

November 2023

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NASHVILLE CHRISTIAN FAMILY®

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Production and Art Direction: Wendy Satterwhite

Website Development/Maintenance: A3 Marketing and Communications

Digital Marketing & SEO Services: Bowen Digital Marketing

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Printer: Central Missouri Press

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@nashchristian.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 2023 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, \$100 for one year (12 issues). To subscribe, e-mail publisher@nashchristian.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

A Deeper Gratitude: Reconnecting with the True Spirit of Thanksgiving

“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.” John 3:16 NKJV

As we approach the season of Thanksgiving, it's easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of festivities, from reuniting with family and friends to indulging in delicious feasts and cheering for our favorite football teams. While these traditions are cherished and meaningful, it's essential to pause and reflect on the true essence of Thanksgiving - a time to express heartfelt gratitude for the blessings bestowed upon us.



We meticulously plan our gatherings, prepare sumptuous meals, and immerse ourselves in the excitement of the day. However, in our pursuit of these traditions, we may inadvertently overlook the profound thankfulness we should feel toward our Creator. Thanksgiving is more than just a holiday; it's a reminder of the incredible gift of God's creation. As Christians, we are called to appreciate the world around us, to marvel at the beauty of nature, and to recognize the hand of the Divine in every facet of our lives. From the breathtaking landscapes to the smallest creatures, God's creation is a testament to His infinite wisdom and love. Moreover, Thanksgiving should remind us of the ultimate sacrifice made for our redemption. It's a time to remember that God, in His boundless mercy, sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to bear the weight of our sins on the cross. Through His death and resurrection, we are offered forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. This is a gift beyond measure, one that should evoke profound gratitude in our hearts.

In the midst of the festivities, let's take a moment to offer our thanks to the Lord, not only for the blessings of family, food, and fellowship but also for the immeasurable gifts of creation and redemption. It's an opportunity to refocus our hearts on the spiritual significance of this holiday, grounding ourselves in the true essence of Thanksgiving. As we gather around the table and give thanks, let's also remember those who may be less fortunate, extending the love and compassion of Christ to those in need. In doing so, we embody the spirit of gratitude and selflessness that defines the Christian faith.

This Thanksgiving, strike a balance between the joyful celebrations with loved ones and the quiet moments of reflection on God's goodness. By doing so, we can experience a deeper, more meaningful gratitude that goes beyond the festivities and reaches into the very core of our faith.

May your Thanksgiving be a time of genuine thankfulness, a celebration of God's creation, and a profound acknowledgment of His grace and forgiveness.

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

DEPARTMENTS

3 From The Publisher

6 Legal Matters

To Kill a Mockingbird Revisited

6 Mighty Women

These Are the Moments

8 Teachable Moments

Serving Blessings This Thanksgiving

9 Music Notes

This Is Jesus Live Coming to Nashville

10 Mighty Men

The Importance of Men and Fathers Fostering a Close Relationship with the Lord

13 Mission Makers

Lee Company Hosts Vans4Cans Food Drive

13 Ask The Expert

Holiday Expenses from a Special Needs Trust

15 Senior Scene

Medicare Open Enrollment – What’s Next?

17 Family Flicks

The Release for the Award Winning Film “Sight” will be Postponed

18 Business Today

3 Reasons to Be Thankful for the Housing Market in 2023

18 Teachable Moments

Midnight Lights

23 Faith Under Fire

Learning and Growing Through Suffering

25 Faith At Work

Speak to Your Mountain

25 Healthy Living

Be Happy, Be Healthy, Be Whole

26 Hassle Free Zone

The Holiday Season is Upon Us, Are You Ready?

27 Body & Soul

God Designed Us to be Healthy

28 Healthy Living

Balancing Age-Related Balance Issues, Neuropathy, and Posture

30 Body & Soul

Everything Happens for a Reason?

32 Parenting Points

Kids of Divorce Give Thanks

35 The Home Front

Cold Floors? Insulate Your Crawl Space and Lower Your Bills

37 Monthly Spiritual Goal

Count On It

37 God’s Plan For Salvation and Eternal Life With Him



ON THE COVER 20

The Salvation Army’s Captains Philip and Elaine Canning have a vision for Nashville. They are committed to leading our city forward in addressing homelessness See page 20.

8, 26 **Holiday Home Tips**

18, 23, 32 **Family Matters**

1-40 **Good News!**

SPECIAL FEATURES

8 **Staging Your Home During the Holidays**

9 **Understanding Hair Loss: Unveiling the Science Behind It**

10 **What Happens When Addiction Meets Grace**

14 **Trevecca Doctoral Graduate Inspires Educational Leaders**

NEXT ISSUE



Phil and Sheri Barfoot share their journey in Christian Ministry, celebrating Christ’s birth and MUCH MORE!



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CONTENTS

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 6



9



15



28



Israel The Miracle
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To Kill A Mockingbird Revisited

Occasionally I get asked the question, “why law”? What influenced your decision to pursue this profession as opposed to another? Frequently, this question comes from young students who are intently seeking some direction or purpose, or what Christians sometimes refer to as a calling for their lives. For others, who may not share a Christian world view, there is a deeper, spiritual question underlying their curiosity. For them, the undeniable question is whether it is possible to have a “calling” to any given occupation, because, in order for there to be a “calling”, there must necessarily be one who “calls.”

The Psalmist perhaps said it best: “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delights in his way” (Psalm 37:23). I do not read this verse as implying that one must first come to a saving knowledge of Christ before this process of “ordering” and early and observable signs of a calling for their life begins. For me, my personal interest in law began in the eighth grade, long before I surrendered to Christ years later in my final year of law school. Looking back with the benefit now of hindsight, I can trace events and experiences in my early life that like signposts pointed me in the direction of the practice of law.

Oddly enough, one early, yet profound influence

was a movie based on the Harper Lee novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*. The setting was a small, rural town of Maycomb, Ala. in the 1930s. For many in our present generation, it is difficult to understand the depth of racial segregation that permeated our culture at that time. One scene, in particular, left an indelible impression. The trial had ended. A crippled, young innocent black male had been wrongfully convicted of raping a white woman. As his lawyer Atticus Finch shuffles his papers and is preparing to leave the courtroom, the blacks seated in the balcony gallery all rise to their feet out of respect as he passes by. The message is unmistakable. Atticus had achieved the impossible even though ignorance and bigotry won out in the trial.

Last year, I filed suit in federal court on behalf of a young black student in a small, rural town in Tennessee who had been ridiculed and taunted for several months by his peers based solely on the color of his skin. He was repeatedly called the “N-word”, shown mocked up “slave auction notices”, subjected to a barrage of racial epithets, called “monkey”, and shown depictions of a KKK member holding a torch and noose, and images of African-American caricatures being stabbed and



shot. His mother wept as she shared the story of her son’s mistreatment, and her futile appeals to school officials to protect her young son. As I listened, I could not help but flash back in my mind’s eye to a courtroom in Macomb, Ala.

The law truly is an honorable profession if for no other reason than it provides for an even ground where we strive for an ideal we call “justice”. As Atticus Finch put it so eloquently in his closing remarks to the jury: “But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal- there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, and the ignorant man the equal of any college president. That institution gentlemen, is a court. It can be the Supreme Court of the United States or the humblest Justice of the Peace court in the land, or this honorable court which you serve. Our courts have their faults as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal.”

— Larry L. Crain, www.crainlaw.legal



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

These are the Moments

I honestly cannot believe that I am the mom of an almost 3-year-old boy already. Everyone told me that the days would be long, but the years would go by quickly, and they were all so right. Charlie is the greatest gift and blessing. He is my mini best friend, and my favorite moments are the ones spent with him and my husband and I am doing my best to take them all in before they are gone.



I still remember waking up every two hours and sleeping in shifts with my husband to feed Charlie every night. I was so tired, but so in love. Those moments are already gone. I remember chasing him around and becoming a human bubble just to protect him when he was learning to walk... now we race, and he of course wins every time. I remember being so afraid to let him try new foods in the fear that he would choke, now he eats everything and anything. Those moments are already gone. Right now, we are in the sweetest season where he wants to play with friends, but I am still his favorite person to play with and first choice, I know too soon those moments will be gone as well.

I am learning daily and reminding myself to cherish every single moment. To not get caught up in planning for tomorrow, to be present and give my full attention as often as possible to that moment. To turn the phone off, to mute the email notifications and just be. It is so hard for us to just BE and not be thinking about what we need to do next or waiting for our phone or emails to

ding reminding us of something else we must do and taking us away from our present moment.

As moms, we have to wear so many hats, remember so many things and cook so much food. I am still in disbelief at the number of snacks a toddler can eat in a day! I often wonder why God chose to only give us two hands and one mind to keep it all together! But what an incredible blessing and calling it is. So Mama, I am not sure where you find yourself today, maybe your waist deep in laundry, or maybe your workload and responsibilities at home feel more than you can carry. Can I encourage you today to just BE? To just enjoy each moment as it comes and not worry and stress over the never-ending to-do list and workload? Something I am quickly learning is that the to-do list and workload will still be there when I get back to them, but these moments, these precious moments, they are fleeting, and I don’t want to miss a single one of them.

— Ashley McClain is a Wife to Bobby, Mom to Charlie, General Manager of CTN-WHTN Nashville and Host of - What If? Moments for Moms aired nationally on the Christian Television Network. Currently surviving on Grace and Coffee... lots and lots of Coffee.





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Staging Your Home During the Holidays

Staging your home during the holiday season can be quite tricky and very personal. How can you enjoy holiday decorations but not offend potential buyers? While some sellers prefer to wait until the holidays are over, not everyone can do that. Oftentimes, it is actually a great time to sell, because there is less inventory on the market and more serious buyers who are anxious to buy a home and ring in the New Year.

What can I do to stay living in my home while enjoying all the festivities? The first thing you want to do is get photos of your listing before putting your property on the market. This means you avoid holiday decorating until your home hits the MLS (Multiple Listing Service). I cannot stress this enough! You do not want to distract buyers in your listing photos with decorations you love, but they may not. It is also possible that your home will not sell as quickly as you had hoped, so using neutral décor is practical in case your home lingers online.

Another reason to wait on your festive themes is that over-decorating can actually make a room feel smaller and it keeps the buyer from visualizing themselves in the space. We want buyers to see themselves living in the home, and covering up key focal points, unique features, and blocking beautiful views could turn them away. The general guideline is to keep your home simple, cozy, neutral, and clean until the listing photos are complete.

Ways to Keep Your Home Staged After the Listing Photos:

Exterior of the home:

- The porch/entrance should remain simple.
- Display a tasteful wreath and door mat to welcome Buyers.
- Use elements that are more natural.
- Decorate for the season instead of the specific holiday.
- Store the yard ornaments and whimsical decorations.
- Use white lights for elegance.
- Choose colors that match your home's exterior colors.
- Add seasonal evergreens and live plants if sustainable in your zone.
- Keep the front porch clear of leaves, snow, or debris.

- Add a color “pop” with fresh mulch.
- Make sure your house numbers are visible for buyers to find you!

Interior of the home:

- Keep within your home's color scheme for a cohesive look.
- Set your formal dining table.
- Light your fireplace.
- Decorate your mantle.
- Use elements that are more natural.
- Be sure that your Christmas tree is not too big for the space.
- Select only the best of your decorations. You do not need every ornament.
- Avoid “themes” and/or the names of your family members.
- Set up Emotional Connection Points (ECP's), by creating nice vignettes, pleasant smells (think cinnamon), and classical holiday music.
- Go “light” on your indoor lights. Too many are distracting.
- Add comfortable throws to create a warm and cozy feel.
- Leave the small collectibles packed up until you are in your new home!



Holidays often create added stress and a list of “to-do's”. Give yourself permission to “K.I.S.S.” (Keep it Simply Staged) and you will find that the maintenance required for your Open Houses and Showings are much easier to manage. Once you have cleaned, decluttered, and removed the collectibles, add the touches back in that accentuate the positives, and draw attention to the home's best features. As tempting as it is to decorate every space, you still want the home to look as spacious as possible.

If you follow the guidelines above with the buyers in mind, then you are off to a great start to enjoy your holidays in YOUR new home!

— Julie Wills, ASP - Owner/Consultant,
Fresh Look, LLC Occupied Home
Staging Services “Maximizing Your Home's Appeal and Value”
Juliewills1084@gmail.com, Proverbs 16:3



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Serving Blessings this Thanksgiving

“How to Prep Your Home to Host the Perfect Thanksgiving”

“How to Impress Your Guests at Thanksgiving”

Don't these titles pile unneeded stress onto your shoulders? They did for me. Even Ina Garten (Barefoot Contessa) said the biggest mistake a host can make is doing too much to impress. As Christians, our aim should lean towards blessing rather than impressing.

We can start with preparation by shopping in advance. Secure your menu, write it down, and form a game plan listing a timetable of everything that needs to go in the oven (including the temperatures). Every year I forget an item in the fridge. Consider asking others to bring their favorite side dishes. You may bless them.

When we prepare in advance, we can relax and stay present with family and friends. Remember Mary

and Martha? Jesus chastised Martha for spending so much time in the kitchen that she ignored her most important guest. Think of ways to engage your guests. One year, we hosted a group of people who didn't know each other. I wrote several questions and placed them in a jar. Each person chose a question, and everyone answered. They were simple, like: What is your favorite Christmas movie? What do you enjoy most about the holiday season? What are you looking forward to in 2024? What are you thankful for in 2023?

Consider the five senses. Your guests will immediately smell the aromas when they reach the threshold. Play background music to create a soothing atmosphere. Greet guests with hugs or a touch on the arm, then send them home with a small gift or a to-go box of leftovers. Use fresh herbs to enhance the flavors in your dishes. You can cheaply decorate your table with natural items like pine cones, acorns, miniature pumpkins, or candles. If something goes wrong, what if we could laugh about it? I've served a

lukewarm dish that should have been hot, burnt the pie crust edges, and missed a considerable cobweb hanging over a light fixture. Each time I would sulk. Why? Because I was trying to impress. Let's put on our best manners this Thanksgiving Day. You may need to train the young ones ahead of time by practicing saying please and thank you. Help your child engage with other adults by prompting them to look at you when you speak. And put the phones away and give your company undivided attention.

Of course, don't forget your personal time with God. Family can be messy and unpredictable, bringing out the crazies during the holidays. Talk to God about your guests' needs, then pray for them—and you.

— Sally Cressman writes about faith, family, and home on her website, www.sallycressman.com. You'll receive FREE “Conversation Starters for the Holidays” when you sign up. Connect with her on Instagram at [@sacressman](https://www.instagram.com/sacressman).

SPECIAL FEATURE

Understanding Hair Loss: Unveiling the Science Behind It

What causes hair loss? Unfortunately, the answer to that question is complicated. There are a number of possible causes, and it can take some detective work to determine the source in your particular case. While there are about 18 documented causes, there are five that are most common. Chances are, your hair loss falls into one of these categories. At the very least, these are where you should start in determining why your hair is thinning:

1. Genetics. Just like male pattern baldness, genetics can be the cause of hair loss in women as well. It usually involves thinning of the front hairline, temples, or all the way to the crown of the head. This cause needs to be ruled out through a DNA test or TrichoTest™.

2. Autoimmune Disorders. In an autoimmune disorder, the body mistakenly identifies your own hair follicle cells as foreign agents and attacks them in a misguided effort to protect you. In this case, the hair loss may appear across the scalp, as well as the eyebrows, eyelashes, and beard. If you start to see balding areas, a significant amount of hair loss in the shower, or thinning of the edges of your eyebrows, an autoimmune disease may be the culprit.

There are a number of autoimmune disorders, but Hashimoto's thyroiditis is one of the most common, as thyroid issues are frequently the reason for hair loss. The best way to determine if this is the case is to be tested for autoimmune antibodies and thyroid markers. Unfortunately, most doctors don't test for all thyroid markers, so you need to specifically request a full set of these blood tests. If an autoimmune disorder is determined to be the

cause of your hair loss, treatment may include dietary and gut health recommendations, nutritional supplements, and/or prescription medications.

3. Scalp Conditions. Diseases like eczema and psoriasis can lead to hair loss. If you have noticed your hair thinning, examine your scalp carefully, and visit a dermatologist for a proper diagnosis. Bear in mind, too, that psoriasis is an autoimmune disorder, and people who have one of these disorders often eventually develop more of them, especially if they are left untreated. Therefore, it's important to treat scalp conditions early.

4. Underlying Health Conditions. To determine if an underlying condition is the cause of your hair loss, you will need to get a full set of laboratory tests. Most of us neglect these to our detriment. We need to stay on top of these numbers to determine if we have any vitamin or mineral deficiencies. As I mentioned in number 2, this includes a full workup of thyroid markers.

Other deficiencies to specifically note include iron, ferritin, and vitamin D. All of these particularly play a critical role in hair growth and the health of your hair follicles. Note that your levels of these nutrients should be in the optimal range or at least in the high normal range. If they're in the low or mid-normal range, you may not have enough of these nutrients to prevent your hair loss. If your vitamin D level is especially low, you may need an IV infusion or a prescription-strength supplement for a few weeks before starting a maintenance dose.

Please don't supplement these on your own, however. You should have your levels tested and



be directed by a medical practitioner to make sure you take the proper dosage. It's also important to check your nutrient levels regularly, preferably on an annual basis.

5. Traction Alopecia. This condition results from (1) frequent twirling, picking, and pulling of the hair, eyebrows, and/or eyelashes. Frequent repetitive behaviors can also be linked to this form of alopecia; or (2) tension and strain on the hair strands and follicles from tight ponytails, braids, or weaves. Over time, the hair follicle can lose enough strength that it actually dies. Therefore, it's important to recognize the problem early before it's too late.

Hair loss can often be treated and improved, but the cause must be pinpointed first. If you are losing hair, pay close attention to your symptoms, and get the medical help you need to determine the source and receive proper treatment.

If you are experiencing any of the causes listed above or are concerned about your hair, contact HPIHair Partners today to meet with a Trichologist, www.HPIHairPartners.com, 615-662-8722 or info@hpihairpartners.com

— Kimberly Vaughn, Advanced Trichologist, Hair Loss Coach and Certified Nutritional Coach, www.hpihairpartners.com



MUSIC NOTES

This is Jesus Live coming to Nashville

Get ready to embark on a heartwarming and soul-stirring Christmas journey unlike any other. The "This is Jesus Christmas Tour" brings together an extraordinary trio of musical talents – Tauren Wells, Kay Nichole, and Jordan Smith – to deliver an unforgettable holiday experience that celebrates the true meaning of Christmas.

Immerse yourself in a festive atmosphere that combines awe-inspiring music, stunning visuals, and heart-touching stories. The "This is Jesus Christmas Tour" is not just a concert – it's a celebration of love, unity, and the message of Jesus' birth. From intimate moments to exhilarating performances, each show will leave you with a sense of wonder and a renewed appreciation for the holiday season.

This is Jesus Live will be at Belmont University's Fisher Center in Nashville on December 9. Visit www.ThisIsJesus.live for tickets. 🎟️





The Importance of Men and Fathers Fostering a Close Relationship with the Lord

In a society increasingly marked by secularization and moral ambiguity, the role of men and fathers in embodying Christian values cannot be overstated. Today, more than ever, there is a dire need for men to cultivate a deep, enriching relationship with the Lord. This connection goes beyond routine church attendance or hollow utterances of faith; it's about an authentic relationship with God that penetrates every facet of life.

Leading by Example

The first, and perhaps most obvious, benefit of a strong relationship with the Lord is the ability to lead by example. Fathers are often the de facto spiritual leaders of their households, and the depth of their faith can have a significant impact on their children and spouse. Whether it's nightly prayers, Bible studies, or simply living out the teachings of Christ in everyday interactions, fathers who walk closely with the Lord serve as living testimonials of faith to their families.

Providing Moral and Ethical Foundations

As society's norms and values continue to shift, it becomes all the more essential for men to have a strong ethical compass. An intimate relationship with God provides this, offering a sturdy framework grounded in Biblical teachings. In an era where relativism often trumps absolute truths, a God-centered life can serve as an unwavering guidepost, helping men and fathers make decisions that are not only beneficial for them but also ethically sound.

Emotional and Spiritual Support

Life is fraught with challenges—professional struggles, familial discord, and personal dilemmas are unavoidable realities. In these times of strife, a close relationship with God serves as an irreplaceable source of comfort and guidance. The assurance that comes from a deep, personal relationship with God can be the bedrock on which men build resilience and mental fortitude.

Impact on Society

Finally, let's not forget the ripple effect that a strong spiritual life can have on society at large. Men and fathers who are rooted in Christian principles are more likely to engage in charitable acts, uphold justice, and advocate for the marginalized and oppressed. They also serve as counter-narratives to the stereotypes of toxic masculinity that often plague discussions around male behavior.

For men and fathers striving to make a lasting impact, the first step is to nurture an intimate relationship with the Lord. This relationship is not merely a personal choice; it is a commitment that has far-reaching implications for families and communities. As leaders, providers, and moral compasses, men have a unique opportunity to reflect the love and wisdom of God in a world that increasingly needs both. Cultivating a deep connection with the Lord is more than a religious obligation; it's a lifelong journey that promises eternal rewards and lasting legacies. In order to have an intimate relationship with the Lord, adhering to a daily devotional time spent in Bible reading and prayer is paramount. Through a 30 day "bootcamp" *The First Hour For Men* gives provides a simple and unique pathway to help men become true men of God, not only in parenting but in every area of life.

— Mark W. Koch is an Author, Inspirational Speaker 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



What Happens When Addiction Meets Grace

The subject of addiction is complex and controversial.

Whether you believe addiction is a disease or a choice is up to you. What we know for sure is that millions of lives are affected by addiction. Many people report feeling trapped in their addiction while family and friends struggle to pinpoint the fine line between support and enablement. As the host of Bridges, I have interviewed hundreds of people with addiction stories. I've also personally experienced the pain and fear of loving someone that battles addiction. While it isn't easy, I have come to know the grace of our Savior in a deeper way.



No Pat Answers or Cliche Quotes

If you are entrenched in an addiction or love someone who is, I understand your pain and feel the sting of your tears. I won't offer you pat answers or cliché quotes. I will offer you compassion and what I've learned personally, and in the studio about this treacherous journey. Addiction can be a scary road, but it is not a contradiction of faith to be afraid and brave. Jesus demonstrated that in the Garden of Gethsemane. We are made in God's image and created as triune beings. This means if we have a physical addiction, we need to treat the whole person, body, soul, and spirit.

Since addiction affects everyone, family and friends usually need help as well. I found Christian counseling and Celebrate Recovery helpful. While I highly recommend everyone seek the medical treatment, godly counsel, and support we need here on earth, nothing compares to the power of GRACE. Grace is the most outrageous lavish gift a human being could receive, and it is ours for the asking. Grace covers our sin and makes our lives brand new. Grace changes the desires of our heart and gives us the supernatural ability to do His will.

Grace Makes Religious People Angry

Grace frees us from the sting of sin and the prison of bondage. Grace makes religious people angry and hell tremble. Grace frees the enabler and the addicted. While it is true that we don't deserve grace, it's also true that God offers us grace because He loves us. Let's consider a 10-year old's birthday party. Imagine a child opening gifts from their parents and being told --- you don't deserve these gifts because you lied about doing your homework last week. Wouldn't this kind of birthday party shaming be awful? Isn't it more like --we bought you these gifts because we love you?

That is exactly what grace is like for us. We don't deserve it. But it is our Good and Merciful Father's pleasure to wrap us in His grace and take all that is wrong and make it right. To you my dear friends and readers, wherever you are in the battle against addiction, please know that you are loved, and that grace is yours for the asking. Today's Secret from the Studio: Never Underestimate the Power of Grace.

— Monica Schmelter is the host of the weekly television show Bridges. When she's not sharing the secrets she's learned in the studio, she enjoys spending time with her family, and making plans to clean her closet.



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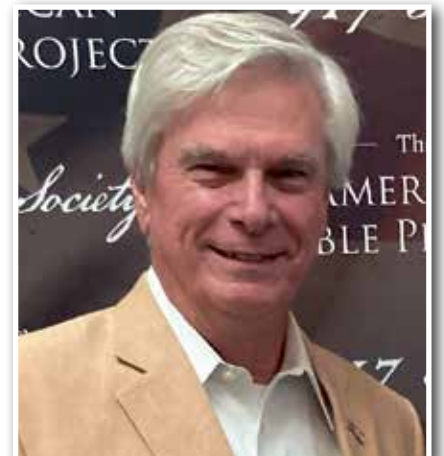
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Lee Company Hosts Vans4Cans Food Drive to Help Our Hungry Neighbors

Pay the bills or put food on the table for your family. How would you decide what to do? Unfortunately, too many of our neighbors have to make this decision every day. They're not worried about what's for dinner. They have to worry about whether there is anything for dinner.



Lee Company is working to change this through their Vans4Cans Food Drive. By partnering with Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, they will be collecting non-perishable food items that will help feed our hungry neighbors. Through the Vans4Cans Food Drive, Lee Company invites everyone to join in helping to provide the much-needed food and resources to our neighbors in need. Here are the many ways you can participate, now through November 20:

- Give canned food and other non-perishables to a Lee Company technician during your next service call.
- Drop off food donations at a Lee Company office.
- Donate to their Virtual Food Drive where just \$5 provides 20 meals for a family in need. Visit leecompany.com/vans4cans to donate today.

It is not a hidden fact that Lee Company loves to serve their communities beyond repairing an HVAC unit or fixing a burst pipe. By joining them you too can help make a difference in the lives of our hungry neighbors. Together, we all can fight hunger and feed hope! To see this year's Vans4Cans Food Drive's updates and results, make sure to follow Lee Company on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

— Emily Bonomo, Brand Specialist at Lee Company, www.leecompany.com

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Holiday Expenses from a Special Needs Trust

Question: *It's almost Thanksgiving. I am having the entire family, 11 people, to my house for the holiday. I'd like to use my trust to pay for the Thanksgiving meal and buy some presents for my family. What do I need to do to be able to use my trust money for this purpose?*

Answer: Special needs trusts are designed to help and assist only the beneficiary – that's the person living with a physical, mental, or intellectual disability. By law, the trust money cannot be used to purchase food or gifts for others. If you have a qualified expense, such as a cable bill, the trust can pay for it, thus freeing your personal money for you to make the purchases you want.



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



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Trevecca Doctoral Graduate Inspires Educational Leaders



For Dr. Rachel Edoho-Eket, a doctoral program experience at Trevecca has been the difference between serving as an effective principal at her own school and helping aspiring administrators everywhere as a successful author.

Edoho-Eket recently published *The Principal's Journey: Navigating the Path to School Leadership*. This practical book on leadership for school administrators has found remarkable success, ranking third on Amazon's education leadership book list.

While the book's contents draw extensively on her years of experience, the confidence to complete a manuscript came from the process of writing her doctoral dissertation in the Doctor of Education program.

Inside The Principal's Journey

"In the book I talk about having a mentor. I talk about resumes and give sample interview questions," Edoho-Eket said. "Then I talk about the first year of the job and what to expect. I answer questions like how do you set a vision for your school, how do you build relationships quickly with people and how do you have hard conversations."

She hopes the book will help principals and future administrators have a realistic idea of the job and have the support they need to thrive in their position. "The job is extremely challenging but it is doable when you have the right people in place around you. I don't do anything by myself and I talk about that in the book," Edoho-Eket said. "It's a team effort. If you're going to lead a school, you need the help of your staff, you need the community's input and you need your students to do it well."

Leaving a Legacy

She got her start as a kindergarten teacher, where she put her passion for helping children learn and grow into practice. She then became a stay at home mom after having twins. However, an unexpected opportunity changed her trajectory. "I got a call from one of my previous schools saying that a teacher had left in the middle of the year and asking if I could take over her classroom," Edoho-Eket said. "I came back to work and soon after had the opportunity to be a part of opening a school right around the corner from my house."

As she began teaching in the new school, her principal became a mentor and began to ask if going into administration was something she had considered. Edoho-Eket was hesitant, but she loved her job and students and was continually invited to participate in school life in new and significant ways. "My principal would say, 'Hey, can you organize this for the school?' Or, 'I'm going to a professional development meeting, why don't you sit in with me?' And so I really learned about leadership by watching her model," Edoho-Eket said. "Finally I decided to go back to school to get my certification. Right after that was over, I applied for assistant principalship and was promoted."

Eventually, she took a job at Waverly Elementary School in Maryland as assistant principal. During that time, she discovered that she wanted to go farther

and was inspired by her family to pursue the highest levels of education. Her Ed.D. helped prepare her and four years after starting at Waverly, she was promoted to principal.

"I lost two grandmothers in the same year in 2016 and just listening to them and learning more about their life triggered in me a desire to leave a legacy like they did," Edoho-Eket said. "They were both educators. So I made a personal goal that day. I really want to get my doctorate and that's when I began researching programs."

Finding the Right Fit

She looked at leadership doctorates around the country but was drawn to Trevecca's convenient online format and Christian emphasis. "At the time, my twins were in first grade, so I thought logistically about what I could manage. I am an assistant principal and I work a lot of hours. I'm married with two young kids, so for me online made the most sense," Edoho-Eket said. "My father was a minister, and Trevecca has that faith-based part of it too, and that was a unique aspect that the other programs didn't offer."

Throughout the program, Edoho-Eket received support from her cohort and professors that has carried far beyond her degree. "I'm still in contact with my cohort members. The caliber of the people that I learned with and that I'm continuing to learn from has been amazing," Edoho-Eket said. "The support of Dr. Ryan Longnecker, Dr. Kristen Bledsoe and several others have been instrumental in getting me through and helping me promote the book."

Making Plans to Inspire

She hopes to write more books in the future, encouraging other leaders to go further in their careers. "The success has been so unexpected and I'm just extremely blessed that people are talking about the book and that I'm getting it out so that more people can benefit," Edoho-Eket. "I've got some ideas for future books. One would be around time management. I would also consider writing about women in leadership, but right now I'm gonna focus on being a principal and helping bring other aspiring leaders into the fold."

The Principal's Journey: Navigating the Path to School Leadership provides a helpful and practical blueprint for educators to follow as they transition into new leadership roles and serves as an essential guide for those who are interested in learning more about school-based leadership. Copies of the book are available for purchase through Amazon.

— Rebekah Warren, Office of Marketing and Communications,
Trevecca Nazarene University, www.trevecca.edu

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Medicare Open Enrollment Ends Soon

Yes, it has come around again and your mailbox, email, and TV commercials are telling you that open enrollment is here!

So, let's take a look at what Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) is all about. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan or a prescription drug plan (PDP) this is the time of year you get to review how those plans have done for you. You will be receiving from your plan's carrier toward the end of September a letter called the ANOC letter (annual notice of change). It will tell you what the changes on your plan will be for 2024. Remember to open this letter from your carrier and not put it in file 13!



The open enrollment signing period is October 15th through December 7th. If you decide to make any changes your new plan will start January 1, 2024. If you don't make any changes then your current plan will roll into 2024 and you don't have to do a thing!

Suggestion – call your Medicare Rep and discuss next year's plan with him or her! Every year we must get recertified with Medicare and the Carriers to be able to offer suggestions as to what would be the best route for you in 2024. We are blessed to have such a great healthcare system in Middle Tennessee and that attracts many companies that want to do business here.

If you don't do mail, then hop on your computer beginning October 1st; you will be able to log on to Medicare.gov and check out your plan there. You may also see your plans info in the 2024 Medicare&You that will be mailed to you. It's available on their website but does not have local information on plans/carriers.

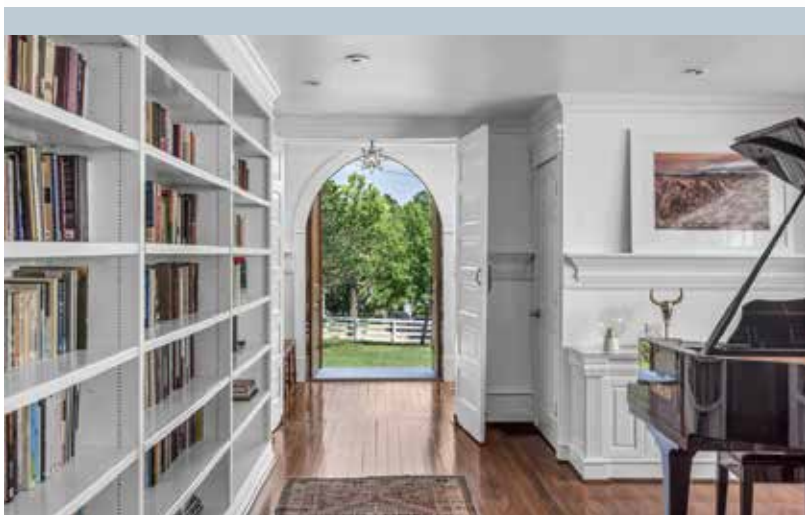
Remember this is about your healthcare coverage for next year. It's worth taking a look! And this time next year – we get to do it all over again!

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sarah's story

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The Release For The Award-Winning Film “Sight” Will Be Postponed

The initially planned release of the film *Sight* (based on Dr. Ming Wang’s autobiography *From Darkness to Sight*) by Universal Studios in theaters across the U.S. will be delayed beyond 10/27/23. The film has won the top prize (best picture) at the 50th ICVM International Christian Film Award, and has also recently been nominated for grand prize at Heartland International Film Festival. We will let you know when we have a new release date.



surgeon in the United States. Set in 1970’s rural China, a young Ming faces persecution and despair at every turn, but through the support of his dedicated family and his own unwavering determination, he finds his way to America, attends Harvard and MIT and helps develop an innovative technology that restores sight in millions. Taking on the seemingly impossible challenge of helping a blind orphan, the resilient Dr. Wang must reconcile with his own traumatic past and face the harsh reality that the strength of his own will can only go so far.

About Dr. Ming Wang, MD, PhD

Dr. Ming Wang, Harvard & MIT (MD, magna cum laude); PhD (laser physics), is a world-renowned laser eye surgeon, philanthropist, and a co-founder with Dr. Rice Broocks 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. 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 (and holds two U.S. patents), has been used by tens of thousands of eye doctors throughout the world in nearly every nation, and millions have had their eyesight restored.

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.

To reach Dr. Ming Wang:
drwang@wangvisioninstitute.com,
www.drmingwang.com

— Leona Walthorn

The message of the film *Sight* is about freedom, faith and common ground. In recent years, such films have met with difficulty in release in Hollywood. A notable recent example is *Sound of Freedom*.

Sight, starring Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning Greg Kinnear and Terry Chen (*Almost Famous, Falling*), is based on the true story of Dr. Ming Wang, a poor Chinese immigrant, who defies all odds to become a world-renowned eye

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3 Reasons to Be Thankful for the 2023 Housing Market

Thanksgiving is on the horizon, a time of food, family, and turkey-induced power naps. It's also that time to count our blessings and consider the things we are thankful for during the year. From a housing perspective, this year has certainly been...interesting. That's not to say that it's all been negative — far from it. In fact, there are many signs of a market that's settling in for more long-term viability, while new exciting avenues and opportunities are opening up for homeowner and homebuyer alike. It's fitting because the holidays have always been about possibilities.



So as we look forward to 2024 let's look at what is going on in Nashville real estate that can cause us to be grateful.

1. Home prices cooling (and inventory's increasing)

Home prices have reached dizzying heights the last few years, which has made it difficult for first-time homebuyers to find a home of their own. Even those with a home who wanted to upgrade their space have had to make many concessions in this seller's market. The market has shifted toward a balance between buyers and seller, as there are signs that home prices are 'cooling off'.

2. Home buying contingencies are back

During the mad frenzy that was our post Covid market, buyers were forced to do away with almost all contingencies in order to "win" a house. But real estate professionals know that contingencies exist to protect buyers (and sellers). Inspections, appraisals and the like exist to allow buyers to exercise their due diligence when purchasing what could be their largest asset. Now that inventory is up and average days on the market is increasing, buyers have the time and the leverage to complete their due diligence before buying.

3. Renovation resources

If you are planning either a large- or small-scale renovation of your home, one major obstacle you simply have to overcome is scheduling. The spring and summer months are the peak season for renovations while the weather is good and the sun is shining. Demand for workmen and building materials can taper off dramatically as the days get shorter and the temperature drops, however.

This makes fall, and even winter, the ideal time to book contractors and work crews for those updates or repairs. It winds up working out well for both you and them, as work can be scarce during the later months of the year, so it's win-win for both parties involved — you get a more convenient renovation schedule, and they get work in the off season...something that both sides will welcome at this time of the year.

At the end of the day, the housing market is still in a good place: Homeowners still have plenty of home equity to work with, as well as a greater pool of resources to renovate and update their homes; homebuyers have increasingly more options to buy and a greater inventory to choose from in the market. Taken together, that means that we have a housing environment where everyone involved has at least some advantages that they can use to bring about their own unique vision of homeownership. We can all surely be thankful for that.

— Sarah Milligan, 615-545-1133
www.sarahmilligan.com or
sarah@wilsongrouprealestate.com



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.

Midnight Lights



Imagine it is midnight.

Your spouse, who outweighs you by a bunch, has a "nature call." He trips after stepping on a recently visiting grandchild's forgotten toy, and falls on the way back to bed. You hear a big "thud" and his calls for help amidst groans and moans. "I'm coming!" Wide awake, you holler back as you instinctively grab your cell phone by your bed and turn it on for the light. In your mind you rightly think that the last thing you need is two of you moaning and groaning on the floor in the dark.

Sure enough, he is on the floor, in excruciating pain. You think his hip may be broken because his doctor warned both of you that he has osteoporosis. You call 9-1-1 for an ambulance from your lighted phone. By the time they arrive, you have turned on lights all over the house, and on the front porch so they can clearly see where they need to be. You quickly get dressed and know you will be following the ambulance to the hospital.

Let's think about this for a minute or two.

Light was needed to safely navigate in the darkness. Actually, had your husband turned on even a small flashlight to begin with, he could have seen the obstacle and avoided a fall all together. Ever wonder how the nights must have been before electricity, modern lighting, and even cell phones? I can only imagine they were dark and dangerous.

I have to 'fess up something. Not only do I have a small flashlight by my lamp on my nightstand, I have a glass oil lamp that was old when I was a little girl (a very long time ago!) half-filled with oil. The wick is trimmed and the chimney is clean. On top of my refrigerator, I have a disposable lighter to light that lamp with if the electricity goes out.

Why? In the darkness, danger is lurking all around. A physical light, whether it is olive oil powered, battery powered, or plugged into an electrical outlet brings safety.

Way more than our need for physical lights to navigate through the physical darkness and danger, we need a Light to navigate through the dark, dangerous, and evil world all around us and lead us all the way to Heaven. One that cannot be unplugged, never needs charging, and that never needs new bulbs. The Word of God declares in Psalms 119:105. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." It just needs to be read and applied in the midnight darkness all around us.

— Linda Culbreth, Christian author and designer.
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A Vision of Community - for the Whole Community of Nashville



On a warm June day in 2022, Captains Philip and Elaine Canning arrived in Nashville to become the leaders of the Nashville area command of The Salvation Army. Inspired by the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Cannings are leading this beloved Nashville institution into the future with grace and intention.

A calling for the Cannings

Working for The Salvation Army isn't really a job in the traditional sense. It's a calling. The Cannings can't imagine their lives without being a part of The Salvation Army. Their souls have been shaped by the organization and its ministry to help others.

Both Cannings grew up in The Salvation Army. Their families have been part of "the Army" for generations. They've raised their own children in it. Both Philip and Elaine worked as regular employees for The Salvation Army before receiving the call to become officers. Capt. Philip worked as Operations Director at the Atlanta Temple Corps, while Capt. Elaine was the editor of The Salvation Army's Disposition of Forces. When they realized that God and The Salvation Army had even bigger plans for them, the Cannings embraced the call, which required going to The Salvation Army Officers Training College in Atlanta, GA.

Prior to coming to Nashville, Capts. Philip and Elaine served as officers in The Salvation Army in Georgia for several years. First, they were the Area Commanders of the Augusta Area Command and Kroc Center in Augusta, Georgia. Then they received a call to move to Atlanta to serve at the Georgia Divisional Headquarters as Divisional Secretary and Divisional Secretary of Programs.

The Salvation Army's Captains **Philip and Elaine Canning** are committed to leading Nashville forward in addressing homelessness

Now they serve as Area Commanders (co-executive directors) of the Nashville Area Command.

So, yes, it's a job. But being a part of The Salvation Army is so much more for the Cannings. The Salvation Army is also their church home and their mission. And it's a blessing.

A vision for Nashville

When the Cannings learned that The Salvation Army was sending them to Nashville, they were excited. The Salvation Army is a well-respected organization in the greater Nashville community, with deep roots.

Majors Ethan and Sue Frizzell, who were the Nashville area command's previous leaders, had left the command in good stead. The organization was known and respected for its innovations, as well as its good working relationship with the city of Nashville. The message from God about his vision for Nashville was clear.

"The word that God placed on my heart is 'community,'" Capt. Philip said. The word "community" means a group who share something in common. If you've ever heard the slogan, "We are Nashville," you'll remember how the city pulled together after the flood of May 2010 and then again after the tornado of March 2020. The city of Nashville prides itself on taking the concept of community seriously, and the Cannings see that mindset as a great opportunity to help those in need of help and hope.

As a result, collaboration is paramount for The Salvation Army. Capt. Philip emphasizes that the Nashville Area Command doesn't do anything in isolation. Collaboration with civic and community leaders, other nonprofit organizations and private institutions is necessary to the success of any program in the long term—hence, the Nashville Area command's relationships with the Metro Nashville Government, United Way of Greater Nashville, and Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee and others, all with the goal to bring hope to Nashville's most vulnerable citizens.

Plus, The Salvation Army's own community of



staffers and volunteers are passionate about helping vulnerable people. They have the support of a robust and diverse group of community leaders who serve on the organization's advisory board.

The team effort includes ordinary citizens, as well. Consider the Red Kettles, the iconic image of The Salvation Army during the Christmas season. When anyone stops to chat with a volunteer bellringer and puts a donation in the kettle, they're helping, too. All those donations go back to fund programs that help those facing challenges in the Nashville community.

"The reality is that what makes Nashville Nashville is its people," Capt. Philip said. "And its people are everyone, from the wealthiest and the most influential to the individual who is experiencing homelessness and is standing out there on the street corner asking people for money to help get them through the day."

"We're all in this together," he continued. "And we have to work together: the government, the social service sector, individuals, community groups,

companies, the private sector. All of us have to work together to address barriers in our community so that everybody has a chance to get ahead.”

Innovation and collaboration

Homelessness is a systemic problem. It doesn't discriminate, Capt. Philip notes, and people regularly fall through the cracks. The vast majority of those living without shelter are not there by choice, even if they resist initial efforts to help them find housing.

“But it's important for us to realize that what they're saying is, ‘I don't know how to navigate another world, and it scares me. I'd rather stick with what I know,’” he said.

That's where The Salvation Army's LIFNAV program comes in. LIFNAV is the organization's innovative approach to helping people experiencing homelessness find their way to a stable, long-term housing situation. You can immediately see evidence of the importance of community in the LIFNAV program. LIFNAV, which is guided by the mantra “Engage. Empower. Equip.,” is based on forming relationships with people and developing trust.

Indeed, trust makes it all possible. Relationships make LIFNAV work. And that was the type of innovation that drew the Cannings to Nashville. The emphasis on relationships resonates deeply with both of them.

Here's how it works. First, the LIFNAV outreach team goes out into the community, into encampments to make initial contacts with people who are experiencing homelessness. The team members break bread and share food with the people they're hoping to reach. Over time and dinner, they get to know them. Then they can assess whether those people are ready to take the next step, which is to move out of the camp or off the street into temporary housing, known as gap housing or rapid re-housing.

LIFNAV case managers then help those individuals tackle the logistics, such as making sure they have the right documentation to take the next step to obtain permanent housing. They help them with life skills and provide other support, even after they move into their new home.

Even while they deal with small, often tedious details, the LIFNAV team members never lose sight of the fact that each individual is a child of God, with their own hopes and dreams. “It's a respectful process,” Capt. Elaine Canning explained. “The LIFNAV outreach team brings dignity to the process. They take time to find out about these individuals' lives and how they've experienced homelessness and what has brought them to the situation they're in, as well as where they'd like to see themselves.”



And while there are nearly 2,000 people living in Nashville who are experiencing homelessness, the Cannings are confident that The Salvation Army, together with the community of Nashville, can reach them and help them not only find housing but regain a sense of hope.

“We're going to work with them as long as it takes to find housing,” Capt. Philip said. “That's our goal—to build a trusting relationship.”

The LIFNAV program has already experienced notable success—success that all the donors who support the program can be proud of. According to the Metro Office of Homeless Services, since 2021 when the partnership between the LIFNAV program and city started, 87% of those who have moved into permanent housing have remained in permanent housing a year later.

The Cannings are also proud of The Salvation Army's other initiatives. While LIFNAV and the Center of Hope Supportive Housing Program help people move out of homelessness, other programs are designed to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. One of The Salvation Army's homelessness prevention programs is the Pathway of Hope, a case management program designed to help families set goals and overcome barriers en route to achieving those goals. Another homelessness prevention initiative is the Emergency Financial and Food Assistance program, which provides resources to help families remain in their homes and stabilize their households. The Salvation Army also oversees programming that reaches out to children and teens who are at risk for becoming homeless.

Where God is at work

You could see how it would be easy to get lost in the nitty-gritty details, the logistics of meeting people's needs. But the Cannings and their team never lose sight of The Salvation Army's mission, which promises, “Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.”

The mission guides everything that the Cannings and the rest of The Salvation Army team do. They carry it out every day: every staff member, every team member, every volunteer for The Salvation Army's mission. “They're the hands and feet of Christ, extending compassion and generosity,” Capt. Elaine said. She also sees God in the face of every person who is experiencing homelessness.

“I see a chance to remind them that they are valued by God. They are his creation, that he has a plan for their lives, just as for any other individual,” she said. “There is dignity in that.”

Homelessness is a dehumanizing experience, so all the programs are designed to center the person experiencing it. “When we're dealing with homelessness, we're dealing with humans,” Capt. Philip said. And that remains at the core of The Salvation Army's work. “God is in the redemption business, and he's redeeming lives physically and spiritually,” he added. “You see God at work in the results of changed lives.”

The future

As 2024 approaches, the Cannings are optimistic about what the future holds for Nashville. “The future for Nashville is bright. All the right things are happening,” Capt. Philip said. “The city is growing. We're attracting new business and new opportunities, which is great for the city. “The future is also bright because the conversation around homelessness is happening. The right conversations are occurring, and we're addressing this in a new way,” he added. It will take time to address homelessness, of course, and as with any journey, there will likely be a few bumps in the road along the way. “But the important thing is that we're heading in the right direction. And it's going to take all of us,” Philip said. “We're all in this together, and we all have a role to play in continuing to make Nashville a great place for everyone to thrive—and by everyone, I mean everyone.” As the city grows, and those new businesses arrive and establish a foothold, it's important to remember the people who live without shelter, on the margins of society. There's an old adage that a rising tide raises all ships, and the Cannings believe it will be true for Nashville, if everyone pulls together. Says Capt. Philip: “Let's work together to make that happen.”

— Jennifer Larson



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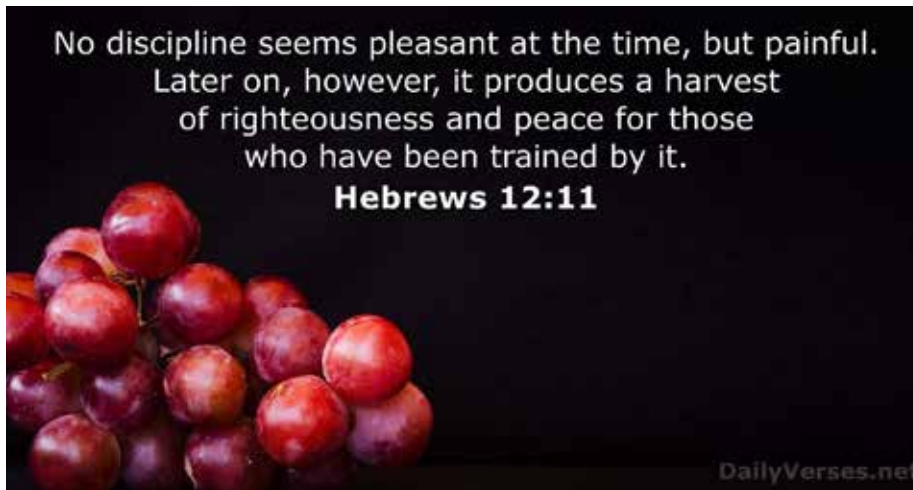
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Learning and Growing Through Suffering

I remember the first time I came across the scriptures on suffering in Hebrews, Chapter 12. Despite my heaviness in what I was going through, I was lifted up by knowing “whom God loves, He chastens,” (v6). I thought, well at least God is loving me through this and believing his work is not in vain; and if I can “endure chastening God will deal with me as a son” (v7). No one wants to suffer, and let's face it, there's no pleasure in it. I'm grateful that I'm seeing suffering in the proper perspective now, knowing and believing God holds purpose behind it. God works in mysterious ways. He says in his word, “do not despise suffering” (v5) and that he, (God), “chastens us for our own profit that we may be partakers of his own holiness” (v10). Well, praise God for that.

There are different kinds of suffering. For example, there can be persecution and trials in being mocked, jeered or even hated for being a Christian and lover of Jesus. However, praise the Lord, there is great reward for this, my friend (see Luke 6:22-23). There is also physical suffering which can be heartbreaking; not only for the person suffering but for family members, too, who endure alongside us and hate to see the suffering taking place. There is also the suffering we, ourselves, are solely responsible for. Suffering can be a consequence of sin and not following God's ways. This has a kind of double suffering to it. First, the suffering itself and then the realization that one actually caused the pain themselves. Ouch! But better to suffer for righteousness sake (the pruning process) then for unrepentant sin that leads to death.

Certainly, as followers of Jesus, we can recall a time when we veered from God's way and order of things and paid a heavy price for it. Unfortunately, I'm familiar with this type of suffering. There are some popular scriptures specifically for marriage. One such scripture is Eph 5:25, which says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" Ok men, how are we really doing in this area? “Knowing” the command isn't merely enough, brothers, but it's in the “doing” that we will reap



the respect and healthy marriages we yearn for with our wives.

I'm compelled to share a deep lesson the Lord has been teaching me with the hope of helping to keep other men on the narrow path that leads to life and happiness. Two important scriptures come to mind: One, James 1:22, be a "doer" of the word. And, Phil 4:9, that my wife referred me to, when Paul says, these things you have learned and received in me, "do" and the God of peace shall be with you. There's tremendous blessing in this wisdom. On a good note, I've identified things I don't want any part of, and do not help me fulfill God's command of me.

I can say ashamedly that allowing shallowness, pride and lack of intimacy to rule has not helped me to love my wife like Jesus loves the church. I am learning the importance of sacrificial behavior and self(less)ness, which is Christ's model to his bride. God bless my beautiful wife for putting up with my unloving ways and taking a stand for me to learn how to walk in God's perfect order.

Our favorite saying is, “Love Wins”. I was so grateful when we went to Goodwill the other day and my wife found a beautiful shirt with "Love Wins" on the front. Remember, no chastening is ever joyful while in the moment, but afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness (see Heb 12:11). Whatever trial or suffering you may be going through, remember, God will not forsake you and you may come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in your time of need (Heb 4:16). If you know of someone you'd love to bless with a custom video memorial, song or poem, feel free to contact me. A life is special and worth cherishing forever.

— David Young, *We Make Memories*, David@WeMakeMemories.net
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- Bette Thompson

Speak to Your Mountain

Mark 11:23 is a powerful scripture that emphasizes the significance of our spoken word. It is not enough to just read it, or even believe it, but to speak to our situation as well. We have what we say.



I love the story of David and Goliath. It is a wonderful illustration of how the underdog wins and that even though the surrounding circumstances seem monumental, with God on our side, we win! What is sometimes missed in this classic story of David is his spoken words.

The story of David and Goliath is found in 1 Samuel 17. In verse 26, David asks, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

In verse 32, David says, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine, your servant will go and fight him”.

In verse 34-37, David speaks to Saul and explains how he had fought bears and lions and goes on and refers to Goliath once more as an uncircumcised Philistine.

In verse 45, David tells Goliath where his strength comes from.

In verse 46, David says (out loud) that he will strike Goliath down, and he will cut off his head.

The beauty of this story is that David not only conquered Goliath, doing what he said he would do, but more importantly that he SAID WHAT HE WOULD DO. David was able to speak with authority because he knew the Living God and knew the source of his strength.

Listen today what is coming out of your mouth. Are you speaking faith-filled words or are you speaking negative words full of doubt and unbelief? Before you allow anything to permeate the atmosphere, listen to what you are about to say. If it is not positive and full of hope, do not let it leave your mouth. Our words are powerful, and we have what we say.

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21). Life is always a better choice!

— Rhonda L. Smart, rhondalsmart@gmail.com

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Be Happy, Be Healthy, Be Whole

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

Weight loss and the holidays is my most challenging time of year. Is it the same for you? I love all the events, the time with family, the time off work – but oh the caloric temptations.

I love that people make a lot of gifts at home, in the kitchen, but a lot of times those extras make their way into the break room at work. Oh, the temptation. It looks so good, and it’s the holidays, and it’s small, and then I have eaten seven.

However, I confess, I’m guilty in the other direction also. When my wife Sheryl says, “Hey honey, take these to work so they don’t tempt us”, I’m just following orders.

So, instead of sugary treats, we are hoping to stock up on citrus this year after reading in the *Journal of Lipid Research* that citrus fruits, like tangerines and oranges, increase weight loss and stop the development of type 2 diabetes and heart disease.



Another weight loss tip I found involves one of my favorite things – Music! According to the research journal, *Psychological Reports*, when music is played during a meal, diners eat about 18 percent less and report enjoying their food more.

So, is there a place for chocolate in a healthy diet? An article in the *FASEB Journal*, a medical research publication, says – yes ... for breakfast! Put down that bran muffin and pick up a Hershey bar. Eating chocolate in the first hour of the day could boost fat loss and lower blood sugar. A study found that consuming 3.5 ounces of chocolate within an hour of waking up helps with burning fat, reducing blood glucose levels, and decreasing stress. (Note to self- 3.5 ounces is NOT the whole bar.)

How has your weight loss journey been going? Is someone helping you stay healthy? It’s hard to go it alone. Remember, if you need help, I recommend the people who have helped me and my wife lose weight, Dr. Lodge and the staff at Cool Springs MD.

So – here’s hoping we all can keep our head in the weight loss game over the holidays. My challenge will be to remain disciplined to exercise portion control. I don’t want to feel deprived but I can’t over indulge. What’s your biggest challenge over the holidays?

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
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The Holiday Season Is Upon Us, Are You Ready?

Getting your home prepared for an onslaught of guests ready to deck the halls and trim the tree can be overwhelming and stressful. While it isn't necessary to do a thorough top-to-bottom cleaning to get your house holiday ready, tidying and cleaning the areas you and your guests will spend time in is advisable. This usually includes the main living areas, kitchen, and guest bathroom.

Tips to Get Your Home Ready for Holiday Guests

As you prepare your home for holiday guests, remember to always prioritize cleaning areas. For example, your entryway is the first area your guests see upon arrival. Make sure it's tidy, dusted, and organized. Adding a poinsettia is also a nice way to greet guests and get them into the holiday spirit. Here are some additional tips to help you get specific areas of your home ready for holiday guests:

Entryways

- Pick up and store any shoes, umbrellas, coats, and clutter.
- Designate a space in the closet or other area for guests' coats, boots, and shoes.
- Wipe down walls and baseboards to remove any scuffs and marks.
- Clean windows and doors.
- If necessary, clear walkways and entryways to ensure the safety of your guests.

Living Room

- Pick up the clutter, organize items neatly, and donate any items you haven't used in the last 6-8 months.
- Vacuum carpets (clean stains) and clean wood and tile floors.
- Dust and polish furniture.
- Vacuum furniture fabric, wash pillowcases and blankets, and fluff sofa cushions.
- Neatly fold throw blankets (after you wash them).

Kitchen

- Declutter and clean and disinfect countertops.
- Clean cooktop (soak stove grates and knobs in sink to remove cooking residue).
- Replace kitchen hand towels (have plenty of paper towels available).
- Make room in the refrigerator for your guests favorite snacks and leftovers.

Bathroom

- Clean and declutter any bathrooms your guests will use. For overnight guests, stock the bathroom with extra towels and toiletries.
- Clear personal products from the vanity and cabinets.
- Supply fresh bath and hand towels.
- Refill the soap dispenser and set out extra toiletries.
- Make sure toilet tissue is well-stocked.

- Provide overnight guests with a blowdryer (or access to one).
- Place a nightlight in the bathroom.
- Clean the cabinets and countertops.

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— Ashley Farrar
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God Designed Us to be Healthy

We all want to be confident in our health. I mean think about it, we want to know that we are doing all the right things when it comes to how we take care of our bodies. But we are all dealing with the fact that health can seem so complicated and confusing. Honestly, this can make us feel very tired and discouraged. How can we be confident in our health? How can we know that we are doing the right things when we are stewarding our body?

Firstly, we must realize that we were created to be healthy. God has created us to thrive and to get better and better. Our bodies are amazing! They were made in a specific way and for specific purposes. The problem is that we aren't taking care of them in the way that God has intended. It's like us buying a brand new car and putting oil in the gas tank, gas in the coolant tank, and never doing anything to maintain the car. The car manufacturer has a specific way that the car needs to be maintained for it to run well and for a long time. If that isn't followed, we run into problems pretty quick. So, we can either spend a little money maintaining it or a lot of money when things break because we didn't maintain it. It is the same concept with our bodies. Many of us are not taking care of ourselves in the way that God has intended. We then we turn around and wonder why we are tired all the time and have different sicknesses, when if we would just have taken care and maintained our body in the first place then many of



our problems with fatigue and sickness wouldn't exist. We only get one body in this life. This makes it very important that we take care of it in the right way, it's never too late!

Don't get me wrong, sometimes things just happen. I have seen some of the healthiest people who steward their bodies so well still get cancer. I have also seen some of the unhealthiest people never have any health problems. The fact is that some of this is out of our control. We live in a world where sin has entered, and sin leads to death and destruction. Many times, God can use these hard times we deal with to show us things and perfect us for what he has called us to. My conviction is that we should do everything in our power to steward our bodies in the way that we were made, and trust God for the rest.

Seem complicated? Don't know where to start? Ask for help from people who are walking the walk. God wants us to prosper and be thrive in every season. We were created to be healthy!

— Ashton Tate, Founder, Glory to Glory Fitness
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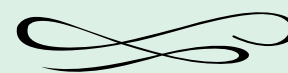
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Balancing Act: Addressing Age-Related Balance Issues, Neuropathy, and Posture

As we journey through life, it's not uncommon to notice changes in our body's balance and stability, especially as we age. Balance issues can significantly affect our daily lives and pose potential dangers, particularly in the context of neuropathy and poor posture. In this article, we'll delve into the intricacies of age-related balance problems, exploring their causes, consequences, and the steps we can take to prevent the risks of falling as we get older.

Understanding Age-Related Balance Issues

Age-related balance issues can stem from various factors, but two significant contributors are neuropathy and poor posture:

- 1. Neuropathy:** Neuropathy refers to nerve damage, which can result from various underlying causes, including diabetes, chemotherapy, or even the natural aging process. When the nerves responsible for balance are affected, it can lead to sensations of unsteadiness and a higher risk of falling.
- 2. Poor Posture:** As we age, our bodies tend to undergo postural changes, which can include a forward-leaning posture, rounded shoulders, and a weakened core. These changes can disrupt our body's natural balance mechanisms, making it more challenging to maintain stability.

The Dangers of Falling in Older Age

Falling becomes increasingly perilous as we grow older, and the consequences can be severe:

- 1. Physical Injuries:** Falls can result in fractures, sprains, and other injuries that may require prolonged recovery periods.
- 2. Loss of Independence:** A serious fall can lead to a loss of mobility and independence, often necessitating additional assistance or long-term care.
- 3. Emotional Impact:** The fear of falling can take a toll on mental health, leading to anxiety, social isolation, and reduced quality of life.



- addressing the underlying causes and symptoms is essential.
- 3. Balance Training:** Participate in balance training programs to strengthen the muscles that support your posture and stability.
 - 4. Chiropractic:** The goal of chiropractic is to restore balance to your entire frame while also relieving pressure and improving joint stability.

Age-related balance issues, neuropathy, and poor posture are common challenges as we grow older, but they need not dictate our quality of life. By understanding the causes of these issues and taking proactive steps to address them, we can significantly reduce the risks associated with falling and maintain our independence and well-being. Don't let balance concerns hold you back; take action today to stay steady on your feet and enjoy life to the fullest.

— Dr. Jae Hitson, Clinical Director of Blue Umbrella Medical Center, Murfreesboro, Tenn.
www.blueumbrellamedical.com

Preventing Falls and Enhancing Balance

The good news is that there are steps we can take to address age-related balance issues and reduce the risk of falling:

- 1. Strength and Mobility Training:** Engaging in regular physical activity that focuses on balance, strength, and flexibility can significantly improve stability and posture.
- 2. Neuropathy Treatment:** If neuropathy is a factor,

HASSLE FREE ZONE

How to Get Rid of Rodents

“Rodents” can refer to several furry little creatures like squirrels and chipmunks, but mice and rats are the most common types that invade homes. While they might be tiny, they sure know how to make a big mess. They can chew through wood, insulation, and even electric wires, which can lead to the danger of fire in your home. Plus, they have a knack for hiding in the most unexpected places. But fear not, we'll show you how to get rid of them.

Signs You Have a Rodent Infestation in Your Home

- Mini (and many!) dark oblong-shaped droppings near food sources
- Nibble marks on kitchen cabinets, baseboards, or storage boxes
- Scratching sounds from roofs and walls
- Shredded paper or other paper product that has been used as a nesting material
- Pets intensely pawing at walls or floorboards

Here are some easy ways to make sure that mice and rats aren't making themselves at home in your home.

1. Tidy Up

Rodents can survive on as little as 15-20 grams of food a day, which means even tiny crumbs can keep them going. So, after dinner, make it a habit to wipe down those counters and put away those dirty



dishes. A clean house is an inhospitable one for these critters. Also, don't let clutter take over your space. Mice and rats love to hide in the mess, so keep your floors and surfaces clean and visible. Pay extra attention to storage areas like basements, attics, and those mysterious closets that aren't frequently opened.

2. Seal up Food and Lock it Away

Seal the deal, quite literally! Mice aren't food snobs, so it's crucial to keep food containers, trash bins, and even pet food tightly sealed. If your pets are messy eaters, consider feeding them at specific mealtimes to prevent leaving a buffet for rodents.

3. Seal Entry Points in Your Home

Rodents are sneaky little creatures, and open doors and windows are their invitation to a feast. Keep them always shut, and if you want some fresh air, install screens to keep the critters out. Check your doors and windows for tiny openings too. Remember, mice can squeeze through a hole as small as a quarter inch, so patch up any potential entry points.

4. Spruce Up Your Yard

Even with a well-guarded pantry, mice love to venture outside for snacks and then sneak back in for a cozy nap. Keep outdoor food sources to a minimum by staying on top of your garden, tidying up fallen birdseed, and securing trash cans full of delicious food waste. Also, keep your lawn mowed and free

of weeds. Tall grass is like a rodent hide-and-seek playground.

Already Have an Infestation?

- **Use Rodent Traps:** Get creative with traps! There are all sorts of contraptions out there, from classic snap traps to more humane live-catch options. The only downside to this method is that you must deal with the caught rodents yourself.
- **Get a Feline Friend:** Cats are natural hunters and can help keep your rodent population in check. Plus, they make purr-fect companions!
- **Hire a Professional:** Sometimes, DIY solutions just won't cut it.

Let the Professionals Handle It

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— Meredith Boyd, Social Media and Marketing Specialist, www.callwaynes.com



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HEALTHY LIVING

Everything Happens for a Reason?

The saying, “Everything happens for a reason,” has no clear origin but it is believed to have been influenced by Aristotle’s teaching that everything happens due to the cause-and-effect model. His theory, is true, it has no exceptions but this law only speaks to the pure intentionality of our own causes and conditions, not those of others. We have developed a habit of saying this in all instances and circumstances not only those which we control. It is most commonly used as words of comfort when bad or unexpected occurrences happen.

Many in America, erroneously believe the phrase is Biblical in nature; tying the saying to the belief that everything is predestined by God. True, there are a number of verses in the Bible that does come close to this phrase, the closest being, “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*” (Romans 8:28).

To bolster the truth of the idiom, we highlighted the natural law of Cause and Effect. As with all natural laws of science, the outcome is extremely predictable. Humans can affect the law but nothing we can do will change the overall outcome. Take the law of gravity as an example, if we drop a brick from the exact location three stories up, the brick will fall straight down every time. Except if we pitch the brick outward. It will still fall but not in the same place as before. The force of our pitch effected the law, it did not change the law. Consider, if everything we do, happens for a reason, what about our own self-inflicted mistakes? If I do something really stupid, like drive a car while intoxicated, the results might be something completely different than what I envisioned. I saw myself getting home safely without incident, but the police



will change my plans greatly. Without a doubt, God can choose to allow us to make that stupid decision, and He may also allow our actions to result in the death of another. God did not choose to harm anyone. We made a choice, He only allowed a consequence to play out, involving a bystander, which we as Christians believe, was used as part of his overall plan for each of us.

We cannot be immune from the consequences of others. Every cause and condition that anyone puts into play will have an effect, but that effect will not only impact the one that caused it but also people who had no bearing on the cause or the condition. Their only tie to the effect was their relationship to the actor of the cause, condition, or effect and/or their being a random person at a specific location at the exact time of the condition.

There is no doubt that God’s plan will be done, just not necessarily by the hand of the people He first assigned to the task. God gives us each free-will; a “gift” that allows us to choose to go against God’s desired plan. We each have the ability to turn our back to God, but know, that is not the choice he wishes us to make. He guides us, never makes us.

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

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

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PARENTING POINTS

Kids of Divorce Give Thanks

Working with kids and families impacted by divorce has been the sole focus of my career for the last twenty years; it has been a sacred honor to sit with children and be a safe place to listen to their stories. Some children have really “big questions” that they can’t seem to get an answer to. Some children only get to see part of their family on a regular basis due to geographical distance, deployment or other challenges that make it impossible to enjoy both parents. Some kids live within a few miles of each biological parent. Some kids have stepparents, and some do not.

Over all these years I can share some common narratives of their hearts when it comes to having divorced parents:

- Kids appreciate when their mom and dad can “get along” and function like friends (we recognize that most divorced co-parents are not actually friends; however, when the opportunity arises to be cordial and polite it really is important to their shared children).
- Kids appreciate not having to pick a “favorite parent” or favorite side of their family
- Kids are grateful to have the “emotional permission” to love everyone in their expanded family
- Kids don’t want to be the messenger and they are grateful when mom and dad don’t put them in the middle.

- Kids are very grateful when they play sports, or perform music or are being honored at school, if they can have all the adults and siblings that represent their family be there and not cause any stress or awkward moments when everyone is there... (many kids I work with feel really worried about who to “hug first” when they come off the court or off the stage because they don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings). A great way to be intentional with this is always encourage your child to go and speak to the other parent and use an upbeat and positive tone of voice. This allows them a chance to connect with everyone who attended the event and not feel so stressed about who to talk to first.
- Kids are very grateful when their divorced parents create a “happy handoff” instead of making their transitions between mom’s house and dad’s house a difficult experience. Kids often tell me that it is hard to leave each parent and they just wish everyone could live together again. There are 3 important things to remember at a handoff: facial expression, tone of voice and body language. These 3 things will either help the shared child have a happy handoff or a hard and sometimes hurtful



handoff. **Most kids will experience over 400-500 handoffs in their childhood when mom and dad are divorced. It is critical to make these transitions as easy on the children as possible, both emotionally and logistically.

• Kids love both parents and they never asked to be in a divided childhood. They are grateful to be loved and supported by both of their parents and to know that they have not just one home, but two amazing homes to enjoy and grow as they continue toward young adulthood.

As you celebrate this Thanksgiving, may you give thanks for the single parents and stepparents in your life, your church and your community and may we all be intentional to help the children that are being raised between two homes. There is HOPE!

— Tammy Daughtry,
Founder of Coparenting International
For more information and co-parent
classes for parents, see
www.CoParentingInternational.com



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CleanSpace is installed on the crawl space walls and floor, which creates a vapor barrier. We close off all vents that were installed around the foundation – it's an old belief that the crawl space needs those vents. Vents let humid air and moisture in, which causes mold growth and wood rot under the house and allows rodents to get in and nest. We don't want this happening under your house, so we seal the vents off. CleanSpace keeps your crawl space nice and clean all year long and keeps your feet warm in winter!

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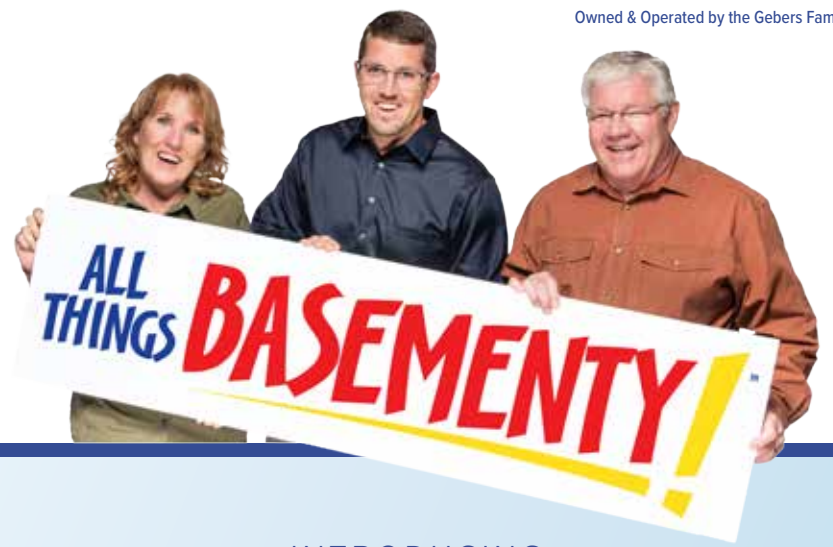
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Spiritual Goal For November

Acts 2

COUNT ON IT...

"In the last days," God says, "I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams, even on My servants both men and women.

"I will pour out My Spirit in those days...and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above...and signs on the earth below. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved."

Prayer: Lord, we are counting on it...because You are the Truth...the Way...and the Life. Thank You for welcoming us to be in Your number, who have been redeemed and set free from the bondage of sin and destruction. 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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