

In Moody's own writings, he tells of his Sunday School teacher named Edward Kimball that had visited him at his work when he was 18 years old. Kimball had said that he was determined to get Moody saved and had been praying for him. At this visit, Kimball simply shared with Moody the love of God. It was that day that Moody's life changed.

“I remember the morning on which I came out of my room after I had first trusted Christ. I thought the sun shone a good deal brighter than it ever had before. I thought that it was just smiling upon me, and as I walked out upon



Boston Common and heard the birds singing in the trees, I thought they were all singing a song to me. Do you know? I fell in love with the birds. I had never cared for them before. It seemed to me that I was in love with all creation. I had not a bitter feeling against any man and I was ready to take all men to my heart. If a man has not the love of God shed abroad in his heart he has not yet been regenerated.”
From *Twice-Born Men: True Conversion Records of 100 Well-Known Men in All Ranks of Life* compiled by Hy. Pickering. London: Pickering & Inglis, [193]

The Bible tells us that it is the love of God that brings us to repentance. (Romans 2:4). It is knowing the love God that will transform human souls.

Sharing the love of God is revolutionary, as we see with the profound impact this reality made on Dwight Moody. A world changer emerged when he was faced with the reality of God's love. Let this be our intention. We too can have an impact on a world changer and may not even know it!

— Rhonda Smart, rhondalsmart@gmail.com

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SPECIAL FEATURE

A Selfless Mother

When we define the role of a mother it can be done with just one word; Selfless. If we try to explain the details that make up a selfless mother, we quickly find that it is much more complicated than just a woman who bears and / or rears a child. The responsibilities go much deeper as does the breath of the love required to deliver on all the commitments that come with the title of selfless mother.

With the understanding that God created the original woman, consider for a moment that God does not need us to exist. Our existence is completely at his pleasure. We exist for only three reasons: each unique human creation's journey starts with God, is born on earth to Know, Serve, and Love God, with the full intention of returning back to God. Our heavenly Creator, designed a woman's body to host, feed, and nurture a new life internally until the ninth month of conception. When the term is complete, her body, in agonizing pain, pushes out the child's body, so it can then be severed from the mother's body. The mother's pain is said to be passionately excruciating to serve the purpose of forging the bond of intense love between mother and child. When we are passionately in love with someone, we are willing to endure intense suffering for them.

Never before in the history of mankind has there been a more evident example of what it means to be a selfless mother, than the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus. At only fourteen years of age her life changed completely with one simple decision. That single decision was the very same decision that every mother-to-be must initially make. They each must decide to accept the responsibilities of nurturing and unconditionally loving a new creation for the rest of their life, regardless of the trails they are presented with. Mary's life epitomized the scope of the role of the selfless mother by her humble recognition that her ability to honor and execute on the commitments of motherhood would require unwavering trust in her God.

Some people believe that Mary had no choice in being the mother of Jesus but we have plenty of evidence to the contrary. Mary was not forced into being a mother; she had freewill and could have said no. God always grants us the ability to decide our own destiny. Yes, Mary was immaculately conceived for God's ultimate plan but His plan always allows for our final decision. Once Mary said yes, her fate was sealed, history was made, and her child would ultimately change the world forever.



Fortunately, the same can be said of every child born of woman. When God implants His life-sustaining soul into our being it is predestined with a

role to carry out; we each have a destiny to fulfill. Each mother is charged with her part in the development the child so that he or she can become the person they are meant to be. This allows God's plan to manifest through each of us and it is our mother who first sees the glimpse of this divine greatness, waiting to be unveiled upon the world. As we celebrate our earthly mothers, let us reflect on our own life's mission. If you are a mother, I ask that you turn your thoughts inward and reflect on your tie to Selfless Mother Mary. Pray that you too can grow a pure and compassionate heart filled with unselfish love while developing a mind toward divine discernment and the strength of endurance in the completion of God's plan for you and your children. Happy Mother's Day!

— Anthony “Tony” Boquet, the author of “The Bloodline of Wisdom, The Awakening of a Modern Solutionary” and Vice President, Education and Development at The American College of Financial Services

THE HOME FRONT

Brought to you by: **Frontier Foundation & Crawl Space Repair** • www.trustfrontier.com • **Klaus Roofing** • www.roofnashville.com



Why Mudjacking Isn't the Best Fix for Sunken Concrete

Let's be honest, uneven concrete is unsightly, it lowers your property value, and it's downright dangerous as a trip hazard. Whether it's your sinking driveway, sidewalk, patio or pool deck – it needs to be fixed, and fixed right. But what's the best way to fix your uneven concrete? For many homeowners, the term “mudjacking” comes to mind. And this outdated, messy method could be stopping them from fixing their concrete.



Pros

- Can be most inexpensive option
- Can level concrete for a period of time

Cons

- Not a permanent fix
- Messy and disruptive
- Large holes left in concrete by installers leave a polka-dotted look
- Return to service in 1-4 days

The good news is there is a modern solution that requires minimal disruption to lift and stabilize concrete slabs. Homeowners can achieve permanent concrete leveling with PolyLevel®. PolyLevel is a two-part foam engineered to expand immediately upon injection beneath a settled slab. Injection holes are much smaller than those required for mudjacking.

In action, PolyLevel® expands to many times its original volume, forcing the sunken concrete back to its original level. Within a matter of minutes, the expanded polymer hardens and reaches 90 percent or more of its final strength. This makes it possible

for the restored surface to regain full functionality right away. What we mean is, homeowners will be able to use their driveway in less than 20 minutes of concrete leveling with PolyLevel.

Pros

- Affordable, permanent solution
- Non-invasive and less messy
- Immediate return to service
- Lightweight but strong
- Environmentally friendly

Cons

• Can be more expensive than mudjacking
So when you're frustrated from tripping on your uneven concrete one too many times and you're ready to fix it, choose the option that makes the most sense for you and your family. And if you're ready to lift and level your concrete with PolyLevel, visit Frontier Foundation & Crawl Space Repair at TrustFrontier.com for your free concrete repair estimate!

— Devon Bagwell, Marketing Manager
www.trustfrontier.com, www.roofnashville.com



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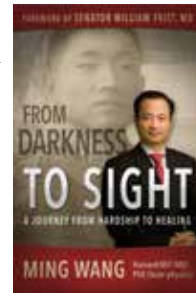
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Faith And Science Have Common Ground

Dr. Ming Wang, Harvard & MIT (MD, magna cum laude); PhD (laser physics) is a world-class laser eye surgeon. His story was featured in the film “*God’s Not Dead*”. He co-founded Common Ground Network. The film “*Sight*”, based on this autobiography “*From Darkness to Sight*”, co-starring Greg Kinnear, tells a fascinating story of how God has showed him that faith and science do have common ground.



ta and amniotic membrane (fetus-connected tissue which are discarded), he eventually invented amniotic membrane contact lens and received two U.S. patents. Today, amniotic membrane contact lens has been used by tens of thousands eye doctors from around the world in nearly every nation, and millions of patients have had their eyesight restored. The film “*Sight*” is about a fascinating story



He came to America with only \$50 and earned two doctorate degrees, one in laser physics and one in medicine, and graduated with the highest honors from Harvard Medical School and MIT.

The amniotic membrane contact lens, which Dr. Wang has invented, has been used by tens of thousands of eye doctors throughout the world in nearly every nation, and millions have had their eyesight restored.

Being a research scientist and also a Christian, Dr. Wang embarked on a 20-year journey, to try to find a way to understand how fetus can heal without scar. He wanted to do research on fetal tissue but without hurting a fetus in the process. He believed that faith and science do have common ground and God will show him the way to discover the secret of fetus’ scarless healing ability and at the same time, preserving life. As a Christian, Dr. Wang believed that God would eventually help him find the solution but he has to continue his work without giving up (James 1-4: Perseverance complete you). After years of research on placen-

of how the amniotic membrane contact lens was invented.

Dr. Ming Wang, Harvard & MIT (MD, magna cum laude); PhD (laser physics), is a world-renowned laser eye surgeon, philanthropist, and a co-founder of the non-profit Common Ground Network.

As a teenager, Ming fought valiantly to escape China’s Cultural Revolution – during which millions of innocent youth were deported to remote areas to face a life sentence of hard labor and poverty.

Wang Foundation for Sight Restoration has helped patients from over 40 states in the U.S. and 55 countries, with all sight restoration surgeries performed free-of-charge. Dr. Wang was named the Kiwanis Nashvillian of the Year for his lifelong dedication to help blind orphaned children from around the world.

The film “*Sight*”, is based on Dr. Wang’s autobiography “*From Darkness to Sight*”, co-starring Greg Kinnear.

— Anle Ji

PHOTO FUN

The Precious Value of a Snap Shot

When I was a young girl something that I loathed most, was getting my photo taken. My tiny hands sticky with icing, following some imaginary quest, and I was forced to stop in my tracks and produce the most annoyed and cheesy grin this world has ever seen.

However, now one of my favorite things is to escape for a second and look back at this birthday. If my mother wouldn’t have taken those few extra seconds to snap that picture, I may not have remembered just how happy that day was for me.



Photography also has that special ability to put a face to those we have lost. When reminiscing about those important people, we can remind ourselves of the features that may fade in our minds. What a beautiful gift it is to be able to show others what these special human beings looked like. Through photography we can connect to our ancestry, live out priceless moments and give a tangible face to our loved ones. Although the frames may become thick with dust, and the pigment may begin to fade, photos are truly a time capsule.

That’s one of the best parts about photography, for just a second you are transported back to the thrill your child felt on Christmas morning when they opened up that huge box sitting beneath pine needles. You may not remember everything about that day- but you sure do get a snap shot.

As generations shift and time sprints itself forward, its precious to think back to the clothes you used to wear that seems crazy now or maybe that hairdo that is so out of style. Images of our past can help us remember the sensations, feelings and imagery of those moments.

So, as I sit here looking at my young cheeky grin, I realize now just how special photos can be. From the wise words of my mother, “You can delete as many of these pictures as you like... But you can never go back to this moment.”

— Kate Grady Student of Psychology at Belmont University and Intern with The Center for Modern Family Dynamics

HASSLE FREE ZONE

Home Remedies To Keep Fleas Off Of Your Pet

Fleas are the pest control epitome of “small but mighty.” These blood suckers are the most common cause of skin disease in dogs and cats and can cause health problems ranging from discomfort to allergic reactions to serious illnesses. You don’t want them on your pets, and you certainly don’t want them hitching a ride into your house. Here are a few pet-friendly, natural ways to keep fleas off pets.

Signs Your Pet Has Fleas

What dog doesn’t love rolling around in the grass to scratch a particular elusive itch? The first step to preventing and getting rid of fleas is to learn the signs. The most common signs of fleas are:

- Frequent scratching, especially in the head and neck area
- Tiny red dots on the skin
- Skin inflammation
- Flea droppings (“flea dirt”), often resembling pepper flakes.

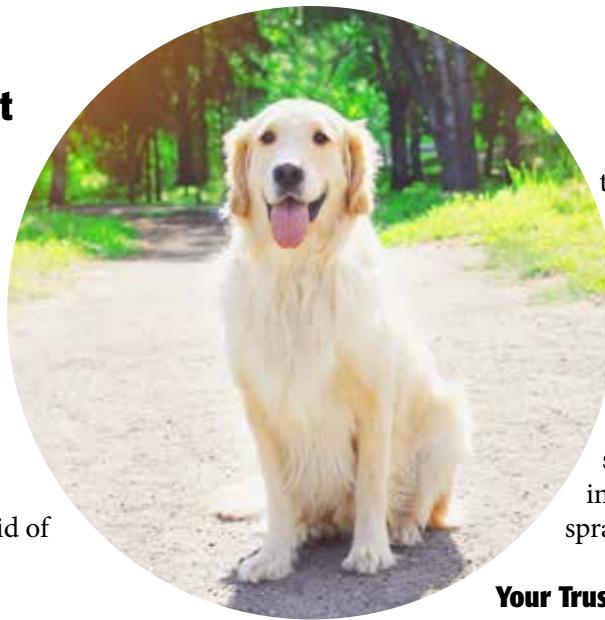
If your pet has one or more of these problems, it’s probably time for phase two.

Natural Ways to Keep Fleas off Pets

#1: Coconut Oil: Coconut oil applied directly to your dog’s coat can repel fleas! Don’t worry if they accidentally get a taste, this oil also has several health benefits for them.

#2: Lemon Juice: Next time you’re bathing your pet, dilute half a cup of freshly squeezed lemon juice into two cups of water and add it to their shampoo. Lemons are known to repel and kill fleas!

#3 Apple Cider Vinegar: Adding a few tablespoons of apple cider vinegar



to your pet’s water will help prevent fleas from the inside out (as long as this doesn’t deter your pet from hydrating). You can also mix vinegar with water and apply it directly to your pet.
#4: Lavender and Peppermint Oils: Lavender and peppermint are two dog-safe essential oils. You can find a shampoo that specifically uses either an ingredient or mix either with water in a spray bottle to repel fleas.

Your Trusted Pest Control for Fleas

These home remedies can be effective in killing or repelling fleas your pet has collected. However, while home remedies and over-the-counter flea treatment can control some of your issues, expert flea pest control gets to the root of the problem.

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— Meredith Boyd, Social Media and Marketing Specialist
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Here are the past year's cover stories. If you would like to read or re-read one of them, using your device you can access a story directly using the qr code. If you prefer, simply use the link online.



JUNE 2022

Sozo Children's Choir
On A Mission to America



www.nashchristian.com/2022/06/sozo-childrens-choir-on-a-mission-to-america

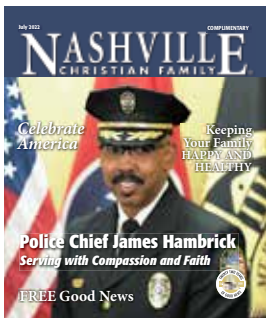


SEPTEMBER 2022

The Fisher Center
at Belmont University



www.nashchristian.com/2022/09/the-fisher-center-belmont-university

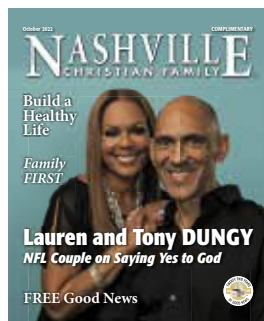


JULY 2022

Mt. Juliet Police Chief James Hambrick
Serving with Compassion and Faith



www.nashchristian.com/2021/08/after-my-worship



OCTOBER 2022

Lauren and Tony Dungy
NFL Couple on Saying Yes to God



www.nashchristian.com/2022/09/tony-and-lauren-dungy-on-finding-your-purpose-in-christ



AUGUST 2022

Greg Jones
Belmont University President



www.nashchristian.com/2022/07/belmont-president-greg-jones-pursuing-the-abundant-life



NOVEMBER 2022

The Salvation Army of Nashville
Liz's Story of Hope



www.nashchristian.com/2022/11/lizs-journey-from-dependency-and-despair-to-hope-2



DECEMBER 2022

Megan Alexander
Celebrates Small Town Christmas



www.nashchristian.com/2022/12/inside-editions-megan-alexander-celebrating-small-towns-at-christmas



JANUARY 2023

Walt Merrell
Parenting in God's Great Outdoors



www.nashchristian.com/2023/01/called-to-engage-in-gods-great-outdoors-district-attorney-author-walt-merrell



FEBRUARY 2023

Benny & Marilou Proffitt
First Priority, Here and There



www.nashchristian.com/2023/02/first-priority-global



MARCH 2023

Dan Boone
Trebecca Nazarene's President Ministering to the Generations



www.nashchristian.com/2023/03/dan-boone-narrating-a-journey-toward-zs



APRIL 2023

Sean BE
Music and Ministry



www.nashchristian.com/2023/03/sean-be-let-your-light-shine

If something in this month's issue of

NASHVILLE

CHRISTIAN FAMILY

has awakened in you a desire to learn more about the **Freedom** and **Eternal Life** that Jesus Christ offers, we encourage you to seek out a **Bible-based church in our community.**

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CHRISTIAN TELEVISION NETWORK

BODY & SOUL

A Simple Framework For Healthy Living

Our body was given to us by God to steward. As a vehicle, so we can do all He is calling us to do. Our bodies are amazing! They can withstand so much and are so versatile. Our body can heal itself. Even that in and of itself is a miracle. The human body is one of the most complex organisms on this earth and just like a car points to a manufacturer, our body points infinitely more to our creator. Car manufacturers specifically design cars to run efficiently for as long as possible without having any problems. God has designed our bodies in the same way. He wants us to use them to accomplish all He has for us on this earth.



But the question becomes, how do we partner with how God has made our body so it can run efficiently for how long God has us on this earth? Well In the same way car manufacturers have a manual and a maintenance schedule, our bodies have specific things we can do to take care of them too! With a car, you can go to the mechanic and they can fix it for you. But to maintain your body, YOU must be intentional in how you take care of it. And with all of the overwhelming opinions and information out there, it can be SUPER confusing in this day and age what to do. So we create a simple framework to make this clear and easy for you to understand. It's called the F.O.R.M. Method.

The F.O.R.M. Method:

Functional Fitness: Movement, create a simple routine for you to move at least 4 times per week. Our bodies were made to move and if we can have a simple routine of movement in every season our bodies will function MUCH better. Make sure to do movements that are functional and take your body through its full range of motion.

Optimal Nourishment: Nutrition, develop a love for whole, natural, and nutrient-dense foods. Use food as fuel most of the time, but also enjoy it from time to time too! This pillar often takes the most intentionality and self-control. Be intentional.

Rest and Recovery: Create preventative routines that help your body be ready to get back to the work God has called you to do. Get enough sleep. Create enjoyable ways to rest. Manage stress. Have good posture. Stretch often. Many of us are reactive when it comes to this pillar. Try and create simple routines in these areas that prevent burnout, injury, and chronic fatigue.

Multiplied Maintenance: Create a sustainable lifestyle where health is easy to fit in. Set the right goals. Surround yourself with the right people. Schedule and prepare each week so health isn't an afterthought. I will also add that you want to have a Biblical approach to health as well. To ensure lasting results you and your family must think rightly about how God made your body to help you serve others and live out everything He has called you to.

If you have a simple and consistent routine in each of these areas you will be well on your way to stewarding this great body God has given you. You got this!

— Ashton Tate is the founder of Glory to Glory Fitness and the creator of The F.O.R.M. Curriculum. He works with schools all over the country to help students build a solid foundation in their health.

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Israel's Most Sacred, Scary, and Joyous Season

It's been a sacred, scary, and joyous season in Israel. This may seem like a contradiction, but in Israel it's quite normal.

During Passover, Islamic terrorists from Gaza and Lebanon fired dozens of rockets at Israeli communities. On the second day of Passover, three members of the Dee family were murdered, executed, in a terrorist attack. They were my neighbors. That night, another Arab terrorist plowed his car across Tel Aviv's Mediterranean promenade, killing one Italian tourist who arrived for Easter, and injuring several others.

Prayers and expressions of condolences from Christian friends across the world have been a great comfort. Many asked what more they could do so the Genesis 123 Foundation set up a fund to provide grief and trauma counseling in the schools where the Dee children attended, and where many of their friends and teachers are still grieving and in shock. To participate and send your own condolences and words of comfort, please go to <https://love.genesis123.co>.

Passover is a family holiday. Yet this year many families had their plans rudely interrupted, or worse. For the Dees, Passover will be forever marred by the murder of Lucy (48), Maia (20) and Rina (15). However, the tense time created other stresses that damped the festive celebration of our freedom from slavery in Egypt, with the need to defend our freedom still today. Freedom is not only not free, but sometimes comes with a terrible price. Public bomb shelters were opened in central Israel and ordered to be prepared for any eventuality. In the event of escalation families like mine were deeply concerned that our sons would be called away from family celebrations to go to defend the country.

Soldiers, like those in my son's and son-in-law's combat units, and my soon to be daughter-in-law's intelligence unit, have been on high alert giving up additional family time. We pray that it won't escalate further but at the moment the responsibilities of these young men and women to defend the country and our people are enormous. Israel has collectively been living on the edge.

Increased threats of war and terror also trickle down among Israelis of all backgrounds, across the country. In communities like my own, rapid response civilian security teams are on high alert for any possible infiltration or other terrorist attack. Recently I hosted a security briefing for participants in the Run For Zion program to learn about where funds raised continue to help communities be prepared for any eventuality.

We also visited a facility in Sderot, on the Gaza border, for orphans and at-risk youth. These children not only live on the front line but suffer additional trauma every time there is an escalation because they come from homes that are not safe and live in a community that too often feels unsafe. The therapies

provided and love and support are essential to help them overcome the fear of life around them and the trauma that they experience uniquely. This reality is multiplied many times throughout the country, and it is essential for us to work to invest to help these children grow up as normally as possible.

This recent season of terror, rockets, and threat of war have been particularly jarring because it's also the season when we commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, Memorial Day for fallen soldiers and terror victims, and then celebrate Independence Day, 75 years this year. Tears of joy flow with tears of sadness, and the awareness that as we say in the Passover Seder, in every generation someone rises up to try to kill us. The seeming paradox of mourning and celebrating together was highlighted in the recent Inspiration from Zion podcast with a man who celebrates the highs, but has also suffered the losses.

As I stood silently at attention during a two-minute siren at which the entire country comes to a halt in memory of the six million victims of the Holocaust, down the road the Dee family was still in the midst of mourning. Amid my tears, I couldn't comprehend how jarring this must have been for them.

During a visit a few days earlier with Rabbi Leo Dee in the week following the murder of his wife and daughter, I shared with him how many Christians had reached out to send prayers and condolences. This encouraged him deeply. He asked that I ask our Christian friends to stand in solidarity by displaying Israeli flags, so I resolved immediately that anyone who donates \$75 or more will receive an Israeli flag, made in Israel.

Many pastors have taken offerings to stand with and support Israel at this time, especially the Genesis 123 Foundation's providing grief and trauma counseling. We would like to do more of both: to encourage and support the Dees, and to help those hurting the most with necessary counseling, including teens who have just lost a friend and peer.

Nashville recently went through its own trauma, an unspeakable crime. I have been praying and in touch with all my friends there. Jewish tradition and history teach us that when we grieve together, we are stronger, and that makes our celebrations more joyous.

The Genesis 123 Foundation invites everyone to participate at www.love.genesis123.co, through which you can send your prayers and condolences, which will be shared with as many people who we are able to reach as possible.

— Jonathan Feldstein, Founder and President, Genesis 123 Foundation
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Be Happy, Be Healthy, Be Whole

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

Weight loss. A topic with no shortage of news, opinions, and advice. Here are a few reports I thought you would find interesting.

Mirror Fat

Do you watch yourself eat? If you want to lose weight, maybe you should. According to researchers from Iowa State University, people who can see their reflection while they're eating consume 32 percent less fatty food.

Listen to the Music

Listening to music can help you lose weight. Music has been shown to make exercise feel easier, so you stick with it longer and burn substantially more calories. In fact, according to studies published in the book *Fitness Walking for Dummies*, it was found that people who listen to music work out from 11 to 24 percent more without even realizing it.

The Real Reason you Shouldn't Eat at your Desk

There's lots of reasons not to eat at your desk. Messy fingers. Crumbs in the keyboard. But the real reason has less to do with cleanliness and more to do with your eating habits. If you're looking to shed a few pounds, couple it up with a pledge to keep food away from your workspace.

Researchers say regularly eating at your desk can force you to develop a habit, as your brain begins to associate working with eating. After a while, you'll find yourself craving snacks as you sit down to work, consuming extra calories along the way. Making a pledge to keep eating in the kitchen or dining room and away from the desk helps to remove your mind's association of food with working at your desk or playing games. The same goes for eating in front of the TV. If you do it often, it becomes an unhealthy habit.

Fruit Trick

If you are trying to lose weight here's a trick: Research, as reported in *Men's Health* magazine, shows that eating fruit before a meal suppresses appetite and will help you feel full sooner, so you eat less food. And it even works for breakfast. Before your bacon and eggs, have a fruit cup first.

It's a journey - diet and exercise – weight gain and



loss. My journey started in 2011 with Dr Lodge and the team at Cool Springs MD. They helped me lose 65 pounds in 16 weeks. Do you need help on your journey? Connect with Dr Lodge and Cool Springs MD, you won't regret it. Dr Lodge and his team of personal trainers, dieticians and medical professionals are ready to help you with their stated goal for everyone to be "Happy, Healthy and Whole"

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

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



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— Larry L. Crain
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How to Keep a Clean Home, Psychologically



Are you looking for help with cleaning your house and tired of the Internet “superheroes” with their top ten tricks, written by people who don’t “get” real life? While the professionals at Molly Maid may not be superheroes, we understand real life because we go through it, right alongside you. That’s why we’re offering real advice, based on psychology, that will help you create the proper mindset, and help motivate and inspire you to achieve more. First, you’ll need a place to start.

One Room at a Time

There’s a clever joke an old English teacher used to say, how do you eat an elephant? The answer is one bite at a time. Apply this same theory to cleaning your house.

The thought of cleaning the entire house can sometimes be overwhelming, especially with the whole family contributing to the mess. The thought can be so debilitating that we often procrastinate at times — put it off until later. In other words, we sometimes get in our own way.

A great way to solve this problem is to clean only one room at a time. Then if, and when you get distracted or pulled away, you can pick up right where you left off. Use one of Molly Maid’s printable cleaning checklists to help you stay focused and on track. While you’re cleaning each room give some thought to how you use that space, and whether the current layout and furnishings meet your needs and requirements.

Every Item Has Its Place

Organize your cleaning in a way that makes sense according to the way you live. Make sure you have easy access to the tools you use daily — everything else should have a home. How often do you use the appliances on your counter? Can seasonal clothing be stored in totes? This organization isn’t just for you, it’s for your whole household.

Create habits that you can continue to develop as time goes on. Eventually, you and your family will get in the habit of performing simple tasks automatically, like taking the trash out on a nightly basis - a great way to reduce and eliminate odors in your home. What might seem overwhelming at first will soon become part of your regular routine. Rewarding yourself with little incentives and some ‘me time’ — like curling up with a good book, relaxing to music, or enjoying your favorite foods can serve as motivation too.

Provide Yourself Incentives

Games are a wonderful incentive for busy parents. Have you ever heard of the saying, “If you can’t beat them, join them?” Well, maybe that glass of wine or chocolate bar just isn’t enough of a reward for you anymore, and you may not be able to run out to get a massage at the spa.

Reward and challenge yourself in different ways. Changing your focus can change the way your brain operates. So be sure to take a break and do a crossword puzzle or a word search. Read a chapter out of a book. Or download a game with an online community that can help you establish new friendships — such a youthful approach might even impress your kids.

Sure, our brain loves routine but, at the same time, it craves engagement and challenges. Stepping out of your comfort zone or simply mixing things up by doing something different during the day can provide extra motivation and a break from familiar tasks and activities. At the end of the day try to find some much-needed time to unwind.

Be Realistic About What You Can Accomplish

Keep in mind, every day’s a work in progress. You’re working toward a cleaning frame of mind that makes you feel comfortable, easily engaged, and dynamic enough to challenge you. Remember, even the professionals aren’t superheroes, so don’t put too much pressure on yourself to be one. You don’t have to achieve “white glove” status with every cleaning. Comfortable and lived-in is sometimes good enough.

Your home is where life happens, and every moment you spend in it is an opportunity to improve your surroundings. Maintaining a clean home is just one way to enhance your environment, relax in your surroundings and unwind. And here’s a bonus — you won’t have to scramble to clean up when unexpected visitors arrive.

When You Need Help, Don’t Be Afraid to Ask!

Whether you’d like a one-time cleaning or a weekly recurring cleaning plan, our custom cleaning plans are designed to work around your schedule and budget. Contact your local Molly Maid – 615-794-0200 or 615-603-3766, today to discuss a cleaning plan that’s right for you. <https://www.mollymaid.com/s-davidson-williamson-maury-counties/about-us/contact-us/>

— Ashley Farrar



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

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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Evangelism, Imagination, and Artists – A Critical Mix for Modern Evangelism

My life's work and my passion are to motivate the Church toward thinking more deeply and seriously about the importance of creatives and artists who serve as “imaginative expression specialists.” And, toward these ends, my goal is for pastors and others in church leadership to treat singers, musicians, fine artists, dancers, and others as not just performers but as key strategists on their evangelism and outreach teams. Why? Because God has gifted artists with the ability to uniquely communicate his infinite, unfathomable transcendence.

But what does this mean in practice? It's important to remember that evangelism is essentially four things:

1. Content – As evangelists, the objective realities we attempt to share are the existence of the Triune God (Deuteronomy 6:4, Exodus 3:4-6); God's accessibility through the work of Christ as empowered by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:1-10); Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 3:21-25, 1 Corinthians 15:1-3); and our response through repentance, faith, and surrender (Romans 10:9, 10).

2. Relationships – This is the currency of the Kingdom of God. God's reality and His connection with people happens frequently through a nonbeliever's relationship with believers.

3. Community – This is the crucible of God's Kingdom. We must engage with other believers if we are to mature in our faith. Likewise, as ambassadors for Christ, we are to bring nonbelievers into this spiritually nurturing community.

4. Encounter – This is the engagement of God through the believer with the nonbeliever.

Evangelism, then, is the mysterious transaction between God and people engaging with each other. So, then we need to ask the question, “Why are artists so crucial to the process of evangelism?” To this question, I suggest six realities:

1. Artists are imagination specialists.
2. Artists are powerful storytellers.
3. Artists are gifted relational curators.
4. Artists are specialized community creators.
5. Artists are environment designers.
6. Artists are transcendence touchers.

There are at least three Old Testament truths that affirm these realities:

• First, we see that human beings possess God's image (Genesis 1:26, 27), his imaginal intelligence (Isaiah 26:3), and his imaginative expression (Exodus 35:30-36). The Hebrew term used in these verses and others (79 times total in the Old Testament) is *yatsar*, which is “to imagine” or “to fashion” something in one's mind before forming it in time and place.

• Second, in Scripture we see many different capacities of imaginal intelligence. An example would be the ability to see, hear, or know what can be before it is – like when a songwriter “hears” a song in their mind before composing it on paper. Imaginal intelligence is also revealed through the ability to see beyond the observable into deeper, transcendent realities. This is the essence of faith. We have faith in the completed work of Christ through his life, death, and resurrection. And we have faith that his shed blood has covered our sins, so we now have access to the true and living God.

• Third, God not only gave people imaginal intelligence, but He also gave to some “unusual wisdom” in the realm of imaginative expression. The best word for this is “craftsmen,” as found in the Hebrew Scriptures, and it means “someone who is unusually wise at imaginative design or expression.” This



definition is then typically modified by one, two, or three of five other Hebrew words: wisdom, knowledge, ability, skill, and understanding.

Therefore, the best word for artists in the Bible is the term craftsmen because it demonstrates the reality that there are some whom God has equipped with a special and unusual capacity for imaginative expression and design. Then, if we look to see how these craftsmen are used in Scripture, we find that they design environments where people come together and interact with the transcendent reality of God, along with other transcendent realities of life.

Remember, though, that while all people have imagination, God created artistic people to creatively make relationships, create community, and design environments wherein our encounter with God can happen. Frankly I believe we can't do any of these things well without the help and input of the artistically gifted.

The problem is we live in a secular age that wrongly believes people can find meaning and significance without God or the transcendent aspects of the world around us. So, given the context in which we live, evangelism must “reenchant people.” Evangelism must “connect” people with the true and transcendent God so we can help those who don't know Him to “imagine” that He is the source of love and healing and forgiveness. That He restores and energizes us into the life we truly want and for which He created us to live.

The artist's role in the Bible is to lead people into touching the transcendent realities of life and of God Himself. The artistically gifted “imaginative expression specialists” must be in the mix for evangelism to be effective. This is because evangelism requires relationships, community, and encounter. And the artistically gifted are the “imaginative intelligence specialists” we need to create the context wherein the supernatural transaction of evangelism may happen.

In closing, let me remind you of this axiom: You cannot do anything you can't imagine. We must help people imagine the objective reality of the true and living God, and we must create environments wherein people, through metaphors, symbols, and expressions, fully encounter Him.

My challenge, then, to the leadership of churches engaged in evangelism is to include imaginative expression specialists in your work because God gave them the unique ability to lead people into touching His transcendence amid our mundane, everyday lives.

— Dr. Byron L. Spradlin, Founder and President, *Artists In Christian Testimony*
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FAMILY FLICKS

Faith + Film: *Jesus Revolution*

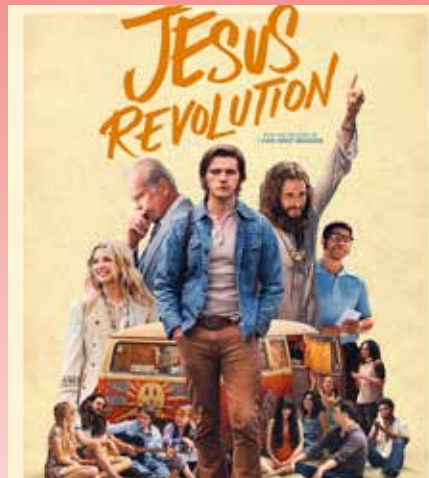
It can be difficult to find movies the whole family can enjoy together. The film, *Jesus Revolution* is a great option.

Nashville's Jon Erwin, one of the producers and directors of *Jesus Revolution*, is no stranger to producing faith-based films. He and his brother, Andrew, directed *October Baby*, *I Can Only Imagine*, *Moms' Night Out*, *Woodlawn*, and more. "We like to tell stories that can inspire the whole family and change people's lives. We love the power of true stories," Erwin says. When he was just 16 years old, his dad Hank Erwin gifted his sons a camera. "We started making all kinds of videos and it's where we began to hone in on our craft," he remembers. Today, the brothers are known as The Erwin Brothers.

Jon Erwin has fond memories of growing up in Birmingham, Ala. While he and his family currently live in Nashville, they often visit the area. In fact, he first discovered the June 1972 *Jesus Revolution* issue of *Time* magazine while he was in Birmingham directing the film *Woodlawn*. "I was so blown away by an entire high school being saved from violence and racial tension to a spiritual awakening," Erwin says, adding, "I almost didn't believe it was true."



Director Jon Erwin and his wife Beth have been married for almost 19 years. They have four children: Kate, Ethan, Logan, and Sam.



***Jesus Revolution* is available to rent or buy on Amazon Prime Video.**

He began studying the time this happened and bought a copy of the issue on eBay. "It was this sweeping spiritual awakening that started in Cali. and eventually swept the entire nation," Erwin explains. The more he studied, the more he realized that we are in a very similar time today. He remembers thinking, "I want to make a movie about this so I can feel this movement a little bit and experience what revival must feel like." It took seven years to bring the compelling story to the big screen.

Jonathan Roumie, who plays Jesus in the hit show *The Chosen*, plays evangelist Lonnie Frisbee in *Jesus Revolution*. Erwin says that Roumie "does such an amazing job. He is an incredible actor, but an even better person," adding, "he brings an intensity and love of the role that is just incredible." Erwin hopes viewers are entertained throughout the movie and laugh and cry. "I hope people come out of the theater saying, 'If that happened once, it can happen again.'" To learn more about *Jesus Revolution*, visit www.jesusrevolution.movie.

— Melissa Armstrong

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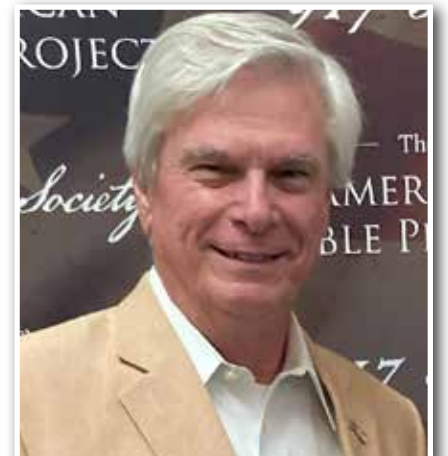
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Don't Overlook God's Glory In Your 2023 Faith Journey

I Pray That The Fullness Of God's Glory Will Be Revealed To The Church In A New And Beautiful Way

A few months ago I had a dream in which I mistook a friend whose name is Glaura for another friend of mine whose name is Annette. The dream stuck with me, and, as I often do, I sought God's wisdom in how to interpret it. He led me to research the meanings of the names of these friends.

Interestingly, "Annette" means, "grace/favor," while the root name of "Glaura" means, "glory." I contemplated what God could be trying to communicate through this dream—one in which a personification of "glory" had been mistaken for one of "grace/favor."

After further prayer and meditation, I felt God was revealing an important reminder for me and other believers: while it's essential that we have a solid understanding (and gratitude) of God's grace and favor in our lives, we also must not fail to appreciate another equally important facet of His character: His glory.

This leads us to consider, "What is God's glory?" Zondervan's Amplified Study Bible defines it as "the grandeur and majesty of God." However, I've found that Scripture passages illustrating it express its fullness more robustly.

In Isaiah 6, God's throne room is reported to be filled with heavenly beings who continuously call out to one another saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is filled with His glory."

In Revelation 4, Christ gives the Apostle John a similar vision in which four living creatures were gathered around God's throne "and day and night they never stop saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.'"

A mentor of mine and my husband's relayed a beautiful interpretation of these scriptures, sharing that although these heavenly beings exist to worship God continuously, they never tire of it because God's glory is incomprehensibly infinite and can be observed for eternity without losing its wonder.

My favorite depiction of God's glory and majesty, however, comes from His own mouth in the book of Job (38:35), where He responds to Job's doubts about His divine understanding and sovereignty over all created things, rhetorically asking Job, "Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, 'Here we are?'" Wow. To consider that not one bolt of lightning strikes without first reporting to God for duty conveys the awesome magnitude of His sovereignty over every aspect, every atom of his creation—not just our individual lives and problems.

Sometimes Christians shy away from searching out verses describing God's awesomeness because they are often tied to His many judgments, and we prefer to focus on His boundless grace and ignore those passages in which He exacts His judgment against sin. However, every parent knows that a child

cannot be raised to be a person of integrity unless they are corrected when they misbehave.

Proverbs 18:19 soberingly states, "Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives." Most of us inherently accept this as truth when it comes to raising children, but we must remember that the same principle applies in our relationship to our Heavenly Father, as the Bible is clear that God disciplines the ones He loves (Hebrews 12:6), and that this in no way diminishes the boundless grace He provides through the sacrificial death of His only Son, Jesus Christ.

Yes, there is grace to cover all sin (Romans 5:20), but if we do not also have a true understanding of God's glory and reverently awe Him, we will not experience the fullness of an abiding relationship with Him.

The Zondervan Amplified Study Bible sums up the importance of grasping God's glory and holiness in relation to Isaiah's vision of God's throne room (described above), declaring, "There is little appreciation or understanding of the sacred 'otherness' of God. We have too often reduced Him to only friend and advisor. We do so at our own peril; for it is that sacred 'otherness' that brings us to our knees. That is where the relationship needs to begin."

The key takeaway I find here is that God desires for His children to perceive His glory not to puff Himself up, but because He knows we cannot begin to have a meaningful relationship with Him unless we understand Him for ALL that He is; not only a Sacrificial Lamb, but the King over all creation. Look no further than every single Biblical character who had a true and personal friendship with God.

Moses, David, Solomon, Paul and many others received a revelation of God's glory, and their resulting admiration and awe drove them into the arms of God and led to fruitful relationships with Him.

My prayer for 2023 is for God's Church to have a fresh revelation of God's glory, to experience His wonder in new ways, and for this to lead to miraculous breakthroughs in hearts and lives all over the world.

I urge you to join me in this prayer.

— Christen Limbaugh Bloom is the co-author of "The Resurrected Jesus" and the creator of Haplous, a Christian blog and Bible study community. Her writing focuses on practical "baby steps" individuals can take while pursuing a deeper relationship with God. Christen lives with her husband, Sam, and their son in Texas. You can follow Christen's blog on Instagram at @haplous_official and her website at www.haplousofficial.com.

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Spiritual Goal For The Month

REMEMBER...

Prayers change things...starting with us. Our prayer life should not be relegated to just when we're facing challenges or a GIMME...GIMME...GIMME attitude.

Our lifestyle should be one of prayers: talking with and spending more time listening to The Lord; constant dialogue with our Best Friend. We should share everything with The Lord, our God, after all, He knows our hearts and every thought that we have.

God is God and will always deserve respect, honor, reverence as Creator, Savior and Lord. Scripture reminds us to "pray without ceasing". If not before...starting today...let's make our prayer life a priority: listening and talking...more than once or twice a day...but with "an attitude of gratitude" as our foundation of thinking.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for giving us the gift to choose. We choose You...because You have the keys to unlock all doors...giving us meaning and purpose. Lord Jesus, this is a tremendous day because You made it for us. We thank You...and rejoice knowing we may abide in ONE-NESS with You. Thank You for the honor of having spiritual eyes, ears and a mind that recognizes Your presence in all things. Amen.

— Ralph E. Vaughn

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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