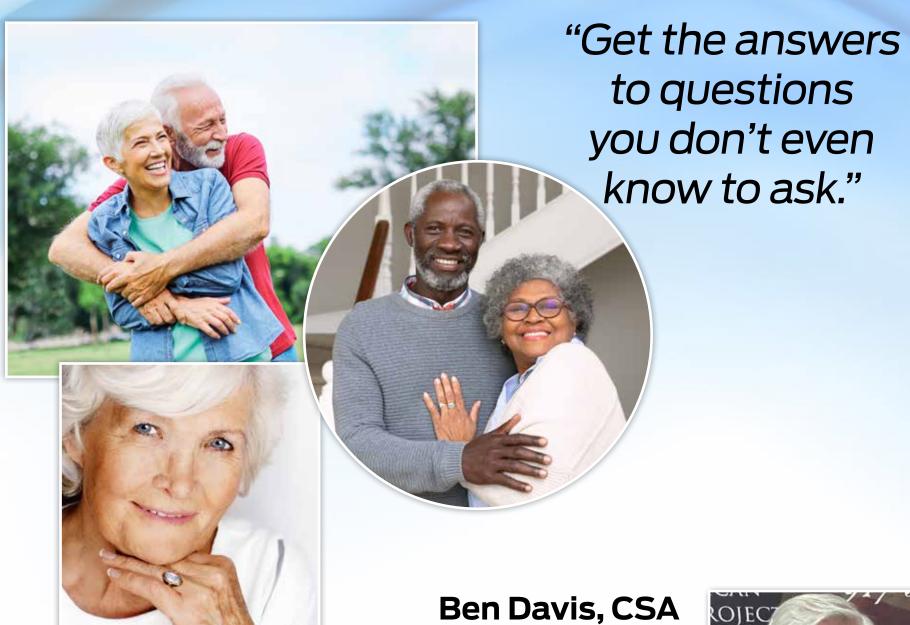
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### **OUR MISSION**



**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

### Fall is in the Air

September is an enjoyable month for my wife and me because fall is our favorite time of the year.

With the kids back in school and Labor Day signaling the end of summer, the days grow shorter, and flocks of geese begin their occasional honking overhead. Another football season kicks off, bringing a sense of anticipation.

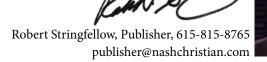


Fall is in the air, and I feel invigorated. Even our cat, Rocky, seems more alert and active, sensing the change in the weather.

I love this time of year, eagerly awaiting the beautiful transformation of the leaves that will begin later this month. Despite the apparent chaos and disorder we see in our country and around the world, the changing seasons remind us of the incredible and incomprehensible power of God, displayed through His creation. His order in the universe and the consistency of the earth we inhabit are constants that will never change.

It's easy to take the beauty of creation for granted. Over the next few weeks, I encourage you and your family to slow down and take time to appreciate the beauty of God's world. Give thanks to the Creator for all His works. As a biblical reminder, consider reading Psalm 104 and Genesis 1.

"O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions." — Psalm 104





### ON THE COVER 20

Jaime and Eva Romero of Solace Oral Surgery and Implant Center create new smiles in Middle Tennessee. Read their story of faith and family. See page 20.

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### MISSION MAKERS

### **Event to Benefit Helping Hands**

Tennessee Action Council a 501c3 nonprofit organization is comprised of two divisions: Helping Hands and Project Life, both focused on children and families.

On September 19, the organization will host its annual "Voices For the Unspoken" event to benefit the Helping Hands division. The evening will include dinner, entertainment by the Christian "Unspoken," and guest speakers Brent and Anna Morgan from Bridge Family Ministries.

Tom Thompson, Tennessee Action Council Board member and Chairman of Voices for the Unspoken, a dinner event benefiting Helping Hands, says, "Helping Hands: It's why God gave them to us." Tom and supporters of this organization take action to demonstrate compassion to at-risk children.

Helping Hands has a twofold mission: to provide new, attractive duffle bags to children entering the foster care system in Tennessee, and to convey a message of worth and hope to children during traumatic periods in their lives. Over 9,000 children in Tennessee are currently in the foster care system, often experiencing significant emotional and psychological trauma when they are removed from their homes. Helping Hands addresses the needs of these children and their families by preserving the children's dignity and respecting their personal belongings. Gone are the days when children must carry their belongings in black garbage bags.





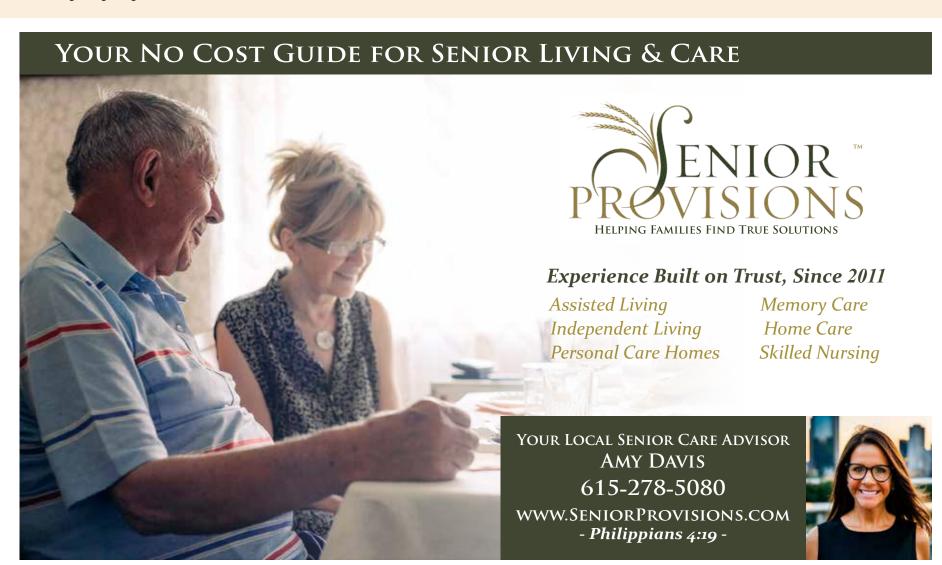
The goal is simple yet profound: to help children feel valued and that their belongings matter, instead of conveying the message that they are worth no more than trash by using garbage bags. Having their own duffle bag helps these children feel more normal and stable—sometimes for the first time in their lives—whether they are entering custody or moving from one placement to another. These attractive, new, and compartmentalized duffle bags aid in their transition to new opportunities and placements, reinforcing their sense of worth and appreciation for their developing lives.

Jacquelin McDonald, Tennessee Action Council Board President, comments: "Being involved with this ministry, knowing my efforts are truly helping women in need, saving the lives of innocent children, surrounding and helping families stay together, and maintaining the dignity and worth of traumatized children is truly God honoring work. Please join TAC in serving our community."



You can support Helping Hands by attending the Voices for the Unspoken dinner, being a Sponsor, by making a one-time donation or through monthly, ongoing contributions.

For more information about the organization and/or to purchase tickets or become a sponsor for the event, visit www.projectlife4tn.org/unspoken-event.



### SECRETS FROM THE STUDIO

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Secrets



### **What Did You Say?**

It's a prayer I've uttered several times. It goes something like this – God please give me a thick skin and a tender heart. Why that prayer? Words.



Careless words. Misinterpreted words. Well intended but clunky words. Mean words. Ambiguous words.

He said she said word wars. Many of my Bridges guests share how negative words have affected their lives. Words are powerful and their impact lives on long after the conversation ends.

#### **Thick Skin and Tender Heart?**

I am a sensitive person, so I found that I got my feelings hurt a lot. I didn't want to harden my heart toward people, so I asked God to give me a thick skin and a tender heart by the power of His Holy Spirit. That prayer has spared my heart pain on many occasions. Words can also incite heightened emotions. Consider this true story of a single mom. This single mom, let's call her Sue, lived with her two children in the inner city in what was considered an unsafe area. Sue was very brave and hardworking. She didn't have a car, so she took a bus to her full-time job as a secretary. One year, she got a second job in the evenings at a department store to have money for Christmas presents.

### **Are You Ready to Die?**

One snowy night after her shift she walked to the bus stop. A very tall man walked into the bus stop as well. He looked at Sue and smiled. Then he said, "Are you ready to die?" At that Sue started to scream for help as loud as she could. Then, the man started apologizing and explained he wasn't going to hurt her. The very tall man told Sue what he was trying to say was "When you die do you know for sure that you'll go to heaven?" The man meant well but his poor choice of words scared a single mom of two children beyond belief. I share with you this true story to illustrate the power of words. What we say - how we say it - is very important. Words can heal. Words can hurt. Words can bring people together. Words can destroy relationships. Words can be the difference between life and death. *The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences*. Proverbs 18:21 NLT

### You're Cute but You're Not Very Smart

A recent guest on Bridges shared that when she was little her family would say "good thing you are cute because you are not very smart". They were kidding, but as a young child she interpreted those words as truth. Those words – that label stuck with her for years. Those words shaped her choices and framed her world until she became a Christ follower.

When she became a Christian, she walked into a brand-new life where God's Word became her absolute standard. She discovered that God's Word declared her chosen, loved, redeemed, daughter, forgiven – and so on. She traded her worldly labels for God's Word. We have the privilege and responsibility to choose our words wisely. When we speak life, we build a solid foundation filled with the hope of Christ.

Today's Secret from the Studio: Words are powerful so choose your words carefully.

— Monica Schmelter is the host of Bridges aired on Christian Television Network which airs in over 50 million homes. Monica enjoys spending time with her husband and is very excited about her son's upcoming wedding.



### LEGAL MATTERS

### National Religious Broadcasters Association Files Johnson Amendment Challenge

Leading professional association of Christian communicators opposes unlawful silencing of churches, charities on candidates and electoral issues

The National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) association—a nonpartisan, international association of Christian communicators whose member organizations represent hundreds of millions of listeners, viewers, and readers—has joined with First Baptist Church Waskom (Waskom, Texas), Intercessors for America (Purcellville, Va.), and Sand Springs Church (Athens, Texas) to file a complaint challenging the Johnson Amendment's restrictions on the First Amendment freedoms of nonprofit organizations, including churches. The case was filed in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas in Tyler, Texas. Both churches are located in the Eastern District of Texas. View the full complaint here.

"For too long, churches have been instructed to remain silent on pressing matters of conscience and conviction during election season or risk their 501(c)(3) status," said NRB President & CEO Troy A. Miller. "We believe that all nonprofits should have the constitutional right to freely express their point of view on candidates, elections, and issues on the ballot. Our challenge to the Johnson Amendment is about securing the future of free expression for all Americans, particularly those standing in the pulpit."

"The Johnson Amendment has long been applied in a discriminatory manner that respects the First Amendment freedoms of some, but not of others," said NRB general counsel Michael Farris. "Our intent is to vindicate the right of every church and religious nonprofit to express what their faith teaches on every issue, including political matters, as is their right and their duty." Plaintiffs are making no attempt to obtain a decision prior to the 2024 election. They are not filing a motion for a preliminary injunction or any other motion to expedite the litigation. They do not expect any hearings in the matter prior to the 2024 election. Some plaintiffs are not seeking the ability to formally endorse or oppose political candidates, and the complaint does not challenge limits on lobbying activity by 501(c)(3) nonprofits or the restriction on donating directly to political candidates.

All plaintiffs in this suit are religious nonprofits in the business of communicating viewpoints informed by the Christian faith to the public. Under the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) as interpreted and enforced by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), they are not free to express their views about political candidates. In its complaint, plaintiffs argue that their speech has been wrongfully silenced under the language known as the Johnson Amendment, which prohibits 501(c)(3) nonprofits from supporting or opposing candidates for public office, including restrictions against comparing the positions of candidates to the positions of the organization.

The complaint details the fact that many 501(c)(3) organizations engage in electoral activities that are open, obvious, and well-known, yet the IRS allows some, but not all, such organizations to do so without penalty. At this time, the IRS has no apparent rational basis for determining which 501(c)(3) organizations will be permitted to speak freely and which will be penalized for violating the Johnson Amendment; it acts in an arbitrary and capricious manner vis-à-vis electoral statements by nonprofit organizations. Moreover, the complaint argues that the IRS operates in a manner that disfavors conservative organizations and conservative, religious organizations in its enforcement of  $\S 501(c)(3)$ , constituting a denial of both religious freedom and equal protection.

— Troy A. Miller, President and CEO, National Religious Broadcasters www.nrb.org



### TENNESSEE ACTION COUNCIL HELPING HANDS

Before Helping Hands began, Tennessee children placed their personal effects into disposable garbage bags when they moved to a foster home. TAC Helping Hands provides new, durable, attractive duffle bags to DCS for each child's personal items to let these children know they are valued.

### **WAYS TO PARTNER**

- Volunteer
- Donate (cash, stock, in-kind donations, one-time or recurring)
- Conduct a baby bottle drive in your church/organization
- Attend an event and invite your friends to join
- Participate as an event sponsor
- Pray for these ministries

### www.ProjectLife4TN.org

To purchase Tickets and Sponsorships for



visit

www.projectlife4tn.org/unspoken-event or scan this QR code



Event benefits TAC Helping Hands





Join (Is

Old Natchez Country Club 115 Gardengate Dr. Franklin, TN September 19, 2024 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Tickets \$150 Student Tickets \$75

Dinner and Entertainment by Christian Artists

## "UNSPOKEN"

Centricity Music recording artist, Unspoken, has received over 350 million on-demand streams, 80 million YouTube video views and released two No. 1 radio songs as well as 11 Top 15 hits. With music as

distinct as its roots, the band's soulful, pop-flavored songs are led by the Adam Levine-esque vocals of Chad Mattson. Fueled by Mattson's transparency as a songwriter who battled addiction, now with two decades of sobriety, performing



alongside Jon Lowry (bass), Ariel Munoz (drums), Zach Smith (guitars) and Matthew Callaway (keys). Whether backed by a horn section, gospel choir or hip-hop rhythms, Unspoken has no fear of mixing it up.

## with Guest Speakers Brent and Anna Morgan of Bridge Family Ministries

We are pleased to introduce Brent and Anna Morgan, founders of the Bridge Family Ministries. As a family of nine they were Inspired by scripture to create a ministry surrounding foster children and their foster families. The ministry has been blessed to actively serve over 75 families and they have also adopted a child in the foster care system.

### The Gift of Knowing God

One of the greatest gifts of God is that He allows us to know Him. God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing invites us into His presence in order that we may know him intimately and personally. Yet, as humans, we tend to limit ourselves and as a result, we limit our relationship to know Him deeper.

We see this through the experience of Moses coming down from the mountain. When Moses returned from having just experienced a personal encounter with the Almighty, the people chose to turn away. They did not want to "know" God in the same way; thus, they limited

their relationship with Him. Maybe it was fear, or shame, or a million other reasons why they did not enter a personal relationship with Him, the invitation was there, but it was their choice to not accept. We see this is our own lives today.

God wants us to know Him as He wants to know us. He will meet us exactly where we are. To commune with Him may take vulnerability on our part or simply slowing down, but it allows us to see Him in a fresh way. In my own life, I know God today in a totally different way than I knew Him as a child, or in my twenties. The seasons of life are ever changing. Over the years, not only have my needs shifted but ultimately, my capacity to commune with Him has as well. My relationship with Him continues to be vibrant.

Recently, my 90-year-old mother commented on her relationship with God and how she has such pleasure in communing with Him. We both realized



that she too is experiencing a part of God that she had not had the pleasure of, nor the need of before. She is allowing God to meet her in new ways now due to this season of life versus where she was perhaps 20 years ago. Through it all, He continues to meet her exactly where she is and her relationship with God continues to be dynamic.

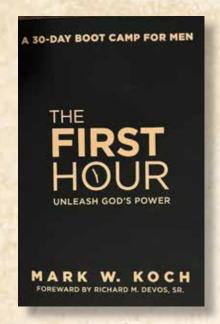
I am a mother, a friend, a daughter, a wife, a daughterin-law, etc. Get the picture? I am the same person, yet I am known in different capacities. And so it is with God

- on a grander scale. Knowing Him is endless. The more we get to know Him, the more we realize there is always so much more to know. The following names represent only a few of His many characteristics that He invites us to know Him as: Abba (Father), El Olam (The Everlasting God), El Roi (The God Who Sees), El Shaddai (God Almighty), Elohim (The Creator), Immanuel (God With Us), Jehovah-Jireh (The Lord our provider), Jehovah-Rapha (The Lord our healer), ), Johovah-Shalom (The Lord is Peace), Jesus (The Lord Saves), Logos (The Word/The Bible), Messiah (the anointed one).

Because there are so many different aspects and dimensions of God, we will never fully exhaust who He is, yet the invitation is there to know Him intimately. It would be a shame to settle for a one dimension relationship with an amazing multi dimension God.

— Rhonda L Smart, rhondalsmart@gmail.com

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being restored, miracles are
happening in all areas of the
lives of the men who are earnestly
seeking God and spending their
first hour with Him daily. God
promises to answer the prayers
of the righteous and to those who
diligently seek him. I challenge you
to find out for yourself!

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### SPECIAL FEATURE

### **Larry Crain: Constitutional Lawyer**

Many of the rights secured by the Constitution of the United States are facing persistent attack nowadays. One local attorney stands in the gap for religious freedom assured by the Constitu-

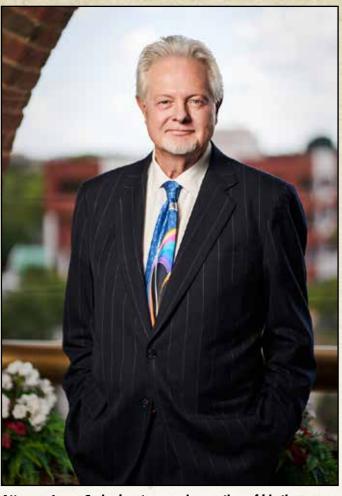
Beginning very early in his practice, Mr. Crain received calls for help from clients facing all sorts of constitutional challenges to their exercise of religious liberty: parents facing prosecution for merely wanting to homeschool their children consistent with their religious faith; ministries that faced arbitrary zoning restrictions on their church schools; churches facing internal struggles over self-governance; and myriad other religious issues affecting individuals, families, and ministries.

While a case that Mr. Crain handled led to legalization of homeschooling in Tennessee, the scope of other religious liberty issues affecting individuals and churches continues to expand. His dedication to First Amendment issues, particularly the rights of individuals to be free of religious discrimination, led Crain to litigate a broad spectrum of constitutional issues on a national level before The United States Supreme Court, several Circuit Courts of Appeal, and several state Supreme Courts, including Tennes- Attorney Larry Crain devotes a major portion of his time repnia.

As a nationally recognized constitutional lawyer and a frequent lecturer and commentator, Crain has litigated, debated, and widely practiced constitutional law, especially in the realm of parental rights and religious liberty. His work in this area also opened the door for a number of ministry and nonprofit clients to operate their ministries over the years, including an adoption ministry called Small World Adoptions, Teen Challenge International, and the Church Law Institute, a non-profit legal and educational ministry serving churches all across the United States.

Crain remembers: "Before reading Francis Schaeffer's works, I had never thought about the preeminence of God in the law: 'The law must be anchored in moral absolutes which trace their origin back to God's preeminence': 'all authority is from God' (Romans 13) and that truth transcends the Constitution. It is where we get the notion of inalienable rights."

Two specific scriptural precepts serve as anchors in Crain's life testimony: "The steps of the righteous man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholds him with His hand" (Psalm 37:23-24) and secondly, "whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear this command behind you: 'This is the way. Walk in it" (Isaiah 30:21). Crain learned how to incorporate his faith into his legal practice and how to serve ministries that serve the Lord—top priorities.



see, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Califor- resenting churches with a variety of legal issues. Contact him at 615-376-2600, Larry@crainlaw.legal or visit www.crainlaw.legal. His office is located in Brentwood, Tenn.

Today, while his law practice has expanded to a number of areas, he continues to devote a major portion of his time representing churches on a wide variety of legal issues. Crain explains, "The legal landscape involving churches is changing dramatically. As more major denominations shift their focus to accommodate changing norms in our society, serious rifts afflict their member churches."

"Theological schisms are never pretty." Crain cites as an example, the United Methodist Church—America's third-largest religious body—undergoing major changes over its teachings on sexuality. Crain has represented over a dozen Methodist congregations in Tennessee that have voted to leave the denomination over its rejection of traditional scriptural teachings concerning marriage and human sexuality. "The problem is that when these smaller congregations vote to pull out, the denomination claims it now owns all of the church's property. Some of these congregations date back to the early 1800's, but in the 1960's, when they added the word "United" to their names, they did not realize that they were assigning all right, title, and ownership of their sanctuary to the denomination."

"I represent one church now in a lawsuit that has been pending for over eleven years. We are seeing a rise in such cases, when with just a little proactive legal advice and planning on the front end, many such cases could be avoided."

Crain's approach to his law practice mirrors his personal faith: "Respect in this profession from judges and fellow members of the bar must be earned, and once obtained, must be carefully guarded." The highest Source of all says it this way: "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold" (Proverb 22:1).

Crain summarizes: "I believe God has blessed me over the years with some of the most courageous clients a lawyer can have. Their humility and courage have always born witness to their faith in Christ."

— Sheila E. Moss: author of Living to Matter: Mothers, Singles, and the Weary and Broken; Interrupting Women: Ten Conversations with Jesus; and international publications derived from teaching Bible and Christian ethics in Africa, Ukraine, Venezuela, and England; teacher of Bible classes for 35+ years; mother of five adult children and grandmother of eleven.



### SPECIAL FEATURE

### **A Caregiver in Distress**

So many of our senior care phone calls come from stressed-out, burned-out family caregivers. Their stories all have the same familiar details including years of giving personalized one-on-one care, sleepless nights, injuries of their own and complete frustration and exhaustion. The most important element of all runs through each family's story, the sense of duty and obligation to the ones they love. "I know I can't keep doing this, but I'm ok right now". "I promised her I would never put her into an institution". Or "No one can care for my mother like I can".

Here are some startling statistics about caregivers in America today:

- There are 65 million caregivers providing 20 hours or more of unpaid care a week
- Of these family caregivers, 60% work outside of the home
- 70% suffer from depression
- Women make up 66% of the caregivers and 64% of those live with the loved one
- An estimated 30-40% of caregivers die before the ones they are caring for do
- National Alliance for Caregiving in collaboration with AARP; November 2019

When we receive these calls, our local senior care advisors come alongside the family in need and help put resources in place to begin to relieve the heavy burden. Our goal is put the professionals in place either through home care services, adult day programs, or placement in assisted living to take over the physical care giving. Only then can that family caregiver return to caring for themselves and being the family member they were meant to be. We finally see the family restored and everyone back in their proper roles. I

often tell families, "Caring for your loved one 24 hours/day, 7 days/week is a task we simply weren't designed to perform. It's like asking yourself to fly like a bird. It sounds like a lovely endeavor until you step off the limb". Once the care is in place, we connect our families to support and stay available to them for any future questions.

Your local senior care advisor for Greater Nashville is Amy Davis. Amy grew up at the base of Pikes Peak in Colorado. After meeting her husband during Freshman year at the University of Arizona, together they raised their two children in a quaint suburb of Chicago. Amy and her husband have opened their home to many vulnerable children through the Safe Families for Children ministry. Amy worked in Pastoral Care for her church for several years and then worked in the hospital setting



Amy Davis

alongside families who were facing the tragic loss of a loved one helping to coordinate their life saving gifts as organ donors. Her passion to serve others is where she feels God has called her to be. It is truly her honor to work with families who are facing difficult seasons and help them on that journey to find hope.

Now residing in the Nashville area, Amy is delighted to partner with Senior Provisions as an advisor to families who are seeking a trusted advocate during a transitional time in their lives. All of the care management and referrals are at NO COST to families.

— Amy Hentschel Owner/Senior Care Advisor, www.seniorprovisions.com



### MONEY MATTERS

### **Million Dollar Baby**

This is a super alternative to the 529 Plan for education. This MDB Plan comes with many advantages over the 529 Plan. One of the beautiful aspects of our plan, unlike the 529 Plan, is that ours is not a government plan, thus, it does not have all the stipulations that come with any government plan.



In the past several years, many parents have been severely disappointed in the performance of the single-purpose 529 Plan. Our multi-purpose Million-Dollar Baby plan has a protection of principal as well as the gains, and can be used for anything--including education. This flexibility is especially important since the child may later decide that he/she does not want to attend college or just simply may not be college material, which is perfectly fine. In either of these cases, what happens to the money in the 529 Plan?

Our MDB Plan is what becomes basically the child's own bank so the child can later access these funds for anything including large purchases, i.e. car, financing education, weddings, house, starting a business etc.--all without having to qualify with a bank or mortgage company. Also, the child has the peace of mind knowing that these items that he/she purchased will not be repossessed if the owner becomes disabled over an extended period of time (i.e., longer than their emergency fund lasts) when they cannot make the payments on them.

Our Million-Dollar Baby Plan goes like this (which we highly recommend putting back in the plan—with no structured repayment plan) after each use as soon as possible to be used at the next opportunity):

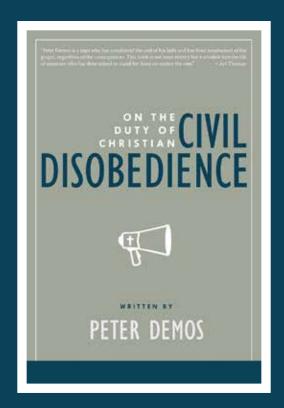
- $\bullet$  From age 0 through age 22, the parents (and/or grandparents, etc.) put \$50 a week (\$200/month) into the plan.
- At age 23, they can stop putting money into this plan.
- At age 23 through age 26, the child can use \$25,000 a year of this money for his/her education. This is \$100,000 total (\$25,000 x 4.)
- At age 32, the child can use \$40,000 of this for a down payment on a house.
- At age 50, the child can use \$50,000 of this toward the purchase of a business.
- At age 65 and FOR THE REST OF HIS/HER LIFE, he/she can use \$100,000 a year of this plan—and all TAX-FREE. This eliminates the biggest fear that most retirees have today, which is the fear of outliving their money.

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— J. Graves, www.joycegraves.com, Tax-Free Retirement, jagnet700@yahoo.com







In this timely yet timeless book,
you will be invited to think critically
about your decisions to act or remain silent
in the face of unjust policies.
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### Medicare Open Enrollment Starts Soon

Yes, just like the trees starting to turn those beautiful colors, it will soon be time for Medicare Open enrollment. 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 in your plan will be for 2025. Remember to open this letter from your carrier and not put it in file 13!

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 2025 Medicare&You that will be mailed to you. It's available on their website but does not have local information on plans/carriers. 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, 2025. If you don't make any changes then your current



plan will roll into 2025, 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 2025. We are blessed to have such a great healthcare system in middle TN and that attracts many companies that want to do business here.

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!

- H. Ben Davis, III CSA SelectPointe, LLC 615-584-4946 ben.davis@selectpointe.com www.selectpointebd.com

### **TEACHABLE MOMENTS**

Brought to you by: Trevecca Nazarene University • Trevecca.edu

### **What You Should Know About Dual Enrollment**

Barbara Sweatt, an admissions counselor at Trevecca Nazarene University, frequently works with students who've earned dual enrollment credits. Read on to get her insights about how



asynchronous ones, offer greater flexibility and can be completed at a faster pace.

### Q: What's special about Trevecca's dual enrollment program?

A: Trevecca's dual enrollment program stands out because of an exclusive partnership with CampusEDU, which provides innovative video-based course content. Courses are taught through a biblical lens, and students also benefit from personalized support from a dedicated counselor working closely with them. Local students also have the option to attend classes in person on Trevecca's campus.

### Q: What courses are available through Trevecca, and how many could I take during high school?

A: Trevecca offers a variety of dual enrollment courses. While students are advised not to take more than three courses simultaneously, the shorter duration of online courses allows you to potentially complete six to eight courses per semester. This flexibility helps you effectively manage your workload while earning college credit.

### Q: How do I get help if I need it?

A: If you need assistance, your dual enrollment counselor is just an email, text or phone call away! We encourage discussing course-specific questions with your professors, but your counselor is always available to help answer questions, direct you to appropriate resources and offer additional support.

### Q: Would I be paying full tuition prices for my college courses?

A: No, you would not be paying full tuition prices. Trevecca significantly reduces the cost of dual enrollment courses to match the out-of-pocket amount covered by the Tennessee Dual Enrollment Grant, which is \$555 per course plus the cost of books and lab fees, if applicable. This reduction represents approximately 75 percent off the standard college course price, making it an affordable option for high school students. If you qualify for the grant, these courses could be taken at no cost.

### Q: I'm not sure yet where I want to attend college. Could I still take dual enrollment courses from Trevecca?

A: Yes! Early credits can be worth pursuing no matter where you attend college. While we hope you'll consider Trevecca based on your dual enrollment experience, we want to be sure you find the right fit as you plan for your next step after high school graduation.

You can learn more and preview Trevecca's dual enrollment courses at gotrevecca.com. If you have questions of your own about dual enrollment, please contact us at admissions@trevecca.edu.

— Teron Fairchild, Copywriter

Q: How will taking dual enrollment classes in

A: Dual enrollment classes offer numerous ben-

taking dual enrollment courses at Trevecca can be beneficial to you.

high school help me in college?



efits for high school students. First, they allow you to reduce the number of general education courses needed during your freshman and sophomore years of college. This can help you advance into your major courses sooner. Dual enrollment courses are also significantly less expensive than regular college courses, saving you around 75 percent compared with full tuition. These classes also provide a valuable introduction to college-level coursework, helping you understand academic

### Q: Are all dual enrollment classes the same? What's the difference?

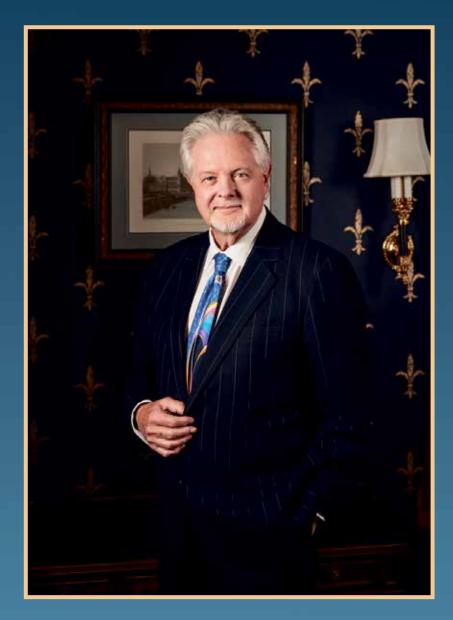
expectations and develop essential skills such as

A: Dual enrollment classes can vary depending on the college or university offering them. You have the option to take courses either in person or online, so you can choose the format that best suits your learning style. Online courses, especially

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time management.

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## COMMUNITY PARTNER

### **How Encapsulation Can Help With Alleviating Allergies**

Allergies can significantly impact your quality of life, often exacerbated by indoor air quality issues. For many homeowners, the crawl space — a common but often neglected area beneath the house — can be a hidden source of allergens. If you've been struggling with allergy symptoms despite your best efforts, it might be time to consider a solution you might not have thought of: crawl space encapsulation. Here's how encapsulating your crawl space can help alleviate your allergy issues.

### **The Allergy Connection**

Here's how each aspect of encapsulation can help with allergies:

#### 1. Reduces Moisture and Mold Growth

A well-sealed crawl space prevents excess moisture from entering. Since high humidity is a breeding ground for mold and mildew, reducing moisture levels can significantly diminish the chances of mold growth. Mold spores can easily travel from the crawl space to the living areas of your home through the HVAC system or air ducts. By controlling moisture, you reduce the risk of mold development, which can trigger allergic reactions such as sneezing, coughing, and itchy eyes.

### 2. Minimizes Dust and Allergens

Encapsulation helps to limit the amount of dust and dirt that can accumulate in the crawl space.

Without proper sealing, these particles can become airborne and make their way into your home, worsening indoor air quality. A sealed crawl space is also less likely to attract pests such as rodents and insects, which can be sources of allergens. Droppings and body parts from these pests can contribute to poor air quality and allergy symptoms.

### 3. Improves Indoor Air Quality

By controlling the environment in the crawl space, encapsulation helps ensure that the air circulating through your home is cleaner. This can be especially beneficial if your HVAC system draws air from the crawl space, as it ensures that fewer contaminants enter your living spaces. Insulation in the crawl space can help maintain a more stable temperature, reducing condensation and the resultant growth of allergens.

### 4. Enhances Energy Efficiency

While not directly related to allergies, encapsulation can improve your home's energy efficiency. With better insulation and moisture control, your home's heating and cooling systems don't have to work as hard, leading to a more consistent indoor environment that can contribute to overall comfort. A stable indoor environment can reduce stress on your body, including allergy symptoms.

### In Conclusion: Encapsulation Can Help Minimize Allergies

Crawl space encapsulation might not be the first thing that comes to mind when tackling allergies, but it plays a crucial role in improving indoor air quality and reducing common allergens. By controlling moisture, minimizing dust, and deterring pests, encapsulation creates a healthier environment that can lead to noticeable improvements in allergy symptoms. If you're dealing with persistent allergies, consider having your crawl space evaluated by a professional. A cleaner, healthier crawl space could be the key to alleviating your allergy woes and creating a more comfortable living space. At Frontier Foundation & Crawl Space Repair, we offer FREE, no-obligation inspections and estimates. Contact us today to schedule an appointment with one of our skilled system design specialists. Encapsulating your crawl space is an investment in your health and home comfort that can provide long-term benefits. Don't let allergies control your life — take the first step towards a healthier home today.

— Hannah Moulton, Marketing Content Specialist at Frontier Foundation & Crawl Space Repair

### MIRACLE MOMENTS

### A Modern Job

I had about an hour between meetings and was sitting in a hotel executive lounge, catching up on emails. Not being the only businessperson trying to find a quiet place; four other people were in the room, scattered some distance apart. Shortly after sending my first email, I noticed a gentleman sat down in a chair directly opposite me. After just a minute, I noticed he seemed interested in speaking with me, but he did not want to interrupt me. Glancing up, I did

not recognize him, he said, "Emails are a necessary evil of every business today." Smiling, "It definitely is.", as I sat back, he leaned in and offered a hand of introduction. We exchanged pleasantries and oral business cards, but I soon found out that was not exactly what he was interested in talking about.

Before too long, this total stranger began telling me about personal tragedies he was dealing with. His business was falling apart (his words), his wife of twelve years died in an accident, and his



young daughter was becoming more distant with each passing day. "I am a good man. Why is Allah allowing these evils to enter my life. I am beginning to believe, there is no God." The man was almost in tears. I looked around the room, and wondered what he was hoping to get from me, a complete stranger. Silently, we sat looking at one another for several seconds, I did not know what to say. Then out of the blue, I said, "Have you heard the story of Job?" Not knowing

why, I began telling him about Job.

For the first time, since listing his trouble, he smiled, "In the Quran, our Job is the Prophet Ayyub. The Islamic tradition holds that Ayyub was a righteous servant of God who suffered greatly but never lost faith, continuously praying to God for relief from his suffering."

"I remember, I too have read the Quran, it is much like the Bible's story of Job." Raising his hands in exaltation, "Allah does exist." With that said, he looked at his watch, and stood to leave, I rose with him, offering my hand, he reached out and hugged me. Before he left, I had to know. "Why did you first approach me?"

He chuckled, "I woke up this morning, and felt like I needed to speak to someone about my doubts in Allah. As the day progressed the feeling got stronger. I came in here to clear my mind, and I saw your lapel pin, and somehow, I knew that you would not think me crazy. Instead, Allah showed me the way."

I was wearing this small white cross with a red challis on top of the stanchion of the cross. It is the cross of Holy Communion.

God does exist!

 Anthony "Tony" Boquet, the author of The Bloodline of Wisdom,
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### The Church Must Shepard a Believer's Spiritual Journey

### Church needs to stop talking about salvation

In contemporary Christian circles, the term "salvation" is often used to denote the moment when an individual commits to following Christ. Preachers and missionaries frequently highlight the number of conversions with phrases like, "We had 50 people saved last weekend." However, this perspective can obscure a critical truth: salvation is not a singular event but a continuous journey. It is essential for the Church to shift its focus from counting salvations to nurturing the spiritual growth of individuals.

### The Parable of the Sower: A Lesson on Growth

Consider the Parable of the Sower from the Gospels. In this parable, seeds fall on four types of soil. Three of these soils allow the seeds to take root, but only one soil allows the seeds to flourish and bear fruit. The other

three soils fail to sustain growth due to various obstacles: the temptations of the world, the worries of life, and the lack of depth. This parable underscores that while initial acceptance of the Gospel is important, it is not enough for sustained spiritual growth. If we were farmers, we would not say, "I grew vegetables," because we planted seeds. We know it is more than that. Yet, in the realm of faith, we often simplify our understanding by celebrating the act of planting seeds without considering the necessary nurturing and growth that follows.

### The Journey Beyond the Initial Salvation

It is crucial to recognize that coming to Christ is merely the beginning of a much longer spiritual journey. Just as a plane ticket symbolizes a journey to a destination, salvation represents the starting point of a transformative process. Many people, however, have a ticket in hand but never board the plane. They may be deterred by the complexities of the journey, such as traffic, other passengers, or the mechanics of the plane.

Some individuals may reach the airport, go through security, and even get to the gate but then fail to complete the journey due to distractions or doubts. Others may follow a misguided pilot, leading them to the wrong destination. Similarly, many believers start their spiritual journey but falter along the way, losing sight of the transformative goal of becoming more Christ-like.

### The True Role of Pastors and Missionaries

Pastors and missionaries play a crucial role in guiding individuals on their spiritual journey. They are not merely TSA agents who ensure that people get through a checkpoint. Instead, their role should be to facilitate the entire journey, helping individuals grow in their faith and navigate the challenges they face.

Focusing solely on the number of salvations can lead to a superficial understanding of success. It's akin to celebrating the number of people who get their boarding passes without considering whether they actually board the plane and reach their destination. True success in ministry involves nurturing spiritual growth and transformation, not just tallying up initial decisions.

### **Comparing Missionary Journeys: Philippi vs. Corinth**

Consider the missionary journeys of Paul in Philippi and Corinth. In Philippi, Paul initially faced rejection and was even jailed. Despite these challenges, he shared the Gospel with his jailer, leading to the jailer's conversion and his



own release.

This experience brought Paul joy and helped other churches but was relatively short-lived in terms of visible growth.

In contrast, Paul's time in Corinth was marked by significant challenges and rejection from religious leaders. Nevertheless, he remained in Corinth for eighteen months, teaching and nurturing the church. This period of discipleship led to the establishment of a thriving community of believers. The different outcomes in these two cities highlight that quantity (number of conversions) does not always equate to quality

(depth of spiritual growth).

### **The Case of Hillsong Church- New York**

The Hillsong Church, particularly its New York branch, provides a cautionary tale. Initially, the church experienced rapid growth, with many people attending services, and they would talk about the number of people saved as a unit of measurement of their success. However, scandals involving the pastor led to a significant decline in attendance and faith among the congregation. The rapid fall-off suggests that those counted as "saved" was saved by the charisma of the pastor rather than a deep and genuine relationship with Christ.

This situation underscores the importance of focusing on genuine spiritual growth rather than just "salvation" numbers. Churches that emphasize quantity over quality risk fostering a shallow faith that can easily crumble when faced with challenges or the flaws of human leaders.

### **Shifting the Focus**

It is essential for churches to shift their focus from counting salvations to nurturing ongoing spiritual transformation. Instead of celebrating the number of people who make initial decisions for Christ as a finished product, churches should measure their success by how many individuals embark on each journey of faith, and measure that so they can see where they are missing each step along the way.

Moreover, when it becomes evident that individuals are merely following a charismatic leader rather than growing in their own faith, it is crucial for church leaders to recognize this and refocus their efforts on true discipleship and possibly allow the pastor to move on to another church.

In conclusion, celebrating each step is important through the transformative process. Counting salvations as an end when they are in the middle of the journey undercuts believers from a deeper and more enduring relationship with Christ.

— Peter Demos is the author of "On the Duty of Christian Civil Disobedience" and the host of "Uncommon Sense in Current Times." A Christian business leader from Tennessee, Demos uses his biblical perspective and insight gained from his own struggles to lead others to truth and authenticity in a broken world. To learn more, visit peterdemos.org.

### MIGHTY MEN

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### Which Are You Pursuing: Happiness of True Joy?

Late last year and in January of this year, most of us made either a written or mental list of resolutions or goals to attain during 2024. These resolutions are often about self-improvement: exercising more, improving our diet, optimizing sleep patterns, balancing work and relaxation, and dedicating more time to family. These aspirations, while commendable and certainly beneficial, but tend to skirt around an underlying pursuit common to us all: the quest for happiness. As we are now in the second half of the year, let's pause and consider: are we truly seeking happiness, or is it the



deeper, more enduring state of joy that we crave?

Happiness and joy, while frequently used interchangeably, harbor distinct meanings and implications in our lives. Understanding and acknowledging this difference could be the most transformative resolution we made early this year. Happiness is a universal pursuit. Our society relentlessly quests for it, as evidenced by countless self-help articles promising paths to happiness and the American Declaration of Independence, which enshrines the right to its pursuit. Yet happiness, often triggered by external events like acquiring a new car or receiving a promotion, is fleeting. It ebbs and flows with life's inevitable ups and downs. Joy, in contrast, is an enduring state, unfazed by external circumstances. It is an "internal" constant, not a transient emotion.

What differentiates joy from happiness? Its divine origin. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, as outlined in Galatians 5:22, and is a result of God's transformative work within us, guiding us to fulfill His noble purposes (Philippians 2:13). The genesis of our joy is grace — the unmerited favor granted to us through Jesus Christ. Without God's grace, we are all subject to divine judgment, having transgressed His laws. Despite our flaws and failings, God's love was so profound that He offered Jesus to bear the penalty we deserve, bestowing upon us not judgment, but forgiveness — the essence of grace.

The sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf is pivotal. It signifies our redemption, the gift of a new life, and the establishment of a personal relationship with our Creator. This is the core of the Gospel, and as Apostle Paul proclaims, if God is for us, no one can stand against us (Romans 8:31). The unwavering truth of Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection is the bedrock of our inexhaustible joy. Thus, the question arises: Are we pursuing fleeting happiness or are we resting in the enduring joy provided by our faith? Our answer to this question can profoundly shape our perspective on life's journey.

If you feel at this point in the year that you are chasing fleeting happiness instead of joy in Christ, take heart, there is still plenty of time left this year to change your attitude and end the year with true joy in your 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.





### THE HOME FRONT

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## COMMUNITY PARTNER

### 7 Gutter Problems and How to Fix Them

One moment, the sun is shining, and the next, a downpour is testing the very limits of your home's defenses. At the forefront of this battle? Your gutters. Lee Company is here to guide you through gutter issues and fixes. Come rain or shine, you'll be able to keep your gutters flowing and your home protected from water damage.



### **Clogged Gutters**

If there's any gutter problem that homeowners are familiar with, it's clogging. Leaves, twigs, debris, and the occasional stray ball can all find their way into your gutters and cause a blockage. When this happens, water can't flow freely through the gutters and downspouts, leading to overflowing gutters and potential water damage on your siding, foundation, and landscaping.

### **Tips for Preventing Clogged Gutters**

The easiest way to sidestep clogged gutters is through regular maintenance. This means checking and cleaning your gutters at least twice a year – once in the spring and again in the fall.

Keeping trees trimmed back from your roof can help keep those beautiful autumn leaves from clogging your gutters. And if you have a lot of trees on your property, consider installing gutter guards to keep things out while still allowing water to flow.

#### **How To Unclog a Gutter**

If you notice water overflowing from your gutters, it's time to get up on a ladder and clear out the blockage. A small hand shovel or a garden trowel can work wonders for scooping out debris. Make sure to wear gloves and protective eyewear, as gutters can be a breeding ground for bacteria and other nasties.

Once the majority of the debris is cleared, flush out your gutters with a garden hose to ensure all the small bits are washed away. If you're not comfortable getting up on a ladder or have multiple-story gutters, consider hiring a professional gutter cleaning service.

Lee Company offers expert handyman services to make sure your gutters are ready for whatever the weather throws their way! Don't let gutter problems rain on your parade — contact our skilled team for gutter services in Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, and Georgia.

Read full blog at leecompany.com.

— Joseph Phillips, Home Improvement Manager, Lee Company dynamic on demand self-paced

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### **How Do I Integrate My Christian Faith with Day-to-Day Business Practices**

How do I integrate my Christian faith with my day-to-day business practices?" That's a question that almost every Christian considers from time to time. And, while that question may have been seen as mildly important as we mused on it several years ago, the rapid deterioration of our culture has suddenly injected it with an ASAP urgency. In this first of series, I deal with the ultimate hindrance to us.

It was a lifestyle to which many of us adhered. Call it comfortable compartmentalization. It was the spiritual status quo. It meant that we got by being somewhat involved in church on Sundays and doing no grievous wrong during the week. In the last few years, all of that has changed. Today, we are living in the world which has risen out of 40 years of comfortable, arms-length Christianity.

A couple of decades of spiritual compartmentalization have brought us to the point where our religious freedoms and values are clearly under attack by a widening coalition of left-wing politicians, complicit media, social media moguls and hordes of anonymous social media pundits. Any half-way literate person can't help but notice the rapid decline in Christian influence in our culture. You may recall that Obama opposed gay marriage when he took office. It took about ten years to go from that to the point where transgenderism is being promoted at the federal level, rational thinking is ignored, and the rule of law is being supplanted by mob rule. If these trends continue, the next ten years will find Christians persecuted in this country.

Ten years ago, we may have thought, "How do I integrate my Christian faith with my day-to-day business practices?" because we had a mild sense of obligation. For the most part, it was a nice idea we thought about from time to time because we felt a bit of a sense of obligation. But, no real urgency, and we were content to build our businesses and careers and keep them separate from our involvement in the local religious institution. Today we ask the question because we realize that if we don't do something, we may not be able to practice our faith in the near future. If something doesn't change, we will have been the last generation to openly practice Christianity. Our children won't have that luxury.

Our motivation now is to insure a reasonably free existence for our children and grandchildren and the survival of the country. The question is no longer an academic musing, but rather our kneejerk reaction to the realization that we have lost

the culture and may lose everything else if we don't act. The mildly intrigued academic question of ten years ago has become the make-or break response to a world turning increasingly dark.

So, how do we integrate our Christian faith with our day-to-day business practices? The answer isn't simple, and it varies from time to time and place to place. In an effort to shed some light on it, I'm going to do a short series of articles on it. This is the first. Where do we start?

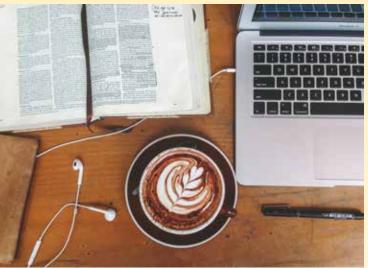
The Apostle Paul gave us the direction: Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

If we are going to make a difference in the world, it has to start in our mind. First, we think it, then we do it. In 21st Century, Western civilization terms, that means a paradigm shift. One dictionary defines "paradigm: as a standard, perspective, or set of ideas. A paradigm is a way of looking at something.

When we shift our paradigms, we see things differently. And, since we see things differently, we think differently and act differently. For example, if we were raised in an abusive home, we might have acquired the paradigm that says, "people of the opposite sex are inherently manipulative." That paradigm colors all our thoughts, interactions and relationships with the opposite sex. It's almost impossible to act positively when we are burdened with a twisted paradigm.

As in every other area of our life, our spirituality is hampered or nurtured by the paradigms we've acquired over our lifetime. One of the most damaging paradigms has to do with our Christianity in the marketplace. That paradigm says that our Christianity is primarily expressed through our involvement with an institutional church. As long as we believe that we will see the world through a slightly perverted perspective – a perspective that puts church—not Christ– at the heart to our Christian experience. And as long as we believe that, we will never be able to fully live out our Christianity in the marketplace.

As in the previous generations who bought into that false idea, the impact will continue to be millions of marketplace people who could have been exposed to God's providence and grace through



interaction with a Christian and weren't. It will continue, as in previous generations to encourage Christians to stay silent in their spheres of influence. As in previous generations, it will continue to create a culture where God is ridiculed, and Christians viewed a s ignorant.

The paradigm that says Christianity is about church has to change. When we shift that paradigm and begin to see that Christianity is about every aspect of our lives in subjection to Jesus Christ, that new paradigm frees us from the idea that holds us to an institution and allows us to think more clearly and more creatively about the marketplace. When the blinders come off, we'll see opportunities all around us.

Until we make that paradigm shift, our efforts to live our Christianity in the day-to-day practices of the marketplace will be like paddling a canoe upstream. You can make some temporarily progress, but you are ultimately doomed to be overtaken by the forces around you. If you are going to live out your Christianity in the marketplace, you must first change your paradigm.

— Dave Kahle has been a Bible teacher, elder, house church leader, short-term missionary and Christian executive roundtable leader. For 30 years, he has been an authority on sales and sales systems, having spoken in 47 states and eleven countries. He has authored 13 books, including The Good Book on Business. His books have been translated into eight-plus languages and are available in over 20 countries. He holds a B. of ED from the University of Toledo, and

MA in Teaching from Bowling Green University. He and Coleen split their time between Grand Rapids, Michigan and Sarasota, Florida. He is a father, foster father, adoptive father and grandfather to 14 children.

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## Jaime Arturo Romero, Jr. Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon



Born in California on October 26, 1977, Jaime Arturo Romero, Jr. lived part of his childhood in Mexico. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee 2007 College of Dentistry and completed his residency at Metro Health Medical Center and the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio. A Major in the Tennessee Army National Guard, he was deployed to Iraq, serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. With an avid interest in aviation, he has flown helicopters in the army and completed training in the US Army Airborne and Air Assault School.

As a newly minted oral and maxillofacial surgery specialist, Jaime Arturo Romero, Jr. moved to Middle Tennessee with his wife Eva Angelina in 2011. "When I look back at my life," he says, "I realize how blessed I am to be

where I am, to have the profession I have, and to have the love of my family and friends." Easy to talk with, Dr. Romero is very passionate about patient care. He provides patients with a caring and soothing environment to ensure their comfort.

According to his wife, Eva Angelina, "Jaime grew up in the Christian faith from a young age, and faced significant challenges that tested his beliefs. The loss of his deeply-loved grandfather and the tragic death of his youngest cousin profoundly wounded him. He strayed from his faith for a while, feeling lost and overwhelmed by his circumstances. Sometimes he blamed God.

"However, over time, Jaime realized that God had a plan for him and now understands that the struggles and challenges he faced were meant to shape him and allow him to connect with others more deeply. These experiences taught him that God has a greater purpose for his life even when it is difficult to see"



Dr. Romero resides in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife Eva Angelina and their five children, Briana, Jaime, Marisa, Javier and Luciano Andres.

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials for we know that they help us develop endurance—our pain has a purpose. Romans 3:3-5.

Dr. Romero reflects on the fine line between love and hate, noting that during his earlier life's challenges, he thought he hated God. Really, he just didn't understand God, and he never stopped loving Him. He acknowledges that "God has always been present in my life, guiding me through obstacles." Now more than

ever, Dr. Romero "feels the presence of God's plan and believes that his faith journey has made him stronger and more compassionate." He is thankful for knowing God and having faith. He knows that everything is "connected with something greater than himself."

"My father was born in Santa Barbara, California, and my mother was born in Tijuana, Mexico. My grandparents were born in Mexico, and many of my uncles and aunts are also from Mexico. My paternal grandfather joined the U.S. Army, and that was how my father was born in the U.S. Even with U.S. citizenship, my father was raised in Mexico and met my mother in Tijuana. After they married, my mother got her immigration papers, and they lived in San Ysidro, California.

"No one in my family had a college degree, and graduating from high school was a rare occurrence. My mother had a sixth-grade education, and my father







Romero's practice specializes in state of the art implant technology.





had taken some college courses at a local community college. Life was hard. To survive we lived in a van and showered outside and worked in fields planting pine trees for paper companies, lumber companies, and private owners. Sometimes we ate animal crackers or beans treated with lime to kill insects living in them. I stayed out of school for five years and continued to work with my family. I was old enough to understand the severity of the situation but young enough to believe in my parents. We four brothers continued to work, and in our free time my moth

to work, and in our free time my mother would have us read and do math problems to keep up with our education. It wasn't accredited, but it was what we had. Finally, we bought a piece of land with a trailer home that to us felt like a mansion. By this time—1994—I was a 17-year-old boy with no real education but with lots of work experience and a will to survive." God's lessons in endurance were fully active.

Two weeks before his grandfather died, Romero promised that he would "go back to school and get a career." In the fall of 1995, he entered a Seventh Day Adventist school called Harbert Hills Academy in Savannah, Tennessee. He graduated from high school the following spring and was accepted to Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, in the fall of 1996 before transferring back to Tennessee in 1998 to save his family money with in-state tuition. "So, I transferred to Bethel College in McKenzie, Tennessee. While at Bethel, I realized I needed more money for school because the soccer scholarship I had at the time was not enough. I did some research and found that the Army ROTC program at UT Martin would pay for school. I enrolled in the fall of 1999 and earned my college degree in the spring of 2002. Making Romero's graduation even more meaningful was that another Romero who had intermittently pursued education—his father—graduated from college with him!

Romero entered flight school in 2002 and planned to become a helicopter pilot, but in flight school he decided to apply to dental school. In the fall of 2003, he enrolled in the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry in Memphis.

"So, I transferred to the Dental Corp sometime around 2004, and that is where I've been serving since. After graduating from dental school in May, 2007, I was accepted into an internship in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in Cleveland, Ohio, and was deployed to Iraq in January of 2008, returning May of the same year. I didn't pilot helicopters in Iraq. My mission was to treat the Iraqi detainees. At that time and until it was closed, we had over 23,000 detainees in the largest prison in the world. Even though we were at a more secured post, we would





All of the Romero brothers served in either the Army or the Air Force and three of the four have been deployed to Iraq.

periodically get indirect fire (artillery) from hostile forces around the area; fortunately, no American or coalition forces were seriously injured during my time there. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for some Iraqi civilians in the area.

"All of my brothers served for either the Army or Air Force. Three of the four have been deployed to Iraq, and we are all doing well and continuing to move forward and fight to better our lives. I guess we have come a long way from living in a van and picking food out of trash cans.

"When asked if I wish things had been different, I can honestly say that I wouldn't change a thing about my past. It has made me who I am today—an humble person now in a position to help others—just as I was helped by many."

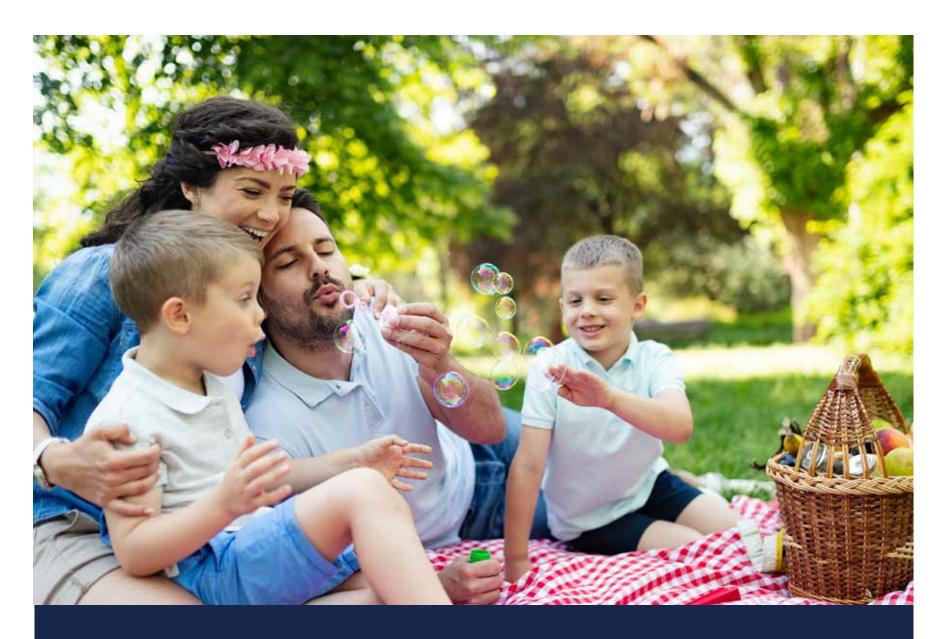
Dr. Romero resides in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife Eva Angelina and their five children, Briana, Jaime, Marisa, Javier and Luciano Andres. Some of his interests include spending time with his family, playing basketball, biking, soccer, enjoying the outdoors, and travel.

Fluent in Spanish, Dr. Romero enjoys reaching out in the community and helping others in need. He and his wife Eva Angelina volunteer with Hope Smiles, Interfaith Dental Clinic, American Red Cross, and many other organizations serving our community.

— Sheila E. Moss: author of Living to Matter: Mothers, Singles, and the Weary and Broken; Interrupting Women: Ten Conversations with Jesus; and international publications derived from teaching Bible and Christian ethics in Africa, Ukraine,



Venezuela, and England; teacher of Bible classes for 35+ years; mother of five adult children and grandmother of eleven.



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### PARENT WITH PURPOSE

### **Navigating Hard Times**

Two weeks into the school year, a mom and dad received a midnight text from their college-age son. "Can you talk? I have a lot to digest." How does a parent respond? How do you navigate hard times with your child? Your first response might be to panic. Before you do, consider these steps when taking the call.

While your child is talking, ask God for divine wisdom and discernment. Resist the urge to judge and listen. Listen not only to the words he's using but also to his facial expressions (if using Facetime). Don't interrupt until you feel he has expressed all the emotions. Then, ask questions to

glean more clarification or information. You'll want to tamp down your anger or sorrow, including your nonverbal language.

**Validate your child's emotions.** Reflect back to them what you've heard: "It sounds like you're scared and angry. Is that right?" Avoid bringing up your own experiences, as this moment is about your child. They need to feel heard and understood, not compared to. This will help them feel that you're truly listening and empathizing with their situation.

### Ask your child if they want your advice or just need someone to listen.

This empowers your young adult or teenager to take the lead in the conversation and potential solutions. If they seek your advice, offer a suggestion for the immediate problem. If they prefer to handle it on their own, ask if you can pray for them. If not, assure them that you will continue to pray until the



issue is resolved. Then, ask again, "Is there anything else you'd like us to know?" Sometimes, an additional thought provides a broader understanding of the situation.

**Allow them to solve the problem.** This hard time could be a time of growth for your child. A time when they have to figure things out on their own or depend on God even more. Hopefully, you've been releasing your child into God's hands and allowing them more responsibility to fail or succeed. When my son called one day from college, he was sobbing. His girlfriend had broken up with him. I listened to him cry as he absorbed the sting

of rejection. He had to sit in that hard place for a while but he got through it, stronger. Check in regularly. Let them know you're thinking of them and praying for them. Encourage and affirm them with your words.

**Remember to give yourself grace.** Parenting is a challenging journey. It takes time to navigate the delicate balance of letting your child go while keeping them close in your heart. Be kind to yourself and acknowledge that you're doing the best you can in a difficult situation.

— Sally Cressman is the author of The Dance of Easter. She writes about faith, family, and home on her website, www.sallycressman.com. She offers family conversation starters on Instagram and Facebook.



### **TEACHABLE MOMENTS**

### What Truly Matters in Life, from God's Perspective

My father used to say, "To understand what truly matters to a person, look at their checkbook." Law enforcement often tracks down criminals by following the money trail, illustrating just how significant our financial choices can be. The Bible offers extensive wisdom on money—how to use it, manage it, work for it, the pitfalls of loving it, and the importance of giving it away and caring for our families.

Let's examine a few scriptures and reflect on our own hearts and the nation's approach to money. 1 Timothy 6:10, a well-known verse, warns: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." This verse highlights that the love of money can lead individuals away from their faith, causing destruction.

In Hebrews 13:5, the writer advises: "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." This underscores that a focus on wealth and self-interest can distract us from our reliance on God.

Paul's instructions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:17-19 offer guidance for the wealthy: "17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

Timothy emphasizes that wealth should not lead to arrogance or misplaced hope. Instead, generosity and good deeds lay a foundation for eternal life. My own book, The Imperfect Servant, reinforces this principle: regardless of our financial situation or personal imperfections, we are all called to serve. Wealth and resources, however substantial or modest, are entrusted to us by God for His purposes. Whether our lives seem orderly or chaotic, God calls us to serve.

The title *The Imperfect Servant* reflects this reality, that none of us are perfect, and some of the wealthiest people I know are far from flawless. Yet, regardless of our imperfections, we are all called to be the hands, feet and voices of God.

The love of money and the pursuit of wealth can often hinder our divine calling. Our resources are not truly ours; they are gifts from God to be used for His work. Whether you have a lot or a little, don't let financial concerns prevent you from fulfilling your calling. We are called to bear fruit, serve the needy, and make disciples.

I am not harping on money in this article, it is a means to a greater message, stay with me here, the heart; what we do in life matters to our family, to our neighbors, our community and to ourselves. It certainly matters to God, we are His ambassadors, we are His servants here on earth. We have a job to do other than praise our Father. We honor Him by being active! Money, the love of it, the pursuit of it, the management of it, the use of it so often gets in the way or our divine natural assignment, our godly DNA, (that is from my dear brother Mark Koch The First Hour, www.thefirsthour.com).



We must learn to find opportunities to work together as one body in Christ, to help each other, to collaborate in mission. So many churches, if they would join together in their communities, could be way more effective if they would collaborate. You, you can reach out, do your part in giving back and looking for opportunities to serve. Teach your children how to serve and give.

If you're looking for ways to contribute, consider supporting Palette Productions, our nonprofit media organization, which will oversee a new video on demand network, the Americas Patriot Network (APN). APN is committed to countering the prevailing WOKE agenda with conservative, Christian, and patriotic programming. We aim to restore news integrity, much like the standards of Walter Cronkite and David Brinkley and have biblically based, family friendly programming. Visit www.paletteproductions.org to make a contribution.

I also want to highlight my friend Mark Koch's project, The First Hour Devotional, which aims to distribute one million devotionals by year's end. Over 400,000 copies have already been given away. You can support this effort by purchasing 100,000 books at a special printing cost of \$1.55 each. This contribution will help complete the campaign's goal. If you're interested, contact Palette Productions for details on receiving a tax deduction.

Lastly, don't miss WOW Jam on September 25 and 26. For 30 years, WOW Jam has worked with local churches to bring outreach to communities. This year, they will collaborate with churches, businesses, and organizations in Nashville at East Park for a free public event. We'll provide free services like haircuts, bike repairs, grocery giveaways, makeovers, and more, concluding each day with a message of Christ's love and an invitation to follow Him. Join us in this mission to continue Winning Our World for Christ, one person at a time.

— Michael G. Carnes has a 43-year career as an author and media executive, he has served as a director and producer for both Christian and non-Christian media, his experience includes 55 years as a Christian, learning from exceptional teachers and preachers all over the world and focuses his attention on helping others help others. READ

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### AN ENCOURAGING WORD

### Ordinary, to Meaningful with Passion and Purpose, to Exceptional

Often, and unfortunately, now almost daily, in my clinical practice I am aware of an increasing number of people who appear to be confused and rather "lost" when it comes to the direction of their lives. "Who am I.... Where am I going.... What's it all about?" are common questions I'm asked, sometimes in a roundabout way. Several of these individuals are highly professionally trained, having invested serious money and time, however now, most of Life is empty!

Often these individuals' express frustrations with "life" ... particularly with the individual they live with, or are married to, have a business or profession relationship which has become boring and it

has lost its meaning! Ironically, several tend to become quite angry (often in a passive aggressive way, as well as cynical... "I'm going to get even" attitude). Ironically, several have entered a career, which they desired to achieve for years, but they have now arrived at a spot where they want to beat the system and retaliate, because they are not happy with the situation.

I recall several years ago, consulting a young woman, name Sue who had been in a relationship with a man, and had significant plans for her life professionally and personally. She came to me because she was feeling depressed. However, with some discussion it became obvious she was really depressed and didn't know what to do to make her relationship with her boyfriend successful. I asked her several questions. Her boyfriend, she stated, was a very bright individual who was valedictorian of his high school class. The irony of the situation was that he has been employed with a manufacturing company in a position that would usually be given to someone who never completed school. She further stated she liked his personality, but he wasn't very interested in doing much. He appeared to be bored all the time. She's asked me if I would be willing to meet with him and maybe he would become interested in doing something with his life. I told her I would be willing to meet with him and to share with her my impression, if he was OK with this. She spoke with him, and he was. A few days later, this young man came to see me, and he was quite open with his thinking and aspirations. He stated that he had worked for this company for four years and he had several opportunities to advance, but he smiled as he said he maneuvered around each because he didn't want to work that hard. Questioned further, he said, "well it's like this, I like getting away with it. I enjoy manipulating my bosses and though technically my job is eight-hours a day, I never worked more than an hour any day". Then I asked him "how do you feel about that?" He stated he loved it, and did not feel any accountability or responsibility for his behavior. He said "I'm just smarter than everyone there and I know how to beat the system!"

A few days later Ms. Sue returned to consult with me and further expressed her frustrations with her boyfriend and for the first time she was upset with him. Also Ms. Sue related more about her goals and aspirations for a family and children, and obviously she was excited with pursuing a career in nursing. She rather abruptly asked me what I thought of her boyfriend. I said, that is an interesting question. What you are going to do with your relationship is your decision. No doubt your boyfriend is quite bright and amazingly honest in someways, that is, he likes to brag about how bright he is and successful at manipulating his environment to make things happen whatever way he cares to. I suggested to Ms. Sue, that I would like to share a different perspective which I believe "reframes much of the attitude" which she is experiencing with her boyfriend and unfortunately, is much more common in our work environment. She was eager to hear "my reframe". I said in 2008 the Amer-



ican Association of school administrators recognized Mr. Ivan Fitzwater as the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award as he shared his summary of an "attitude adjustment", which very often changes the game which we play in our lives.

"I am a teacher! What I do and say are being absorbed by young minds and will echo these images across the ages. My lessons will be immortal, affecting people yet unborn, people I will never see or know. The future of the world is in my classroom today, a future with the potential for good or bad. The pliable minds of tommorrow's leaders will be molded either artistically or grotesquely by what I do. Several future presidents are learning from me today; so are great writers of the next

decades, and so are the so-called ordinary people who will make the decisions in a democracy. I must never forget these same young people could be the thieves and murderers of the future. Only a teacher? Thank God I have a calling to the greatest profession of all! I must be vigilant every day less I lose one fragile opportunity to improve tomorrow."

Ms. Sue pondered what I said and then stated that perhaps, she should slip away from him. I couldn't help but to respond that "perhaps it would be a good idea to keep your running shoes on, so that you are always ready for the quarter mile race". She smiled and said, "thank you, I now understand why I've been so troubled".

There is no doubt that "reframing" a life predicament, utilizing committed perspectives, such as, Mr. Fitzwater and others, will most likely alter the negative perspective, such as, not going nowhere, or bored, not experiencing excitement, etc. Most important is, PASSION for one's calling or career, which almost always includes meaning and purpose for those we serve, including ourselves!

— Tim Lynch, Ph. D

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### **HEALTHY LIVING**

### **4 Simple Practices to Increase Your Energy**

Energy. It doesn't seem like there is enough to go around nowadays. But in order to fully do the things God has called us to we need to be full of energy. One of the main focuses our clients usually have is increasing energy. So We put together a SUPER simple checklist you can start tomorrow to start seeing an increase in energy in just 3 days. Here is it:

**1. Movement-** take 5-10 minutes every hour to get up from your desk and move. This could be stretching, walking, or doing some active recovery. Take a walk while

on a phone call, take a meeting at the park instead of sitting at a coffee shop. Spending time moving increases your momentum for the day and will help your mind have the capacity to get everything done that is on your plate.

- **2. Nutrition-** take a lunch break. Don't mindlessly eat your lunch while working. You may think this helps you get more done, but it usually doesn't. It causes us to crash later in the day. Go to a different location and eat your lunch. Limit screen time, try to have conversations with others or give your mind a rest. For the last 5-10 minutes try and take a walk outdoors to get some sunlight and help your body with digestion.
- **3. Rest-** Get 8-9 hours of sleep. I know, I know. You have heard it 100 times, But if you get 8-9 hours of sleep for 3 straight days I promise your energy





levels will go up. By 8-9 hours of sleep I actually mean time asleep. Not time in bed. Also, make sure to limit screen time at night. Shut down the tv, facebook, youtube, etc before you go to bed.

**4. Thankfulness-** Spend intentional time each day thinking through what you are thankful for AND telling those around you how

thankful you are for what they do. This is huge. Focusing on what we have and being thankful for that rather than focusing on what we don't have will give our energy a boost for sure.

IF you do all 4 of these things over the next 3 days your energy levels will increase. Remember long term consistency far outpaces short term intensity. While these may get your energy levels up quickly, it's the consistency over time that matters.

— Ashton Tate, owner Glory to Glory Fitness, Form Curriculum FormCurriculum.com hello@glorytogloryfitness.com



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### **How to Clean Oven Door Glass**

The glass window on your oven door lets you keep a watchful eye on a succulent roast and peek in anticipation as cookies bake to golden perfection. But what happens when that window becomes clouded with greasy streaks and baked-on grime? With our step-by-step guide, you'll learn how to clean an oven glass door and turn a frustrating kitchen eyesore back into a clear view of your culinary world.

#### How To Clean the Outside of a Glass Oven Door

The glass on the outside of your oven door often collects fingerprints, smudges, drips, and other marks that can hinder your view. Cleaning the glass

on an oven door is simpler than you might think. You can get the outside glass on your oven door clean in no time with the following steps:

- **1.** Gather Your Supplies: Opt for a natural glass cleaner like lemon juice or white vinegar, which you can add to a spray bottle. You'll also need some microfiber cloths.
- **2.** Apply the Cleaner: Generously spray the cleaner on the outside glass of your oven door.
- **3.** Wipe Away Grime: Wipe away the cleaner, while scrubbing with the microfiber cloth, and then buff the glass to a shine.
- **4.** Inspect and Repeat: Check for any remaining spots and repeat the cleaning process until the outside glass is clean.
- **5.** Finish with a Shine: Finally, buff away any streaks with a dry microfiber cloth until it gleams.

And there you have it! You're halfway to a sparkling clean oven door and a clearer view of your culinary creations. Now it's time to roll up your sleeves and learn how to clean the oven glass door on the inside. This will require a little more effort because baked-on food and grime are a bigger challenge.

### **How to Clean Your Oven Window on the Inside**

The inside glass on your oven door is a culmination of your culinary efforts, which means if you haven't cleaned it in a while, you'll need some elbow grease to get it clean. But don't worry, whether it's been weeks, months, or years since you last cleaned the inside glass on your oven door, these cleaning tips will give you a whole new perspective on what's going on inside your oven.

### How to clean the inside glass on the oven door effectively is a matter of following these steps:

- **1.** Gather Your Supplies: You will need the following for cleaning the inside glass on an oven door effectively and without harsh chemicals:
- ½ cup of baking soda
- Water
- A medium-sized bowl
- Dry microfiber cloths
- A razor blade (optional)
- **2.** Prepare the Cleaning Solution: Mix the baking soda with enough water to form a paste. Aim for the consistency of toothpaste.
- **3.** Wipe It Down: Open the oven door and wipe away all loose grime using a damp microfiber cloth.
- **4.** Apply the Cleansing Paste: Spread the baking soda paste on the inside of the oven window. Cover all the glass.
- **5.** Let It Sit: Allow the paste to work its magic for 15 to 20 minutes.
- **6.** Wipe Away: Gently wipe down the door with a damp, clean microfiber cloth.



**7.** Scrape

if Necessary: For stubborn, baked-on gunk, carefully scrape it away using a razor blade. Be careful not to scratch the glass.

- **8.** Repeat as Needed: Continue the above steps until your oven glass is clean.
- **9.** Buff to Shine: Buff out any remaining streaks using a dry microfiber cloth until the glass gleams. Now that you know how to clean the oven glass door, you're all done, right? Almost! But what if you still have crumbs caught between the two panes of glass? Here are tips for how to clean inside the glass on your oven door.

### How to Clean Inside the Glass on Your Oven Door

Sometimes, crumbs and spills manage to get between the two panes of glass on your oven door, creating an annoying mess that seems impossible to reach. No need to worry. Our step-by-step guide on how to clean inside the glass on your oven door will help clear up any questions, and your oven glass too!

- **1.** Find the Manual: Dig up your oven's manual or search online for its specific make and model. This will guide you on how to safely take apart the door.
- **2.** Get a Helping Hand: Oven doors can be heavy, so an extra set of hands is welcome when taking apart the door and removing the glass.
- **3.** Prepare a Work Area: Lay a towel or sheet on the countertop or kitchen floor
- **4.** Remove the Door: Follow your oven manual's instructions to remove the door carefully.
- **5.** Disassemble the Door: Remove the screws holding the door and glass together.
- **6.** Clean the Glass: Use the baking soda paste from the previous section to clean the inside of the two glass panes.
- **7.** Reassemble Carefully: With your helper, put the glass and door back together and reattach it to the oven

Voilà! You've tackled the often-overlooked task of how to clean inside the glass on your oven door, making it look like new.



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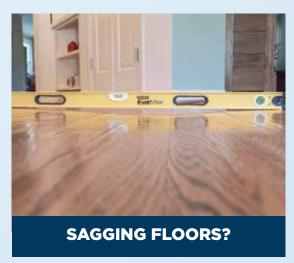


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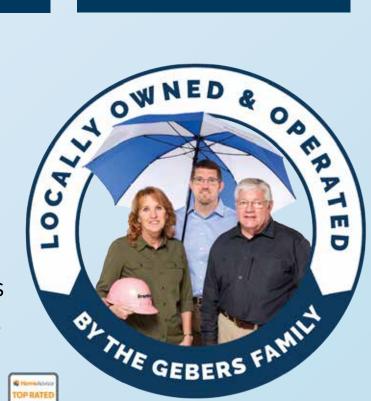












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### BODY & SOUL

### A Tale of Two Fishermen

And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Mark 1:16-18

Did you realize that day wasn't the first time Andrew and Peter had met Jesus? It's true. According to John 1, they had both encountered Jesus much earlier while Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist far away from the Sea of Galilee. One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone). John 1:40-42

Can you imagine that? The Son of God (Matthew 3:16-17) met them and spent time with them—even changing Simon's name to Peter. Andrew and Peter quickly began to faithfully follow Jesus for a little while, but for some reason, along the way, both of them turned back to "business as

usual."

It isn't clear exactly what kept these brothers from making Jesus the top priority of their lives, but in spite of their revelation of who Jesus was and their commitment to follow Him, something got in the way. Has that ever happened to you?

They walked away from Jesus, but He didn't give up on them! Or you. Or me. He never does—no matter how many times we go back to business as usual. Before long, Jesus found them again on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. They were the same two guys, but this time, they made far more than a commitment. They SURRENDERED their lives to Him.

The rest of the story of these two fishermen—Peter in particular—is well documented. He soon witnessed miracles, doubts, betrayal, remorse, disbelief, faith, and mighty works. All because this fisherman finally made relationship with Jesus his top priority in life (John 21:15-19).

So where are you today? Did you make a commitment only to fall away—back to the "busyness" of your "real" life? Possibly more than once? Or are you one who is following Him faithfully—right in the midst of your every-day life?

Even if you have slipped away from His call to a deeper personal relationship, there is real hope for you today. Jesus is still walking down the shore of life, inviting us to leave our "busyness" behind and follow Him. It's up to us to lay down the distractions and follow Him. That decision sure worked out well for Peter.

— Dr. Byron L. Spradlin, Founder and President, Artists In Christian Testimony www.actinternational.org



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### **Gearing Up for Fall Invaders**

### **Brown Stink Bugs**

Stink bugs – those pesky, shield-shaped critters with an uncanny ability to make your place smell like a garbage dump if you squish em. We've all seen them lurking around our homes or workplaces, especially during the fall. But why do they choose your home as their cozy hideaway, and how can you stop them? Our Pest Professionals are here with some tips to help you gear up for the fall stink bug invasion.

### **Why Stink Bugs Choose Your Home**

Stink bugs come for the essentials: food, water, and shelter. When it comes to their menu, stink bugs have a particular taste for plants like grass, apples, berries, peppers, beans, and nuts. They're not foodies, but they're not picky either. Stink bugs also want a cozy place to hide, preferably one that's warm and secure. Water isn't their top priority, but they won't turn down a convenient source nearby. So, if your house offers them any of these things, you might find stink bugs camping out in your living room.

### Where Do They Hide?

Stink bugs are experts at hiding. You'll usually

find them lurking around the outer perimeter of buildings on sunny days. But here's the tricky part: if they decide to move in and hide within your walls, they're not likely to come out unless they catch some rays. If they're inside your walls, you're most likely catching a whiff of them and it's time to Call Waynes.

### **Preventing a Stink Bug Invasion**

Seal Cracks and Gaps:

Stink bugs sneak into your space through cracks and gaps. The best time to seal these openings is in late spring or early summer when overwintering pests have hit the road. Pay extra attention to those south-facing exterior walls that soak up the sun – they're stink bug magnets!

Professional Inspection: Sometimes, these pests decide to make themselves at home in your attic, vents, or ceiling spaces. Waynes pest control professionals are trained to hunt down vulnerabilities in your property that could make it more tempting for stink bugs.

Turn Off Outdoor Lighting: Stink bugs love light. If you have outdoor lighting, keep it low or off as much as you can.

Control humidity: Humidity is a magnet for pests

of all kinds, including stink bugs. Ensure your property has proper ventilation and no leaky pipes or fixtures to keep humidity in check.

Don't Squish – Relocate: Whatever you do, resist the urge to squish stink bugs. They release a not-so-pleasant odor that can attract more of their kind. Instead, gently relocate them outside.

Eliminate food sources: Stink bugs have a taste for fruits, veggies, legumes, and nuts. Keep these tasty treats well-hidden to avoid attracting these hungry critters. This is especially important if you are near agricultural areas or farms.

### **Take Action Today**

Worried about stink bugs settling in for the winter? Don't wait until it's too late. Give us a call at 866.WAYNES1. Our goal is to provide service before the first frost arrives. The best way to avoid a stink bug infestation is to stop them from moving in before they even arrive.

 Meredith Boyd, Social Media and Marketing Coordinator - Waynes, www.callwaynes.com

### KIDS KORNER

### **Senate Takes Step to Hold Big Tech Accountable**

Since 1998—the last year Congress passed a major law to reform the tech industry and protect children in the virtual space—a lot has changed. In the last 26 years, more than 100 million Americans were born during the internet's profound transformation from dial-up to near constant connectivity, especially with the emergence of the biggest social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and more.

In Tennessee and across the country, young people have grown up alongside this transformation. But instead of improving their lives, in many ways it has led to unthinkable harms. As minors have become glued to social media with addictive algorithms and product features—with teenagers spending an average 8.5 hours a day on their screens—we've seen rising mental health issues, eating disorders, online sexual abuse and human trafficking, drug overdoses, and suicides. At the same time, we've seen more and more evidence, including from industry whistleblowers, that Big Tech companies knew about the harms they were causing but did nothing to stop them.

The reason is simple: For social media platforms, children are the product and addiction is the business model. In 2022 alone, social media platforms generated almost \$11 billion in advertising revenue from children. In fact, in internal communica-

tions, Facebook placed the "lifetime value" of a 13-year-old user at \$270. By treating our children as revenue sources, Big Tech has repeatedly put profit over their safety. Thankfully, Congress is taking a big step to protect children from Big Tech's abuses with the Senate's passage last week of the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA).

Over the last three years, Senator Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and I crafted KOSA by working with a broad coalition of stakeholders, including parents, child safety advocates, tech experts, faith leaders, pediatricians, and child psychologists, to ensure that social media platforms are safe for children by default. Among its important provisions, KOSA will create new tools for parents to identify harmful behavior and report abuse directly to social media sites, provide new controls for families to support their children, including to opt out of algorithmic recommendations, and require mandatory audits to ensure that platforms are mitigating harms to children.

Perhaps most importantly, KOSA will create a duty of care for online platforms to prevent specific dangers to minors, including the promotion of suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, and sexual exploitation. Simply put, KOSA will hold Big Tech accountable and put power back into the hands of parents and their children. It is no

surprise, then, that major conservative organizations—including the Heritage Foundation, America First Policy Institute, American Principles Project, and many more—support this pro-family legislation.

In many ways, KOSA's Senate passage would have been impossible without the hundreds of brave parents and young people who came to Washington over and over again, shared their heartbreaking experiences with social media harms, and never gave up on demanding change. Their powerful testimonies were a big reason why KOSA has strong bipartisan support, with 91 senators from across the political spectrum voting to pass it. With its passage in the Senate, KOSA now heads to the U.S. House of Representatives, where the legislation has broad support. In the weeks ahead, I look forward to working with our House colleagues to ensure that we can send KOSA to the President's desk as quickly as possible. As kids head back to school, families should have every tool they need to protect their children on social media. The Kids Online Safety Act will ensure that happens.

— Tennessee United States Senator Marsha Blackburn and her husband Chuck live in Williamson County, Tennessee.





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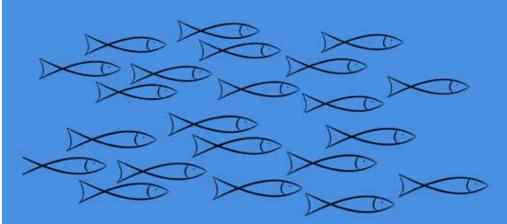
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(from left) Jim Daly, Chuck Swindoll, Anne Graham Lotz, Colin Smith, Alistair Begg, Adrian Rogers, Tony Evans, Charles Stanley, Janet Mefferd, Richard Hamlet, Michael Youssef, Robert Jeffress And Many More!

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"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." (Hebrews 10: 24-25 NLT)

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### **PARENTING POINTS**

### Things We Will Never Regret Doing With/For Our Kids

Like most mothers and fathers, we are acutely aware of our own flaws and shortcomings as parents. Compounding the problem, we are facing the fact that our small children will soon be adolescents and, before we're ready for it, they'll be grown and off on their own. So, in light of how precious our children.

### 1. Praying for them

Children need to hear their father and mother praying with them and for them. No time is a bad time to pray with our children. But there are two times we find especially conducive to praying

with our children: dinner time and bedtime. At dinner, there is no set pattern for who prays. It might be one of the parents, one of the children, all of the children, or the whole family. But it is a great time to be thankful together, to talk with God together. At bedtime, we have the happy opportunity to pray with each child individually, listening to their concerns and watching their little minds whirl as they try to communicate with God.

### 2. Talking with them at the dinner table

Research confirms and illumines what people have always known intuitively, that dinner time conversation is immensely profitable for children. It boosts their vocabulary, improves their school grades, makes them healthier, decreases their chances of clinical depression, and strengthens the bond with their parents and siblings. Fortunately, it can also be a lot of fun for the parents. In fact, dinner time is one of our favorite times of the day.

### 3. Telling them we love them

Every day, we try to slow down and hit "pause" long enough to look each child in the eyes and tell them that we love them. That we will always love them. Whether they obey or disobey. Whether they succeed at a task or fail at it. No matter what. We will always love them. Our children know that this is meaningful; we hope it will be etched in their memories and remind them of God's love.

### 4. Disciplining them

As much patience and emotional energy as it takes to discipline our children consistently (and as often as we fail to do so), we know it is very important for their future well-being. We want to steer them away from sinful desires and toward their need for God. We are especially concerned to discipline them for lying, disobedience, and disrespect. Through the discomfort a child experiences when they are disciplined, they might be persuaded to refrain from sin in the future when the consequences of sin will be much more painful. We know that if we can discipline them consistently and lovingly—reminding them that we love them no matter what they do or don't do—we will never regret it.

### 5. Bringing them into the community of Jesus

We like what our children learn at church. They learn Bible stories and truths at church that we haven't yet taught them at home. They learn to love God in a room full of people, many of whom are different from us economically, socially, culturally, or racially. They build friendships that will encourage them in their walk with Jesus. At church, they learn who God is, who they are, what went wrong with the world, who will fix the world, and how they can be a part of the greatest story of all—God redeeming humanity and restoring the world.



### 6. Reminding them of the gospel

We want to find as many ways as possible to remind them of the gospel. The gospel is the announcement that Jesus Christ's birth, teaching, miracles, death and resurrection give us a glimpse of, and opens up to us, God's coming Kingdom. Jesus will return one day to overthrow evil and establish his perfect kingdom for eternity. The gospel calls for us to believe in Christ, trust Christ, and repent of our sins; if we obey this call, we will live with him eternally in his Kingdom.

The beauty of the gospel is that Jesus "traded places" with us. He lived the sinless life that we should have lived, and died the death that we deserve to die. He took our guilty record, died for it, and offers us his perfect record in return. That is why the apostle Paul declared that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1).

In relation to parenting, that means that he does not condemn us for our flaws and shortcomings as parents. We—Bruce and Lauren—are often made aware of our imperfections as parents. (We're not even consistent with these "dozen things we will never regret doing." Schedules change at the last minute. Children get sick. Parents get tired. Etcetera.) So we put our trust in him, rather than in ourselves, as we try to make the most of these moments before our small children become adolescents. Because, before we're ready for it, they'll mature into young adults and go off on their own.

— Bruce Riley Ashford, Jr.

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### Spiritual Goal For September

John 3:16

### **ENJOY...the sweetest promise.**

For God loves His creation SO MUCH...that God's only begotten Son was given...and whoever believes in the Son...will not perish...

BUT...will be granted everlasting life.

Think about that eternal promise TODAY. Let that promise give us strength...encouragement...assurance...peace of mind... confidence...and the ability to face any challenges that come our way during TODAY.

#### Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for accepting the Mission...and for the joy...You completed that Mission... because Your love is Absolute. You are calling us to action TODAY. We are to believe the promise...to respond to it in faith...welcome the Spirit to do the rest... by accepting Your gift of love...knowing that we never earned it. Your promise is the sweetest...and the best that we could ever know. THANK YOU. THANK YOU. 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.

If you do not have your own Bible, email publisher@nashchristian.com and we will

make sure you receive one.

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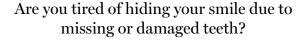
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