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## OUR MISSION



**Nashville Christian Family**® exists to provide Christians and the community at large with ways to strengthen and grow as a part of the Middle Tennessee Christian Family. This local monthly publication is designed to promote positive living by sharing with readers of all ages relevant and timely news and information related to health, faith, parenting, youth, finances, Christian entertainment, missions, church leaders, and much more GOOD NEWS!

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

### Celebrating the REAL Reason for the Season

*“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David;) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward me.” Luke 2:1 – 14, King James Version*



Christmas is here! This time of year is truly magical and exciting—a season to gather with family and friends, decorate the tree, serve and give to those in need, exchange meaningful gifts, attend festive parties, and enjoy holiday treats and meals.

Yet, by the time Christmas Day arrives, many of us find ourselves overwhelmed by the flurry of holiday activities. Instead of enjoying the season, we can end up stressed, exhausted, over budget, and just ready for it all to be over. But that shouldn't be the case for Believers!

This season is a special opportunity to refocus our hearts and minds, to “be still and know that He is God.” Take time for yourself and your family to embrace the true joy of the season. Gather your loved ones and read the Christmas story from the Bible. Celebrate the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

From all of us at *Nashville Christian Family*, we wish you and your loved ones a blessed, peaceful, and joyful Christmas, as well as a Happy New Year!



Robert Stringfellow, Publisher, 615-815-8765  
[publisher@nashchristian.com](mailto:publisher@nashchristian.com)



## ON THE COVER 20

Danica McKellar is often recognized for her role in the 1980s television show *The Wonder Years* where she portrayed the character Winnie Cooper. Now she is known as one of the most popular leading ladies in the Christmas movie genre. Read how her faith guides her in her acting plus get a behind the scenes sneak peek at her new movie on Great American Family, *A Cinderella Christmas Ball*. See page 20.

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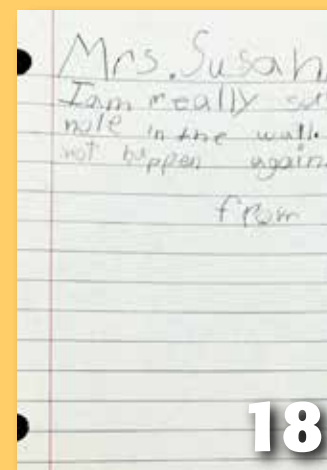
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## This Christmas Season, Remember You Are Not Alone.

In middle school, I wasn't the coolest kid on the block. When you aren't cool yourself, your best chance of survival is to get a cool kid to like you, acceptance by association. For me, the cool kid was Justin. Justin always had the latest games, the latest music, the latest clothes, and he was a rebel, which added to his cool 'lore'.

Justin was on my bus route, and he was also a big Gameboy player, so I quickly learned that I could 'earn' Justin's attention by letting him borrow my Gameboy games. Thus, a friendship was born.

One afternoon, Justin and I were hanging out at a construction site of a new home being built, being kids. We were taking the glass bottles left behind by construction workers and breaking them on the concrete foundation ... until a policeman drove by. As he pulled into the dirt lot where the home was being built, I froze. Justin ran. He ran like the wind. In fact, he ran several miles, all the way back to his house, while I stood in that dusty lot dealing with the consequences of my poor choice, alone.

Have you ever felt abandoned in your decisions? That your decisions left you standing alone with

no one by your side?  
Or even that God was no longer by your side?  
You may have heard the story of a guy named Jonah. God had given Jonah direct orders that he chose to not follow through on. As a result, he ultimately found himself tossed overboard from the ship he was sailing on, amidst some perilous waters alone.

God wasn't going to allow disobedient Jonah to just die, alone, in the waters. If you've read the story, you know God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, and spare him from the waters, before spitting him up on a beach three days later. He still had a plan for him. Despite his disobedience, God stuck with Jonah. That is the beauty of the Christmas season. Despite our own brokenness, the Creator is committed to His creation. We are not alone in this broken world, rather Jesus stepped into it to rescue us from it.



1 John 4:9 reminds us; "God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him." It's not because of us; rather despite us. This Christmas season, remember you are not alone. God is with us.

Merry Christmas from your friends at Lee Company; we are grateful for the opportunity to serve this community; and pray God's best over you heading into the new year.

— Kyle Froman, Lee Company Chaplain



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## Noel Politics: How To Avoid Political Arguments At Christmas

Christmas is a time for families to come together, celebrate, give gifts, and reflect on the real reason for the season. However, it can also be a time when political tensions boil over, especially when family members have differing views. If you want to keep the peace this year and avoid contentious political arguments, there are several strategies you can use to defuse potential conflicts and promote civil conversation.

### Don't spike the ball with the win

After a major election or political victory, it might be tempting to gloat if your candidate came out on top. Some, in viral memes and reels, are calling for people to ambush family members who believed in a losing candidate. However, turning the conversation into a victory lap can spark unnecessary arguments. Instead of focusing on how or why your candidate won, shift the conversation toward the challenges that lie ahead.

If your candidate has been elected, acknowledge that winning is only the first step and that there are pressing issues to address. By focusing on the future and the need to solve problems together, you encourage a forward-thinking discussion rather than a divisive one.

To make this work, remember the “verb tense rule.” Talking in past tense often comes across as blaming, while present tense can imply a moral judgment. Instead, use future tense to focus on what needs to be done moving forward. This simple shift can help avoid sounding like you're reliving past grievances or triumphs.

For example, if they talk about Jan. 6, 2021, then maybe ask, “In the future, how do you think Americans, including yourself, can protest something you feel is wrong even if you find out you were wrong?”

### Ask questions, don't make assertions

Rather than launching into a lecture about why your candidate is the best, ask open-ended questions to encourage thoughtful dialogue. Ask your relatives how they believe the opposing candidate would address current issues, or ask, “What do you think the incoming administration could do to solve [insert issue]?”

Asking questions instead of making declarative statements allows the conversation to feel more like a discussion rather than a confrontation. It also shows respect for others' opinions and can help move the conversation away from debate and toward understanding. It is also good for your sanity as well and hopefully can help the other side see weaknesses and start to break down their own barriers.

### Acknowledge weaknesses in your candidate

One way to keep a conversation civil is to acknowledge the flaws in your own candidate. If someone criticizes your candidate for being brash or dishonest, instead of immediately defending them, take a step back and admit that, yes, those qualities are a concern. A simple, “I get why you might feel that way about Donald Trump, and I don't agree with everything he's done either,” can go a long way in fostering a more respectful conversation.



Acknowledging your candidate's shortcomings shows maturity and can help lower the temperature of the discussion. It also makes you appear open-minded, which can encourage others to listen to your perspective more thoughtfully. This is the start of allowing the other side to soften and become more open-minded.

### Recognize past problems you may have overlooked

It's easy to overlook flaws in a politician you support while criticizing those of the opposition. However, if you're critical of one candidate's past actions – such as the affair scandals surrounding Bill Clinton – it's important to hold your current candidates to the same standard. For instance, don't pretend that Mr. Trump's sexual life is immune to scrutiny simply because you agree with his stance on immigration.

By avoiding contradictions in your political views, you show that you're not blindly partisan. This can make others feel more comfortable engaging in a civil conversation without feeling like they are being judged or dismissed. Oh...and don't think they forget what you said last year as you probably didn't forget what they said either.

### Manage your emotions

It's natural to feel strongly about political issues, but when emotions start to run high, it's important to find ways to stay calm. If you feel yourself getting upset, take a deep breath and give yourself a moment to collect your thoughts. A simple “Let me think on that” can help you regain composure and steer the conversation in a more positive direction.

### “I don't know” is a great answer

If you're unsure about a political topic or don't have all the facts, it's perfectly okay to admit it. Saying “I don't know” is far more productive than pretending to have all the answers. Not only does it avoid misinformation, but it also opens the door for a more informative discussion. If you don't know the answer, ask questions, research later, and continue learning.

Being honest about your knowledge level helps prevent unnecessary arguments and promotes a more respectful exchange of ideas.

Christmas is a time to connect, share meals, and create lasting memories with family and friends. By following these strategies, you can avoid political arguments that might put a damper on the holiday. Instead of focusing on differences, use your time together to foster understanding, appreciate diverse perspectives, and emphasize the importance of working together for the future. By doing so, you'll help keep the Christmas spirit alive — no matter what's happening in the political world.

— 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](http://peterdemos.org).

## BODY & SOUL

### Snowflakes, It's All in the Details...

Six-sided intricate symmetrical designs. No two are alike. Billions fall during one snowstorm alone. Snowflakes. Amazing works of art and creation lasting only a few hours or seconds. One would wonder why so much detail is included in something so small and finite? That is the nature of God. He is a creator that never holds back and considers every detail on this earth. Winter is considered a season of rest and a time for nature's beauty to slumber. When we step outside, the cool air takes our breath, the birds are silent and the leaves are gone. We see our world with a new perspective. Open landscape, once hidden by green reveals its structure. God gives us a moment in the year to focus our senses and take note of the more minor details. There are times in our own lives that we may feel in the middle of a bleak season. We may be struggling with heartache, lost, physical limitations, but God wants us to know that He sees all. He knows the intricate details of our lives and has us in His hand.

My Grandmother Billie used to say, that "aging isn't for the weak!" As our bodies and minds change over the years, our skin sags, we lose muscle tone, we become less resilient to stress. Many of us will experience medical events that totally change the trajectory of our lives. We recently spent 8 beautiful weeks getting to know 6 individuals that had recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. Along with the typical information exchanged about latest treatments and medications and therapy options, we spent a lot of time discussing the change in their lives and marriages. Just like snowflakes, no two stories were alike.

We may not always understand the 'why' of our circumstances, but if we look closer and quiet our minds and hearts, we may just see the detail of His



plan. Take time this month to reflect on the many blessings that are in your life. Stop and consider the path that you have traveled and know that each step has been purposed. Be an encouragement to those around you that are blinded by their storm and cannot see the small details around them. Consider the snowflakes in your own life. May God bless you!

*"I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Wonderful are thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well."*

Psalms 139:14

— Amy Hentschel, Owner/Senior Care Advisor, Senior Provisions  
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## Name Tags & Christmas Trees

A couple of years ago I was going through a very rough time, and I just did not want to decorate our Christmas tree. Then, I thought about a Bridges guest who shared how changing her focus in hard seasons

brought her peace. That thought prompted an idea that brought joy to my heart. I decided to add name tags to our ornaments. On each of the tags I printed the names of family, friends, and ministries that I pray for regularly. Each time I glanced at the tree I was reminded to pray. The simple act of adding name tags changed my focus and renewed my faith. The name tags shifted my focus from my tough season to praying for others. As I prayed for my family, friends, and ministries I was reminded of the true meaning of the holiday season – Jesus Christ. The birth and life of Jesus Christ changes everything.

### Beyond What We Can See

Ultimately, all our hope is in Him. In seasons of suffering, we can choose to rejoice in Him. We can rejoice in His promises, His Word, and His providential care that goes beyond what we can see in this fallen world. In seasons of peace, we can also rejoice in His life, His example and His Word that is more than enough. Whatever season you find yourself in during this Christmas holiday you can rest assured that He is working everything out for your good. His birth, His life on earth and His death and Resurrection provides a secure future for all who believe. This holiday season is all about the good news – the birth and life of our Savior Jesus Christ. *“That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of*

*the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.”* Luke 2:8-10 NLT

### We Can Rewrite History

God gave us the greatest gift when He gave us His only Son Jesus Christ. We can give Him our greatest gift which is our heart and our obedience. When we pray for our family, friends, and ministries we give a priceless gift. We can rewrite the history of our families and friends’ lives with our prayers. If you do not feel like decorating this year it may be that something as simple as adding name tags to your ornaments will change your focus. Any time we choose to focus our thoughts on Him peace is sure to follow. He is Immanuel, God with us. This knowledge alone brings us peace in every season of our life.

**Today’s Secret from the Studio:** We can rewrite the history of our family and friends’ lives with our prayers.

— *Monica Schmelter is the host of Bridges aired on the Christian Television Network in over 50 million homes. You can also watch Bridges on ROKU and the CTN APP on demand. Monica and her husband Joseph have one adult son. They recently welcomed a daughter in-love into their family.*



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**A Legal Look at the Birth of Jesus**

As we look ahead to this special time of year, the humble origins of this celebration often are obscured like the hidden celestial grandeur of a star-light night overshadowed by the haze of urban city lights. The historical record of Jesus’ birth, as portrayed in Luke’s second chapter of his gospel account of this spectacular event, pulls back the curtain on the stark events which punctuated the timing of Jesus’ arrival.

As a lawyer, I have often marveled at the legal setting surrounding the Savior’s birth.

*“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city.”*



Perhaps the closest distant cousin to a “decree” that we in America have experienced in recent years was the issuance by our President of a national COVID-19 vaccine requirement. This so-called “mandate” aroused the angst of many across the nation, and led to the filing of dozens of lawsuits challenging the President’s authority to impose such a broadscale requirement for keeping one’s job.

But in 2 A.D., there was no court challenge available to a “decree” from Augustus Caesar. There were no religious exemptions. There were no medical accommodations due to pregnancy. There were no constitutional arguments. When Caesar said go register for the census – you went. The penalty for non-compliance was not losing your job; it was death.

Caesar Augustus’ mandate declaring that the entire Empire must register at designated locations was centered less on taxation and more on identification. Concerning the word “taxed” in verse 1 of Luke’s account, W.E. Vine in An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, explains that it is translated from the Greek word apographo, meaning “to write out, enroll, inscribe, and in register.”

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

God used the decree of Caesar to bring Joseph and his young, pregnant wife to Bethlehem, so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled that the Messiah would be born in this obscure, whistlestop town on the road to Jerusalem. This demonstrates the providence of God, who used the arrogance of Augustus (the name means “Revered One”) to rebuild the throne of David. It is an interesting study to see how providence paved the way for his ascension to power at the time of Christ’s birth.

In the half century before the birth of our Savior, there had been political turmoil within the Roman republic. The Senate had become divided and paralyzed and Pompey and Julius Caesar waged a civil war. After Pompey was assassinated in Egypt, Julius Caesar was the unquestioned emperor until he too was murdered by members of the Senate in 44 B.C. He was succeeded by his 19-year old adopted son Octavius Caesar who rose to political and

military glory under the acclaimed title “Caesar Augustus” while tyrannically consolidating his power. Within the Roman Empire he was exalted as a god.

To make matters worse, Augustus Caesar and Herod, the governor of Judea, were close friends and had been companions since their youth. When rumors began to circulate that a messiah would soon be born in Judea, Herod had the full support of Rome to impose his cruel sanctions – including mass genocide of male born Jews. Legally, Herod had unlimited power at his disposal to eliminate any potential pretenders to the throne in order to ensure his longevity.

God is a master of irony. In the midst of such abject tyranny there would be born the personification of freedom. A light that shone into the darkness would become the only path to liberation from sin and death. This is indeed cause for celebration, but more than that, adoration. “O come, let us adore Him. Christ the Lord.



— Larry L. Crain, Crain Law Center  
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## Myracle Uses Passion and Experience to Secure Position as Literacy Director



**Dr. Jared Myracle**

With his master's in educational leadership and doctorate in leadership from Trevecca, Dr. Jared Myracle moved from a role as a local educator to executive director of literacy for Memphis-Shelby County Schools, one of the largest school districts in Tennessee

and the 20th largest in the country. After completing his master's with a group of educators in one of Trevecca's satellite locations, he knew he had to go further and immediately began his doctorate for the sake of his career and fulfilling his personal goals. "The ink wasn't dry on the master's degree when we came for orientation for cohort 12 of the doctoral program in 2009," Myracle said. "I'm a first-generation college graduate, and completing my terminal degree was always something that I wanted to do."

By 2012, Myracle had not only completed his doctoral studies but also embarked on a new chapter in his professional career. After spending years as a teacher and assistant principal, he became supervisor of instruction for the Gibson County Special School District. By 2015, he was assistant director

of schools for McNairy County. As he continued to advance in his career, he was able to integrate his learning from the Ed.D., especially his dissertation, titled "Diagnosing Senioritis." It explored the impact of the perception of college readiness on high school seniors' motivation. His research revealed that students' perceived readiness for college often led to a decline in their academic performance during their senior year—a finding that has influenced his approach to education and student engagement. "I found out that the more we tell students they're ready for college as 11th grade students, particularly based on the ACT score, the less likely they are to voluntarily take additional academic coursework," Myracle said.

His ability to look at the big picture helped him continue to advance, and after serving as senior director of ELA, literacy and humanities for the Tennessee Department of Education, he started his new position as literacy director for the Memphis-Shelby County school system. "The real work in my position is answering the question, 'how do we give teachers the resources they need to make an increase in literacy happen while leveraging high impact instructional strategies to pair alongside that content?'" Myracle said. "I make this

happen with regular school visits, instructional coaching, leadership coaching and just ensuring that people have what they need to support our students and be successful."

In a county the size of Shelby, he has had to use all of his expertise to meet the demand and has been able to pull key areas of learning from his degrees. "The school system is very large, so just making sure that the structure of support is reaching all teachers and principals—and that the effects are seen in every classroom—can be challenging," Myracle said. "I still refer to my coursework and research around change management, working alongside people from diverse backgrounds and how we bring together diverse perspectives." In his progression from a first-generation college graduate to the director of literacy for one of the largest school districts in the nation, Myracle personifies the practical power of higher education to impact real challenges that school districts face today.

— *Rebeka Warren, Senior Copywriter  
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## End of Year Report: Reflecting on Our Achievements and Looking Forward to New Horizons

As the year comes to a close, we at Stronger Than My Father are filled with gratitude and pride for the incredible progress we have made in our mission to educate, inspire, and transform the lives of young men and their families. This year has been a transformative period for our organization, with significant milestones that set the stage for an even brighter future.

### Launch of the Stronger Sons In-School Program

This year, we proudly launched our Stronger Sons In-School Mentorship program, beginning with 25 enthusiastic students from grades 6 to 8. This program is specifically designed to integrate into the school environment, providing consistent and focused mentorship with a strong emphasis on character development. Through workshops and discussions, we instill values such as integrity, respect, and perseverance, equipping our young men with the tools they need to excel both academically and personally.



### Growth of the Bi-Weekly Stronger Sons Mentorship Program

Our bi-weekly Stronger Sons Mentorship program continues to thrive, serving 20 dedicated young men who gather every other weekend. These sessions provide a structured and supportive environment where participants can connect with mentors, share their experiences, and engage in activities that promote personal responsibility and leadership skills. This program remains a cornerstone of our efforts to offer continuous guidance and support to our mentees.



### A Farewell to Hope Leadership Academy

As we bid farewell to our beloved Hope Leadership Academy in May 2024, we reflect on the impact it has had on countless young lives. While this chapter closes, we are excited to announce the upcoming launch of the Stronger Than My Father Youth and Family Center in the Spring of 2025. This new initiative will focus on teaching middle and high school students entrepreneurship and leadership skills, preparing them to navigate the challenges they will face after high school. Additionally, we aim to support single mothers by addressing their emotional needs, fostering a holistic approach to family empowerment.



### Looking Ahead

The future holds a great promise for Stronger Than My Father. Our new Youth and Family Center will be a beacon of hope and opportunity, offering programs that not only educate but also empower our youth to become successful

and responsible leaders. We are committed to expanding our reach and enhancing our curriculum with innovative approaches to mentorship and personal development.

### A Call to Our Supporters

The remarkable achievements of Stronger Than My Father would not be possible without the unwavering support of our donors. As we approach the end of the year, we invite you to consider making a donation to help us continue our mission. Your contribution will directly support our programs, allowing us to reach more young men and their families, providing them with the mentorship and guidance they need to thrive.

### Your end-of-year donation will help us:

- Expand our in-school mentorship program to more schools and students
- Enhance our bi-weekly mentorship sessions with new resources and activities
- Develop the Stronger Than My Father Youth and Family Center
- Provide training and support for our dedicated mentors
- Launch new initiatives focused on entrepreneurship and leadership skills

Together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of these young men and help them achieve their full potential. Thank you for being a part of the Stronger Than My Father family. With your continued support, we look forward to another year of growth, learning, and transformation.

*Sincerely, Marcus Meneese*

*Founder and Executive Director, Stronger Than My Father, Inc.*

*Donate Today! Your generosity makes our work possible. To make an end-of-year donation, please visit [www.strongerthanmyfather.org](http://www.strongerthanmyfather.org) or contact us at 615-818-0608. Thank you for your support!*

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## MISSION MAKERS

### Sharing Holiday Joy: Michael Craddock's Smile for Christmas

The holidays are a time of joy, hope, and transformation. For Michael Craddock, this season became one he would never forget. Michael, a man with a profound story of resilience, was chosen as the recipient of Solace Oral Surgery's annual \*Smile for Christmas\* giveaway. Under the expert care of Dr. Romero and his compassionate team, Michael's journey to a radiant new smile mirrored his path to recovery and redemption.

Michael's life had been a challenging road marred by drug addiction and incarceration. At his lowest point, he felt trapped in a cycle that robbed him of his freedom, dignity, and even his smile. But Michael's story is one of triumph over adversity, fueled by faith and the unwavering support of Nashville-based prison ministry, Men of Valor.

#### From Despair to Purpose

Founded two decades ago, Men of Valor's mission is to transform the lives of incarcerated men and reduce recidivism through a Christ-centered approach. Their Jericho discipleship program provides mentorship, life skills, job training, and aftercare support. For Michael, this program became a lifeline.

The results of Men of Valor's work are extraordinary: while the national recidivism rate hovers around 70%, only 15% of participants return to prison. This incredible success is attributed to their holistic approach, which includes providing housing, job placement, and emotional support. Michael graduated from the program with a renewed sense of purpose, a stable job as an electronics supervisor, and 44 months of sobriety. "I'm proud to be a positive influence on society instead of a drain," Michael says. His transformation has inspired countless others, proving that change is possible for anyone willing to take the first step.

#### A Gift That Transforms

Michael's journey took another remarkable turn when Men of Valor nominated him for Solace Oral Surgery's \*Smile for Christmas\* program. Each year, Dr. Romero and his team select one deserving individual to receive the gift of a new smile through advanced dental implants. This initiative is more than a dental procedure—it's an opportunity to restore confidence, dignity, and hope to someone in need.

When Michael learned he had been chosen, he was overwhelmed with gratitude. Years of addiction and poor dental health had left him self-conscious and unable to enjoy simple pleasures like smiling or eating certain foods. Winning the \*Smile for Christmas\* giveaway felt like a divine blessing, another step toward reclaiming his life.

The process began with thorough preparation. Michael recalls his experience with the team at Solace Oral Surgery as nothing short of "awesome." From the initial consultation to his interim denture fitting, he felt supported every step of the way. "The staff are friendly, courteous, and explain everything from start to finish," Michael shares.

The interim denture served as a preview of the permanent smile that awaited him, and he couldn't wait to see the final result. More than just aesthetics, this new smile would allow him to enjoy the little things many take for granted, like biting into an apple or laughing without hesitation.

#### A New Chapter, Inside and Out

Michael's transformation wasn't limited to his smile. Since April of that year, he had lost 60 pounds, further reflecting his commitment to a healthier, happier life. He eagerly anticipated the confidence his new smile would bring, knowing it would complement the joy and purpose he had already found.

"God has blessed me with happiness," Michael says. "Even if I didn't have the surgery, I would still be happy." But now, his radiant new smile would reflect the inner joy and resilience he worked so hard to achieve.

Michael's story is a testament to the power of community, faith, and the generosity of programs like \*Smile for Christmas\*. For Dr. Romero and the team at Solace Oral Surgery, it's not just about transforming smiles; it's about transforming lives.

#### Looking Ahead: Who Will Be Next?

This holiday season, Solace Oral Surgery is once again inviting individuals to share their stories for the \*Smile for Christmas\* program. Dr. Romero and his team are seeking candidates whose lives would be forever changed by the gift of a new smile.

Whether it's someone overcoming personal challenges, pursuing a fresh start, or simply in need of a boost to reclaim their confidence, the program aims to make a meaningful difference. By the end of the year, one deserving individual will be chosen to receive a life-changing smile, just as Michael did.

#### Share Your Story

If you or someone you know could benefit from this incredible opportunity, Solace Oral Surgery wants to hear from you. Share your personal story of how a new smile could change your life and inspire others. The deadline to submit is fast approaching, so don't miss this chance to be part of something extraordinary.

Michael's journey serves as a reminder of the power of hope, faith, and the kindness of others. His new smile is not just a symbol of his transformation but also a beacon of what's possible when people come together to uplift those in need. This holiday season, let's continue to spread joy and transform lives—one smile at a time.

To learn more about the \*Smile for Christmas\* program, dental implants or ALL-ON-4 at Solace Oral Surgery and Implant Center, call (615) 320-1392 or visit the office today.

— Eva Angelina Romero,  
Co-Owner/Operations  
[www.solaceoralsurgery.com](http://www.solaceoralsurgery.com)  
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**The First Hour for Men**



Scan this code to purchase *The First Hour for Men*.

At its core, the book presents the concept of "First Fruits," inspired by biblical teachings that prioritize giving the first and best to God. Just as the Bible encourages believers to tithe the first portion of their income, *The First Hour for Men* calls on men to dedicate the first and most focused part of their day to nurturing their relationship with God. This practice is not merely an act of devotion but a means of aligning one's priorities with God's will,

The *First Hour for Men* is a spiritual guide designed to help men establish a meaningful, consistent connection with God by dedicating the first hour of their day to prayer, reflection, and scripture. Authored with the understanding of the unique challenges men face in balancing faith, work, family, and personal responsibilities, the book emphasizes the power of a disciplined morning routine in fostering spiritual growth and resilience.

setting a spiritual foundation for the rest of the day.

The book breaks down the first hour into practical, actionable steps. These include:

- 1. Prayer:** A time of honest communication with God, where men can express gratitude, seek guidance, and surrender their worries and ambitions.
- 2. Scripture Reading:** Meditating on God's Word to gain wisdom, direction, and encouragement. This practice grounds men in biblical truth and equips them to face life's challenges.
- 3. Reflection and Application:** A moment to internalize the lessons from scripture and prayer, considering how they can be lived out in daily decisions, relationships, and responsibilities. Throughout the book, the author weaves in personal anecdotes and testimonies, illustrating how this morning discipline has transformed lives. Real-life examples demonstrate how starting the day with God can bring clarity in decision-making, peace in the midst of stress, and strength to resist temptations.

In addition to the daily routine, *The First Hour for Men* addresses topics specific to men's spiritual leadership. It challenges men to embrace their

roles as spiritual heads of their households, cultivating an environment where faith thrives. It also encourages accountability through relationships with other men, fostering a community where struggles, victories, and growth are shared openly. What sets *The First Hour for Men* apart is its practicality and relevance. It acknowledges the demands of modern life and provides strategies to overcome excuses, distractions, and time constraints. By presenting a structured yet flexible approach, it ensures that men can adapt this practice to their individual schedules without losing its spiritual essence.

The book closes with a powerful call to action, urging men to commit to this transformative habit and to inspire others to do the same. *The First Hour for Men* is not merely a devotional guide but a movement aimed at strengthening families, churches, and communities through the spiritual leadership of men who start their day with God. By committing the first hour to God, men can experience profound changes not just in their personal lives but also in their relationships, careers, and influence, becoming the faithful and courageous leaders God has called them to be. ✚



## MISSION MAKERS

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### Lives Changed Through the Programs of The Salvation Army: Meet Monique

Monique decided to move to Murfreesboro to provide her daughter with the opportunity to live near her father. Unfortunately, she did not budget enough money to keep them in a hotel until a job and apartment could be attained. She reached out to The Salvation Army when she knew they would soon be without a place to live. On the last day of their hotel stay, The Salvation Army called and said they had a room ready for them to move into. “They provided a level of comfort with not having to worry about where we were going to go or where our next meal was going to come from,” said Monique.

During their stay, Monique secured a job with only one catch – she had to work remotely. The Salvation Army set up a space for her so she could take the job. Within a month of starting her job, she had also found an apartment for her family. “The Salvation Army was there to break our fall. Get me back to the place where I could live independently and have some stability,” she said. “I feel like I am on my way. I’m thankful to The Salvation Army because it’s the kindness of people who don’t know you. Just that you’re a human being that needed help.”

— Misty Ratcliff, Development and Communications Manager  
The Salvation Army Nashville Area Command, [uss.salvationarmy.org](http://uss.salvationarmy.org)

## MONEY MATTERS

### Most Americans Do Not Know the Answers to these 4 Very Important Questions, Do You?

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3. If I am not yet retired, how long will I have to work in order for me to live at my current standard of living and have it to last till life expectancy?
4. If I don’t do anything different from what I am doing today, how much will my current standard of living have to be decreased in order for my money to last till life expectancy?

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— J. Graves

## BEST BOOKS

### Gift-Worthy Reads for Christmas

Books are the perfect Christmas gift. Does your little one like bugs? Look for books about bugs. Do you want your kids to read the Bible? Buy an age-appropriate one. Do you want to hold family devotions? Purchase a devotional that appeals to the whole family. Below are some new (and a few old) releases for children.



*Share the Joy! A Christmas Lift-the-Flap Book* by Valerie Ellis. With a focus on kindness and generosity, this interactive book celebrates all the wonderful things that bring us joy at Christmastime! Charming rhymes and vibrant illustrations will entice little readers to lift the flap to learn how to share the gift of Jesus’s birth with everyone (ages 0-4).

*My Tender Heart Devotions* by Laura Sassi. These short devotions are perfect for toddlers and preschoolers. Each reading includes a short poem, a connection to Jesus, a scripture, and a heart moment where the child can apply what he’s learned. If you want to introduce your little one to basic

truths, these 52 Bible-based reflections were created for your family (ages 0-6).

*Discovering Christmas* by Amanda Jass. This 25-day devotional includes the nativity story, conversation prompts, prayers, and mess-free family activities. Each devotion is written in literal language that kids can understand and features winsome and diverse illustrations. Light a flame of hope in young hearts this Advent (ages 4-8).

*Marvelously, Wonderfully Brown* by Xochitl Dixon. This gorgeously illustrated book celebrates God’s creativity and combats lies that fuel prejudice. Kids will discover that God designed the perfect skin color for each of His beautifully diverse image-bearers, and He loves every spectacular shade of brown (ages 4-7).

*The Compassion Storybook Bible*. The authors highlight God’s kindness and compassion in 52 Bible stories. Each story shines a light on the theme of compassion, with God as the originator and provider of this much-needed lovingkindness. It is a tender book with future ramifications of gracious fruit (ages 5-10).

*Go Bible* is the complete Bible written in the New Living Translation (easy to read and understand). The book introductions and unique features condense complex topics and large amounts of text into small but potent, age-appropriate, kid-friendly concepts. I’m a BIG fan of the Go Bible (ages 5-10).

*Moonlite Storytime: The Bible Story Collection*. While not a physical book, this relatively new company blends technology with books. Think of the classic View-Master. The Moonlight projector projects each spread of a book on a wall using the light app on your phone. Fun sound effects are included with each book disk. The four stories in this collection are Christmas, Daniel in the Lions’ Den, Noah’s Ark, and Easter. Kids will think grandparents are cool with this gift!

— Sally Cressman is the author of “The Dance of Easter.” She’s offering family conversation starters for the holidays when you sign up for her email list at [www.sallycressman.com](http://www.sallycressman.com).





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### “Hate Your Neighbor as You Hate Yourself.”

As I looked into his big blue, tearful eyes, I knew I would never forget that moment. His distraught expression was one I had seen many times, but this was the first time I had seen it on a child. The week before, Bentley had delivered a handwritten apology after he lost his temper and kicked a hole in the wall of his bedroom. Honestly, he was such a thin, wiry boy, it was hard to imagine he had the strength to do such a thing. But apparently, he could become strong as an ox if his temper got out of control.

That’s exactly what had happened, which resulted in the damage to the wall. When we picked apart the incident, it was a series of disappointments and frustrations that created the perfect storm for a child like Bentley. So, it was no wonder he spiraled out of control so quickly.

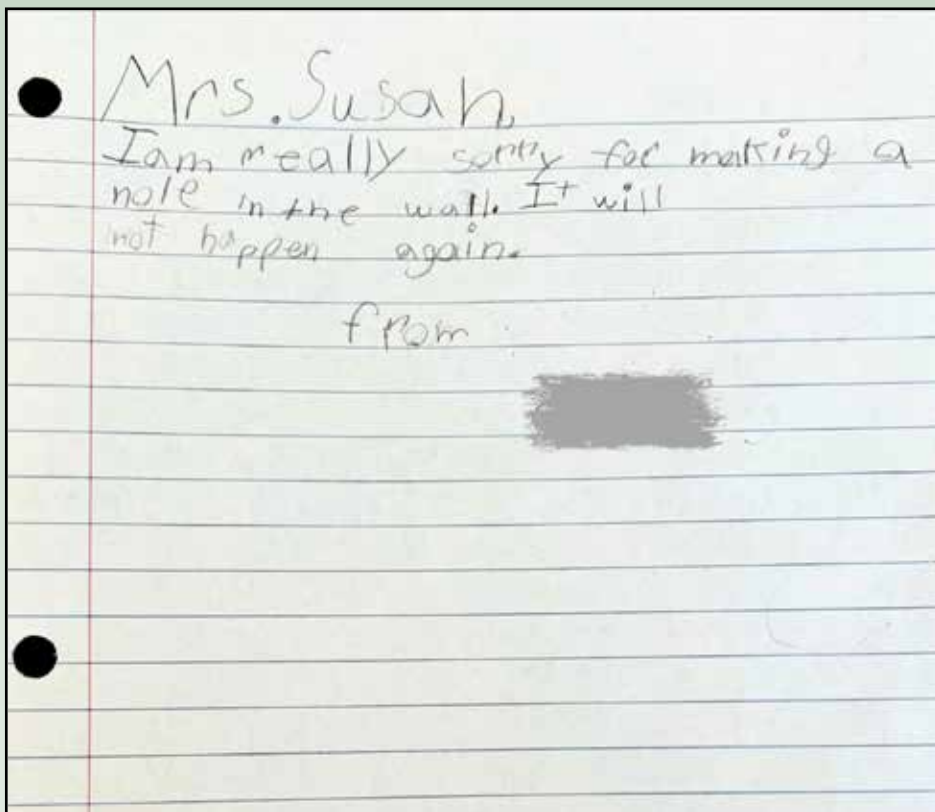
But even though Bentley’s apology note was sincere when he wrote it, he repeated the same thing only a few days later. And here he was in my office again with another apology.

The look in his eyes, as he stared into my own, was packed full of emotions. His expression screamed a desperate, “Why do I do this?!” He was genuinely sorry for what he had done. I could see his pain. But I could also see the shame, disappointment in his own actions, and hopelessness that whatever caused him to act like this might never go away. For the first time I found myself telling a child what I tell our moms all the time. “The way you feel today is temporary. I promise you won’t feel this way the rest of your life.”

In that moment, I had a brief vision of Bentley as an adult, perhaps delivering a similar apology to a future spouse after an angry outburst. I felt an urgency to stop the madness before he became a man, and we had a priceless opportunity to do so. You see, like many of the children we serve, Bentley had experienced heartache, tremendous loss, rejection, and profound trauma that for some, could stretch an entire lifetime. But for him, they were packed into only a few short years leaving him older than his age.

One time, when we invited local police officers to visit our campus, they taught our kids how to use 911 in the case of an emergency. I wondered if they were prepared for Bentley’s immediate response: “I called 911 when my baby sister died!” He was barely old enough to understand how to use a phone when that tragic incident happened. It was probably that very day that Bentley felt the need to become a man – way before his time. No wonder he was angry. And no wonder it was so difficult for him to get that serious, intense look off his face and just be a kid.

You would think after all these years I would no longer have “Ah-Ha” moments. But I had one recently that beautifully sums up everything we do at Blue Monarch. In the Bible, Jesus talks about the greatest commandment,



which is to love God more than anyone or anything, and to always put him first. Well, that one sentence wraps up why some of our graduates are successful while others struggle. The ones who put him at the very center of every decision, every relationship, and every action become absolute rock stars, and they struggle less than the ones who don’t make God a priority. They experience blessings and opportunities that are remarkable and sometimes even surprising.

But Jesus also said the second commandment was just as important - to love others as we love ourselves. And there it is. The women – and the children we serve, don’t love themselves so, it’s very difficult to love anyone else. How can a woman love her child when she doesn’t even love herself? And how can a child love

his mom or others if he doesn’t love himself? After all, “Love your neighbor as yourself” isn’t a good thing if you hate yourself. It becomes “Hate your neighbor as yourself,” which explains a lot.

We strive to teach the Bentleys of Blue Monarch they are worthy of love, not just from others, but from themselves as well. Through time, patience, and intentional therapy, we walk alongside each child as he discovers who he is, what he loves and enjoys, and that he can even like himself.

And we teach the moms to forgive themselves, (after all, God has forgiven them), and to love themselves, too. It’s exciting to see a woman gradually discover who she really is – unique and beautiful. She begins to fall in love with the face in the mirror as if she is looking at herself for the very first time.

As it states in the Bible, if we get these two commandments right, the others will naturally fall into place. And that is exactly what we see at Blue Monarch. Putting God at the center grounds and protects every decision. Then, “Love your neighbor as yourself” becomes the piece that is so powerful, it literally changes the next generation. And with time, I believe in my heart it will change Bentley’s family as well.

Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. The second, most important is similar: “Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.” All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets stem from these two laws and are fulfilled if you obey them. Keep only these and you will find that you are obeying all the others.” Matthew 22:37-40

— Susan Binkley, Founder and President of Blue Monarch Long-term, residential recovery program for women and their children. 931.924.8900  
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# Danica McKellar

## & the Wonder of Cozy Christmas Movies

An entire generation of television watchers know Danica McKellar as one of the stars of the 1980s television show *The Wonder Years*. Her portrayal of young Winnie Cooper was delicate and heartwarming and one of the main reasons the Emmy Award-winning show is still beloved. Now McKellar is beloved for another kind of role, as she's become one of the most popular leading ladies in the ever-popular Christmas movie genre. She says that these roles- first on the Hallmark Channel, and now on the faith-based Great American Family television network- are what gives her particular joy. They represent, she said, the kind of behavior model she wants to set and the kind of entertainment programming there needs to be more of today.

**A Cinderella Christmas Ball.** McKellar stars in a new Christmas movie to premiere on Black Friday (November 29) called *A Cinderella Christmas Ball*. In the movie, McKellar plays Chelsea Jones, a dance instructor from Chicago who travels to a fictional European country to learn more about her long-lost birth parents. While there, she has to teach a stubborn prince (played by Oliver Rice) to dance in preparation for a royal ball designed to help him find a wife. "It's the story of a woman who is trying to find her biological father, and she has a heart for foster kids," McKellar said. "She finds a clue

before Christmas about her father, and it takes her to Havenshire. The search isn't going well so she gets a job as a dance teacher to help this very reluctant prince. And he helps me on this emotional journey to find my father while helping me learn to dance." Over the years, McKellar starred in 18 movies for the Hallmark Channel. She's played the main character in Christmas movies, but also mysteries and romantic comedies. The movies have always been inspiring, but now the movies she stars in are even more faith centric. "I've been associated with wholesome television since I was a kid," she said. "It started on *The Wonder Years*, and that's what feels best. I've played roles that don't show human nature in the best light, and I don't want to do that anymore. I want to lift people up." McKellar said she was in her 30s when she asked herself what sort of stories she wanted to tell through her acting. "What do I want to spend time doing? What kind of stories do I want to put in people's living rooms?" she asked herself. "It's so rewarding to have roles that model good behavior." McKellar, who has authored numerous educational math books



**Danica, 49, was born in California and has been married to lawyer Scott Sveslosky since 2014. Her son, Draco, is 14 and Danica said she loves homeschooling and spending time with her teenager. Left to Right: Mom Mahaila McKellar, son Draco, Danica, and husband, Scott.**



**Danica loved the element of dancing in *A Cinderella Christmas Ball*, which had two dances choreographed for it by *Dancing with the Stars* professional dancer Gleb Savchenko. McKellar herself competed on the dancing reality show in 2014 and finished in sixth place.**

for kids and teenagers (she took a break from acting and graduated summa cum laude from UCLA with a degree in mathematics), served as a writer on her latest Christmas movie and is looking toward writing more in the future. "I write educational books for kids, making math fun, and have written high school geometry textbooks," she said. "But I've also been an actress forever, read a billion scripts, and have ideas for movies with more faith involved."

### **The Wonder of Christmas Movies.**

McKellar said that she appreciates how much people love Christmas movies; in fact, they've become an important holiday tradition for many. "People love the cozy Christmas movies, the cozy rom-coms, the cozy mysteries," she said. "People talk

about how they're an escape. The world gets crazier and more divided all the time, so they do offer an escape. But I think these movies do even more than provide an escape." She said that the movies model a certain kind of behavior and show what human nature can be. "They show what's possible when you want to do the right thing," she said. "Yes, you have struggles,

but you want to do it the right way and do the right thing. These are standards that mostly we don't get to see on TV." According to Bill Abbott, the President and CEO of Great American Media (home to the Great American Family Network and other family-friendly entertainment brands), his company focuses on Christmas "as it's meant to be." The former Hallmark Channel executive who has been instrumental in creating the fastest growing network on television over the last year said that Great American Family's Christmas movies recognize that the true celebration of the season is the birth of Christ. "We know that the focus of the season is religious. It's not commercial, but thoughtful and thought provoking," Abbott said. "We're not going to run away from faith. We're unabashed and proud of faith, family, and country." He said that fans of such Christmas movies are passionate, and they've helped make the network and streaming service extremely successful. "We're proud to now be a big part of creating Christmas movies," he said. "We have a rabid fan base that loves what we do." Abbott credits Great American Family's slate of celebrities as one reason that fans are drawn to its movies, television shows, and other programming. In addition to McKellar, the company features Candace Cameron Bure among other stars. "Candace, Danica, and our other celebrities are so ideal for what we represent. They are different from what else we see in Hollywood," he said. "And it's no surprise that many of them were childhood stars. There's a nostalgia there, and they represent our brand really well."

McKellar said that she's thankful to work with Great American Family. "I love the movies, and I love the family," she said. "It's a dream." McKellar worked with Abbott at Hallmark, and she credits him for reviving her career and for making her such a big part of the Christmas movie genre. While McKellar calls Abbott the "mind behind the Christmas movie phenomenon," he himself said there were a number of people who deserve credit for the popular trend. He and others recognized that Christmas is all about tradition- whether it's meeting with family, making cookies, ice skating, celebrating with music, and other common tropes of the genre- and holiday movies extend the tradition even further. "Christmas moves are a great way to embrace the season," he said. At Great American Media- the home of Great American Family, Great American Faith, Great American Adventures, and Pure Flix- those movies are closely acquainted with faith. "There are so many ways to tell stories with faith in them," McKellar said. "Some have faith on the side. Maybe we see that the character has faith, and they lean on it through the story. Or maybe they go through



**Christmas movies from Great American Family can be watched on its network through streaming services such as Sling, Fubo TV, Hulu and PureFlix. They began airing in October and will continue through Christmas Day.**



**Right before Christmas, Chelsea Jones (McKellar) finds a mysterious photo that takes her on a journey. The photo's handwritten inscription reads, "Our place, Havenshire, December 23, 1984." With only the internet, a plane ticket, and lifelong determination to go on, Chelsea now has four days in Havenshire to solve the mystery of her birth family. Along the way, she'll have to sneak into a castle, teach a stubborn Prince how to dance, and be in just the right place on Christmas Eve when the bells toll.**

be live-tweeting during the movie. "For many people it's the first acceptable day to start celebrating Christmas," Abbott said that he loves the Christmas season, and he has excitement for the projects his company has in store for this year and beyond. "I'm a huge Christmas fan," he said. "I've always loved the music, and the season, and the feeling of home." This year, the network is hosting a Christmas Festival in New York City featuring meet-and-greets with its brand talent, movie screenings, Christmas experiences, a Santa village, and much more. And on the networks and online, Great American Media has 18 Christmas movies featured for 2024. At [www.greatamericanfamily.com](http://www.greatamericanfamily.com), visitors can find almost 100 Christmas programs in total. And the network is already getting ready for 2025, with plans for brand-new Christmas movies. "We're always looking to elevate the quality of our content," Abbott said. "We'll focus on both faith and family, and we have some really high-quality movies coming next year." With the Christmas season just around the corner, that's good news for everyone who loves cozy stories with a message of faith.

a faith journey. Whatever it is, I'm interested in stories that explore faith itself"

**Focus on Faith.** For McKellar, faith has been a relatively new part of her life. "I've only been on my faith journey for about two and a half years," she said. "I'm now on my second time reading through the Bible, and I used to have the impression that it was sort of long and boring and a list of rules. But it's filled with all sorts of things, and it's really fun to get into it." McKellar, who has been married to her lawyer husband Scott Sveslosky since 2014 and homeschools her teenage son, said that she's interested now in sharing her faith through her acting projects. She's found herself watching many of Pure Flix's faith-based programs and has been inspired to develop similar ideas for movies in the future. Abbott also credits his faith for all of his plans and priorities. He grew up in a Christian family with parents who instilled a mentality about the way you treat others. His father was in the military, so he learned early that faith, country, and character were of utmost importance. "I'm very blessed to do what I do," he said, "and to focus on faith."

**Getting Ready for Christmas.** Both McKellar and Abbott say they love the Christmas season and look forward to their upcoming Christmas projects, and the season in general. McKellar said she usually gets ready for Christmas even before Thanksgiving has arrived, and this year looks forward to the premiere of *A Cinderella Christmas Ball*. "I love that it will premiere on Black Friday," she said, noting that she'll

— Cheryl Wray

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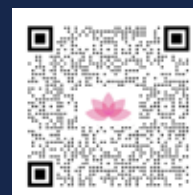
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**Bathroom:** Pull all bath towels and mats and take to laundry room; start a load. Back in the bathroom, fill a spray bottle with equal parts vinegar and hot water. Spray shower/tub walls and floor, plus toilet, then let sit. Fill another spray bottle with ¼ cup vinegar, ½ tsp. dishwashing soap and 2 cups water. Apply to mirrors, then wipe with paper towels. Apply the diluted vinegar to countertops and fixtures, then wipe with a cloth. Scrub shower/tub walls and floor, plus toilet, with a hard-bristle brush, then rinse. Sweep, then mop floor with appropriate product. Return freshly laundered towels and mats to their proper places. Tip: To remove hard-water stains, soak paper towels in undiluted vinegar and place on buildup. Leave overnight, then scrub and rinse.

**Kitchen:** Pull all dishtowels and take to laundry room; start a load. Take any rugs outside to shake, then vacuum. Remove all food from pantry and refrigerator, throwing out expired items as you go. Spray all surfaces, including exterior of fridge and pantry shelves, with diluted vinegar used in bathroom, then wipe with a cloth. Put back remaining items. Place any stovetop burners in a sinkful of soapy hot water. Spray all countertops and appliances, both large and small, with diluted vinegar, then wipe with a cloth. Pull any appliances you can away from wall, then sweep behind. Push back and sweep remaining floor area. Mop with appropriate product. Bring back freshly laundered dishtowels and vacuumed rugs. Don't Forget: Light fixtures, ceiling fans, blinds & cabinets — Dust with a damp cloth prior to performing chores in a room. Oven — Run the self-cleaning cycle. Avoid fumes by setting the cycle and heading outside with any small children or pets.



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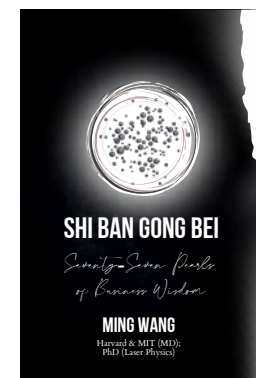


### Dr. Ming Wang Hosts Monthly Zoom To Describe His Efficiency “Shi Ban Gong Bei (How To Accomplish Double In Half Of The Time) Pearls!

Dr. Ming Wang's (the subject of the movie “Sight” ([angel.com/sight](http://angel.com/sight)) 25th book, *Shi Ban Gong Bei (How to accomplish double in half of the time!)* – 77 Pearls of Business Wisdom has been widely and well received. He has been conducting a monthly Shi Ban Gong Bei zoom, on the 3rd Wed 7:30pm CT and the next one is 12/18 Wed 7:30pm CT (563 211 2348 (0524 2024))! RSVP [drwang@wangvisioninstitute.com](mailto:drwang@wangvisioninstitute.com)

“This book can improve your efficiency 10 folds, i.e., up to 1,000%”, Dr. Wang explained, who is a world-renowned laser vision surgeon and a Harvard & MIT graduate (MD, magna cum laude) and is one of the few laser vision surgeons in the world today who holds a doctorate degree in laser physics. He explains why the SBGB book can help you improve your efficiency 10 times. “As human beings, we are 90% emotional and irrational and only 10% are logical. Further more our irrationality is actually predictable. Hence, we can identify human irrational (but predictable) behaviors and devise rational and logical solution to improve ourselves. Since 90% of ourselves are irrational, converting that to rational will thus improve the efficiency of what we do 10 times or 1,000%”

Dr. Wang has spent decades of his life and identified 77 irrational (but predictable) human behaviors and in the *Shi Ban Gong Bei* book, he pointed our rational and effective solutions. *Shi Ban Gong Bei* is an ancient Chinese saying of accomplishing double in half of the time, and Dr. Wang said that by combining the best from the East and West has enabled him to devise these 77 ways to improve the efficiency of what we all do in today's world. “My friends often ask me: ‘Ming do you have 48 eyes in a day or what?’ And my answer often surprises them: ‘Sometimes I feel like I have 72 or 96 hrs in a day’. And they ask: ‘How’ And my answer is ‘Shi Ban Gong Bei!’”



#### About Dr. Ming Wang, MD, PhD

Dr. Ming Wang, Harvard & MIT (MD, magna cum laude); PhD (laser physics), is a world-renowned laser eye surgeon, philanthropist, and a co-founder of the Common Ground Network. As a teenager, Ming fought valiantly to escape China's Cultural Revolution – during which millions of innocent youth were deported to remote areas to face a life sentence of hard labor and poverty. He came to America with only \$50 and earned two doctorate degrees, one in laser physics and one in medicine, and graduated with the highest honors from Harvard Medical School and MIT.

The amniotic membrane contact lens, which Dr. Wang has invented (and holds two U.S. patents), has been used by tens of thousands of eye doctors throughout the world in nearly every nation, and millions have had their eyesight restored. Wang Foundation for Sight Restoration has helped patients from over 40 states in the U.S. and 55 countries, with all sight restoration surgeries performed free-of-charge. Dr. Wang was named the Kiwanis Nashvillian of the Year for his lifelong dedication to help blind orphaned children from around the world. The film “Sight” is based on Dr. Wang's autobiography “From Darkness to Sight” and co-stars Greg Kinnear. To reach Dr. Ming Wang: [drwang@wangvisioninstitute.com](mailto:drwang@wangvisioninstitute.com), [www.drmingwang.com](http://www.drmingwang.com).

— Leona Walthorn

### God's Word is Already Settled

Psalm 119:89 (NKJV), *“Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven”*. Everything Jesus did for us, He did it on the cross. He settled sickness while he hung on the cross. 1 Peter 2:24b, *“By whose stripes ye were healed”*. Our bodies may present contrary information. This is where we either believe what the Bible tells us, or we believe how we “feel”. This is the essence of faith. *“Let God be true and every man a liar”*. God's word has been settled!



It is difficult to believe otherwise if our body is in pain or showing signs of sickness. As faith followers, we do not pretend that we are not sick and hope that it goes away. We can acknowledge the sickness but in the same breath, realize that it has no right to invade our body, and it is trespassing. Do not bring it in and let it set up shop. It becomes a fight. *“The violent take it by storm”*. Do not give up and give in - keep fighting for what Jesus already did for you on the cross.

All healings are good and there is not a wrong way to be healed. We have seen people get delivered immediately from sickness and then other times, it may be a slow process. While Christ has come for all to destroy the works of Satan – the healing process is not necessarily, *“one size fits all”*. Each walk of faith is personal and individual. Thankfully, God's grace meets us where we are.

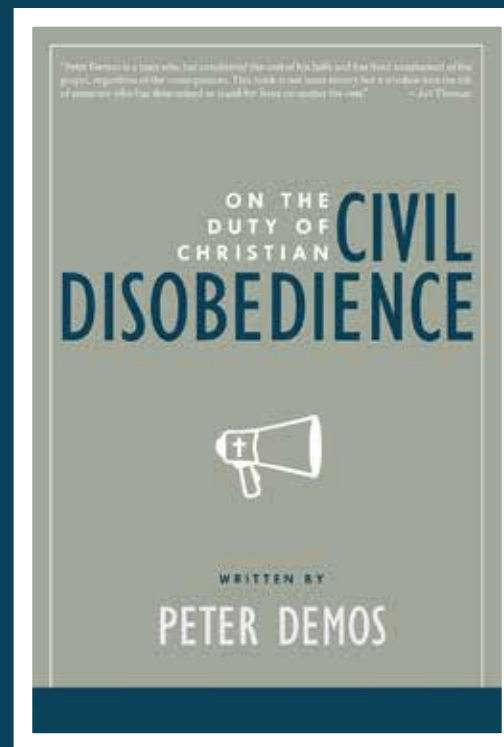
Why is it that well meaning Christians fight for their right to be sick and not accept what Jesus did on the cross nor believe that all healings are our *“God-given”* right? It is sometimes easier to accept the sickness than to believe otherwise. If they have not experienced healing personally, they perhaps believe it doesn't exist. It is easy to allow personal experiences and personal knowledge to go above the Word of God.

If God said it, it is true. If it is in the Bible, it is true. Instead of finding ways to support sickness, step out and faith and believe the Word of God – it has already been settled.

This Christmas season, enjoy all the gifts that God has given you! God's Word has already been settled in heaven. Now enjoy it on earth!

Merry Christmas!

— Rhonda Smart, [rhondalsmart@gmail.com](mailto:rhondalsmart@gmail.com)



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## Empowering the Next Generation: Raising Resilient and Compassionate Youth

As parents, guardians, and community members, we are committed to shaping the future of our youth, God's legacy. We want them to grow, succeed, and have a positive impact on the world. But in today's fast-paced, ever-changing landscape, how can we equip young people with the skills, values, and resilience they need to meet life's challenges? For the Martin family, it all starts with intentional parenting. As the parents of two teenagers, they made a conscious decision to prioritize family time, open communication, and community involvement. Resilience is essential to overcoming adversity and is developed through experience, relationships, and mindset. The Martins encourage their children to take calculated risks, view failure as an opportunity to learn, and hone their problem-solving skills.

### The Power of Positive Relationships

Positive relationships are essential to a young person's development. The Martins have built strong relationships with their children, actively listening to them, validating their feelings, and offering advice. They also encourage relationships with extended family, mentors, and peers, recognizing the value of diverse perspectives and support networks.

### Compassion in Action

Compassion is a key component of empathy, kindness, and social responsibility. The Martins involved their children in volunteer work, community service, and social activities, teaching them to look beyond their own experiences. They developed a deeper understanding of social issues, empathy for others, and a desire to make a difference.

### Navigating Technology and Social Media

In today's digital age, young people face unique challenges. The Martins approach technology and social media by setting boundaries, encouraging responsible use, and engaging in open discussions. In doing so, they learn how to navigate the online environment critically, maintain healthy relationships, and respect themselves.

### Promoting a growth mindset

A growth mindset allows teens to see challenges as opportunities for growth. Martins encourages experimentation, learning from failure, and perseverance. They developed a passion for learning, viewing challenges as stepping stones to success.

### Community Involvement

Community involvement helps young people develop a sense of belonging and social responsibility. The Lartin family participates in local events, participates in community organizations, and supports neighborhood initiatives. Joyce and John learned the value of civic engagement, leadership, and collaboration. In short, empowering the next generation takes effort, dedication, and community support.

By encouraging resilience, positive relationships, compassion, and a growth mindset, we can train young people who are equipped to succeed in an ever-changing world. The Martin family's story is a testament to the power of intentional parenting and community engagement. As we strive to empower our youth, let us remember that every interaction, every conversation, every experience shapes their future. May we continue to nurture, guide, support, and empower our youth to become the compassionate, responsible, and successful leaders of tomorrow.

— Emmanuel O. Afolabi, a seasoned teacher, blogger, author, and Minister of the Gospel, held a Certificate in Christian ministry from Life Bible College, Lagos.

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# SCROOGE

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# Nashville to Asheville with Love



**RICK & DEBBIE MASSIE**  
NASHVILLE TO ASHEVILLE WITH LOVE

It is so hard to describe the impact of seeing the devastation of Hurricane Helene. To see how people are struggling to survive, especially with the extreme Winter weather upon them, is overwhelming. I really can't imagine the deep grief of losing my loved ones, with some still missing and most likely to never be found. And then to add losing everything you've worked for, and for so many who are not young, is inconceivable. After seeing such a tragedy, I could not come home and just live my "happy" life - it bothered me too much! One recipient of a trailer said to me "if you can do anything for us, please go back and tell them the truth". The truth is they have utilized thousands of body bags, and many people are still missing and unaccounted for. People are getting little to no help, in fact, some say FEMA is denying them help. Because of our long-time friendship with Matt & Michelle Coleman we knew the right place to go. As founders of the Asheville Dream Center, filled with a heart for the underprivileged of Asheville, they were already helping those in need before this unfortunate tragedy happened, and they will continue to be there long after. It's our privilege to partner with the Asheville Dream Center to help the people in Asheville and surrounding areas to have a warm place to call home, until their permanent homes can be rebuilt. Think about it, what would you do if this was your mother and father, your son or daughter? For so many families this devastation reaches the 2nd and 3rd generations. With thousands of people still in dire need, we are earnestly asking you to please help us to provide temporary housing during this critical time of crisis. We are sincerely grateful for your support!



**MATTHEW & MICHELLE COLEMAN**  
ASHEVILLE DREAM CENTER

Matthew serves as the President and CEO of the Asheville Dream Center and Michelle serves as the Executive Director. Matthew and Michelle Coleman are spiritual entrepreneurs with a strong background in outreach ministries in California and North Carolina. They met at the Los Angeles Dream Center, developed outreach initiatives through Destiny Church in Sacramento, and moved to Asheville in 2007.

God has given them great dreams and vision for this city. They are both very passionate about helping meet the physical and spiritual needs of people who have been through addiction, trauma, brokenness, poverty, and life-controlling issues. They both founded Asheville Dream Center in 2020.



## Asheville Dream Center

The mission of the Asheville Dream Center is facilitating spiritual, social, and economic transformation through the love of Jesus Christ in the greater Asheville region. The Dream Center collaborates with various community organizations to facilitate meeting the needs of families. Our current and future initiatives include:

- Men's and Women's Live In Recovery Programs
- Family Enrichment Programs
- Gun Violence Prevention
- Youth Mentoring programs
- Single Moms Ministry
- Community partnerships
- Project Prevention for at-risk families
- Education and Career readiness programs
- Re-entry programs
- Community Cleanups
- School enrichment intervention
- Drug Prevention and Intervention Fatherhood Initiatives
- Human Trafficking Prevention and Intervention

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## The Debris Holds Memories

Debris from Hurricane Helene holds memories; of childhoods, careers, happiness, sadness, family, fun, trials, and victories. To some that were affected by this storm, all they have left are memories. Homes destroyed, businesses wiped out, family members gone. Only the memories of what was remains. We can't stay strong without the help of one another. We must look after our brothers and sisters.



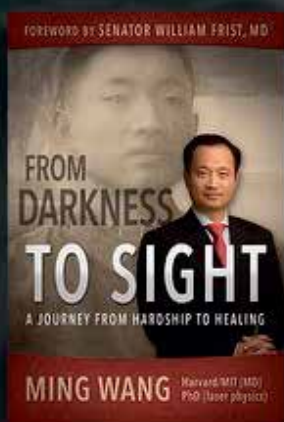
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The Whispers of Santa's Heart

*Christmastime is here,  
Happiness and cheer,  
Fun for all that children call  
Their favorite time of year.*

These familiar lines from Vince Guaraldi Trio's Charlie Brown Christmas bring smiles to many faces. (You're probably humming it now, aren't you?) For most, this is a season of joy, filled with laughter, family, and festive fun. But after nearly 40 years of wearing the big red suit, I've learned the season often holds not only joy but also sorrow—heartbreaking sorrow that Santa quietly hears year after year. As I write this, I'm moved to tears by the many stories carried in my heart.

When I began this journey, I never anticipated that God was preparing me for a ministry disguised as Santa Claus. People often say, "You can't mix Jesus and Santa," but deep down, I know Jesus is the reason I wear the suit. He is the true source of joy and the heart of this mission.

Early on, I realized Santa's role extends far beyond laughter and gifts. At an elementary school, a shy first-grader lingered at a distance, refusing to approach. After the visit, the principal confided that the little girl was living in an abusive household and had recently been placed with relatives. That moment opened my eyes to the profound responsibility I carried—not just to bring smiles but to notice the silent cries for help. From then on, I paid closer attention, looking for those who needed more than holiday cheer.

Another unforgettable moment came years later at a different school. I noticed a boy in a wheelchair, quietly watching from afar. He didn't plan to visit Santa—it was too difficult to get him on stage, and his family couldn't afford a photo. With some help, we got him up there, and I made sure his picture was taken—courtesy of the North Pole. Years later, I saw him again, now walking with prosthetic limbs, his face beaming with joy and resilience. It was a humbling reminder of how even small gestures can create lasting impact.

Over the years, Santa has heard countless "whispers of sorrow" from children and families. That first little girl wasn't the only one whose pain led to action. I've heard heartbreaking confessions—like a 13-year-old girl who revealed she was being abused. Together, we gathered the information needed to help her. These whispers, spoken softly and with trembling honesty, reveal deep needs that go far beyond toys.

I've also noticed a striking contrast: children who have much often ask for more, while those with little tend to ask for much less. One child simply wanted his parents to stop fighting. Another boy, through tears, begged Santa to help his dad quit smoking so he wouldn't die like Grandpa did. After talking with the father, I was later told he hadn't smoked since that day. It's



moments like these that remind me how every visit carries a deeper story.

Santa has been entrusted with countless secrets. Some children ask for shelter: "Santa, we live in our car," or "Grandma is taking care of us because Mommy won't come home." Others share family struggles: "Daddy lost his job, and we have to move." In hospitals, I've met families facing heartbreaking uncertainty. I remember one mother holding her newborn and whispering through tears, "We don't know if we'll be able to bring him home, but you made us smile tonight." That's why I visit—not just to spread joy, but to remind people they are seen, loved, and cared for.

Loss and grief often accompany my visits too. One family came shortly after their granddad, who had planned to bring the chil-

dren to see me, died in an accident. We laughed and reminisced about him, sharing stories of his love and faith. The visit ended with tears, but also with prayer for healing and comfort.

There have been widows, like the mother whose husband was killed in combat. With nothing for her children, she turned to Santa, and I gave what I could from my bag. Moments like these remind me that the greatest gifts are not wrapped in shiny paper but in presence, care, and compassion. This year, my team and I are traveling lighter, trusting God to provide as we go. We've been blessed with a hotel for the season, and we know the rest will come. If you feel called to help, your support would mean the world to us. (Contact details are available upon request.)

Each year brings new challenges and whispers of sorrow. While I can't share every story, one thing remains true: Santa's visits are more than joy and laughter—they are moments of connection, prayer, and healing. When you see Santa speaking softly with a child or family, know that there may be a deeper need. You might even catch a tear in his eye. I ask for your prayers—for the children, for their families, and for the whispered requests that only Santa hears.

*"My little children, let us not love with word or tongue, but in deed and in truth." — 1 John 3:18*

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

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## How Cold Weather Affects Crawl Spaces

As temperatures drop, cold weather can significantly impact the crawl space beneath your home, leading to potential problems that affect both comfort and structural integrity. Understanding how the cold affects this area can help you prevent costly damage and ensure your home remains warm and efficient.

### 1. Freezing Pipes

One of the most common issues in crawl spaces during cold weather is frozen pipes. Since crawl spaces are typically cooler than the rest of the home, the temperature can dip below freezing, causing pipes to freeze and potentially burst, leading to water damage and costly repairs.

### 2. Increased Moisture and Mold Growth

Cold air in the crawl space can cause condensation, which leads to excess moisture on beams, insulation, and flooring. This damp environment encourages mold growth, wood rot, and can even affect indoor air quality, making the home less healthy and comfortable.

### 3. Energy Loss

Without proper insulation, cold air entering through the crawl space can cause heat loss, making it harder for your heating system to maintain a comfortable temperature. This results in higher energy bills and a less energy-efficient home.

### 4. Structural Damage

Freezing and thawing cycles can cause the soil in and around your crawl space to shift. Over time, this can put pressure on your home's foundation, leading to cracks and possible structural damage.

### Protecting Your Crawl Space From Cold Weather

To prevent these issues, it's important to properly insulate and seal your crawl space. Consider encapsulation, which involves sealing the area with a vapor barrier and insulating the walls and floors. Additionally, sealing vents and ensuring proper drainage around the foundation can help protect the space from cold and moisture.



By addressing cold weather concerns in your crawl space, you can protect your home from potential damage and ensure it stays warm and energy-efficient during the winter months. We can help! Contact Frontier Foundation & Crawl Space Repair for a free quote and no-obligation inspection!

— Hannah Moulton, Content Marketing Specialist,  
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Single Parenting at Christmas

Single parenting is a journey that comes along with many unexpected challenges. One of the hard parts of being a single parent is sharing our children at the big holidays. Usually, I recommend that parents rotate the whole holiday instead of splitting it right down the middle. I also remind parents that you can celebrate any time of the year! I know that in my family, I tried to view all the holidays as a flexible format that could happen anytime, not just on the actual date.

One of the hardest things to manage during the holidays is alone time. When our kids are at the other parents' house, and we are alone – that is a critical part of single parenting. I encourage single parents to make a plan ahead of time to do something meaningful on each day the kids are away. Consider activities like volunteering at a homeless shelter or volunteering at a senior citizen's home. Many organizations need help this time of year and being part of the bigger community is always a blessing. If you know other single parents who are without their children at the same time, consider having a potluck and invite others that may be appreciate the invitation. Look for older people as well who may be without extended family nearby.



And more than anything else, having a happy goodbye helps children during the holidays. Kids need your permission to say goodbye and to know that you are supportive of them spending time with the other family. I encourage parents to give your kids your "emotional permission" to love everyone and especially to say goodbye to you at handoffs. When kids can come and go and not worry about their single parents being sad or alone, then kids will thrive between homes during the holidays.

One of the greatest "gifts" a single parent can give their children is the true freedom to love everyone in their life 365 days a year and the flexibility to enjoy holidays on different calendar days along the way!

For more ideas and articles about single parenting, or to take the "One Heart, Two Homes" video course, please come to our website at [www.CoparentingInternational.com](http://www.CoparentingInternational.com) -

— Tammy Daughtry, Founder of CoParenting International.  
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## HASSLE FREE ZONE

### How to Prevent Wildlife from Entering Your Property

As the weather cools off, critters like rodents, raccoons, squirrels, and bats start seeking out places that are warm, dry, and protected. Unfortunately, your home may become their perfect winter hideout, if they can get inside.

From squirrels in the attic to raccoons in the garage, wild animals can bring health hazards, property damage, and even legal issues. When it comes to controlling wildlife, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. To keep wild animals away from your home, follow these preventive measures:

#### Secure Entry Points

- Seal Gaps and Cracks: Animals can squeeze through surprisingly small spaces.

Inspect your home's foundation, roof, and walls for potential entry points.

- Install Chimney Caps and Vent Covers: These prevent birds, squirrels, and raccoons from nesting inside.

#### Yard Maintenance

- Trim Trees and Shrubs: Overhanging branches provide easy access to rooftops, where animals can find entry points.
- Keep the Yard Clean: Remove food sources, such as pet food, birdseed, or fallen fruits, which can attract animals.



#### Use Deterrents

- Motion-Activated Lights and Sprinklers: These can scare away nocturnal animals, such as raccoons and opossums.
- Scent-Based Repellents: Some animals dislike certain smells, like peppermint or ammonia, which can be used as deterrents.

However, these animals are sneaky and still manage to get inside no matter how hard we try. If you're facing wildlife issues on your property, reach out to Waynes Pest Control for professional, humane, and effective wildlife removal services in Nashville. Our experts are here to help you protect your home and restore peace of mind.

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— Rebecca Wood, Digital Marketing Specialist  
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### The Coming

The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word "adventus," which means "coming" or "arrival." Advent has been observed since at least the 4th century. Initially, it was a time for converts to Christianity to prepare for baptism. Over time, it became associated with the anticipation of Christ's incarnation, the celebration of His birth, and His second coming. The season of Advent begins on the Sunday closest to November 30 (St. Andrew's Day) and lasts until Christmas Eve. In the Catholic Church, Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical year. The season is characterized by themes of hope, penance, and spiritual renewal. The liturgical color for Advent is purple, symbolizing penance and preparation, except for the week of Gaudete Sunday.

Gaudete Sunday is the third Sunday of Advent in the liturgical calendar of Western Christianity, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, Lutheran churches, and other mainline Protestant churches. The term "Gaudete" comes from the Latin word for "rejoice," which is the first word of the introit of this day's Mass: "Gaudete in Domino semper"; Rejoice in the Lord always. It marks a joyful midpoint in the Advent season, which is otherwise a time of penance and preparation. The liturgical color for this day is rose, symbolizing joy and a break from the more somber purple used during the rest of Advent.

Advent was the early church's way of keeping the connections to Jewish traditions, particularly in its themes of anticipation and hope for the coming



of the Messiah. In Judaism, there is a long-standing expectation of the Messiah who will bring redemption. This sense of waiting and preparation is mirrored in the Christian observance of Advent, where Christians await the birth of Jesus, whom they believe to be the promised Messiah. Additionally, some Jewish followers of Jesus, known as Messianic Jews, observe Advent alongside traditional Jewish practices, blending elements from both faiths.

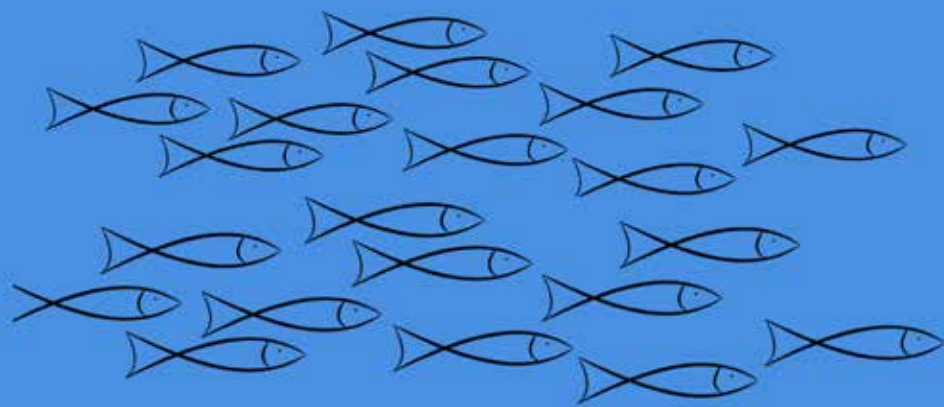
One of the most intriguing aspects of Advent is its dual focus on the joy of anticipation and our spiritual preparation. The Advent wreath, with its four candles, is a powerful symbol of the season. Each candle represents a different theme: hope, peace, joy, and love. Lighting a new candle each week builds a sense of anticipation and reflection.

Advent occurs during the darkest time of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, which makes the themes of light and darkness particularly poignant. The increasing light of the Advent candles symbolizes the coming of Christ, the Light of the World, dispelling the darkness.

These elements together create a rich tapestry of tradition, reflection, and celebration that makes Advent a deeply meaningful and intriguing time for many Christians.

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

## Find Christian Links



### Working together . . .

"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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## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### Multiplying Your Influence By Using Good Words

“Sticks and Stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” Do you remember that from your childhood? It was a response from our parents when we were verbally attacked, criticized, or otherwise made to feel bad by what someone said to us. It was probably helpful in nudging us off our hurt feelings. However, like Santa Clause and the Easter Bunny, it was untrue.

The truth lies in the opposite direction. While words may not break our bones, they can have a huge impact on our lives. On one hand, they can build us up and give us confidence and dedication, and on the other, they can generate feelings of inferiority, a defeated self-image and lead to depression and passivity. Words are one of our most powerful tools for living a life of fulfillment and purpose.

The Bible is full of passages that remind of this powerful truth and encourage us to choose our words wisely. For example, the Bible is God’s Word. Not God’s feelings, not God’s actions, not God’s intentions. It is God’s word for a reason. In addition, God spoke the world into existence. It was His words that formed creation. (Genesis 1, NIV) *And, Jesus is called the Word. ...In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God.* (John 1: 1, NIV)

In case there is any confusion, Jesus makes clear how important words are to God: *36 But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.* (Matthew 12:36-37)

As with so many other passages, we often relegate the idea to the realm of ‘church’ and give ourselves a pass when it comes to our behavior in the marketplace. But there is no exception here for people in the marketplace. No where does it say, “This applies to your life, except your business or career. You don’t have to obey this on the job.”

#### Applications For Christian Business People

If we are going to be serious about our Christianity in the marketplace, then we should develop some guidelines to help us use good words well. Here are some suggestions:

- Words are both spoken and written.

In our world of instantaneous electronic communication, many of us use far more words in writing via text, email and social media posts, than we speak orally. Words we choose to use in electronic communications may last for decades.

- Make sure that your vision, mission and values statements refer to God’s ownership of the business.

Your business is not your business. It belongs to God, and you should say that, in writing, on the foundational documents. That way, everyone who sees those documents will know where you stand -- reflecting the glory back to God.

- Be careful about using critical words.

There are, of course, times when we must correct someone. But we need to be careful about the words we choose and the way we deliver them. We all have memories of some critical words said to us that have lingered for decades.

Years ago, I came across the “sandwich” method of delivering a critique. We teach it to people in our Sales Management course: It means that you sandwich the critique between two layers of positive reinforcement. Start with a layer of positive comment, add your slice of critique, and then end with another layer of positive words.



So, for example, you could say to a salesperson in a coaching moment after a sales call: “John you have a nice, easy way with people that makes them comfortable with you. (Positive words) However, when you called our competitor a ‘fool’ you exhausted any good will you had. Never speak badly about a competitor. It puts the customer in an awkward situation. (The heart of the critique) You learn quickly, so I’m sure you won’t do that again. (More positive words.)

- Be slow and thoughtful about using judgmental words.

In our world of social media and sound bites, it’s easy to fall into the trap of following the pack and making judgements about people and situations. Even worse is when we do it without any good information as a basis. Every day, thousands, if not millions, of people rush to judgement expressed in social media posts. As Christians we understand those are words for which the writer will “have to give an account on the day of judgment for every empty word.”

- Be slow to react and respond emotionally.

Since we can immediately react, via text or email, the temptation is always to quickly respond to something with which we take offense. All too often, those harsh and emotional words make the situation worse. Do we really want to “give an account on the day of judgement” for those words we fired off in an emotional reaction to an email?

- Plan to use good words to encourage someone.

Suppose we were to make a list of the people in our sphere of influence on the job, and methodically deliver good words of support and encouragement to each. And then, wait a month, and repeat. What would be the impact on those people and on your influence with them?

Remember the classic business book, *The One-Minute Manager* which advocated walking around, finding someone doing something well and complementing him/her for it. That was the gist of the book. And that simple, easy -to-implement advice can and has made huge differences for those who implement it.

Here's one summary rule. Think about what we say or write before we do it. Keep in mind that we will give an account for every word.

— Dave Kahle has been a Bible teacher, elder, house church leader, short-term missionary and Christian executive roundtable leader and has authored 13 books, including *The Good Book on Business*.

# Spiritual Goal for December

## Keep Seeking

*Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find.  
Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you  
Matthew 7:7, NLT*

Is there something you are believing God for today? Does it seem like it's taking a long time to come to pass? Be encouraged because the Bible says that through faith and patience you will inherit His promises! If you'll stay in faith, if you'll keep on seeking Him, it won't be long until you see that breakthrough!

The problem is that most people give up just before they get their miracle. They stop when things get hard or when they don't get the answer they want the first time. But today's verse encourages us to continually ask and continually seek. That doesn't mean that we seek Him one time and then stop. No, we seek Him until we have the promise!

Today, submit your prayers to the Lord and keep an attitude of faith and expectancy. Keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking

on the door, and it will be opened to you. Know that God is working behind the scenes. He's perfecting whatever concerns you. Don't give up! Instead, start thanking Him for His faithfulness in your life. Thank Him for His promise that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek after Him!

Prayer for Today:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me a diligent spirit. Thank You for Your faithfulness. Give me strength to stand and seek You until I see Your promises fulfilled in every area of my life. In Jesus' name! Amen.*

May God Bless your day abundantly!

— Mark W. Koch

## PLAN OF SALVATION

*Has something in the magazine or something you have discussed with someone or some thoughts that you have had or something that you have heard, brought you to a point of realizing that you want and need to know Christ in the truest and personal sense?*

*If so, below is a simple outline for someone of any age who is not a Believer to act on their desire to accept Jesus Christ into their heart as their Savior.*

### God's Plan of Salvation

#### God created us to honor and serve Him

Revelation 4:11: "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist[b] and were created

#### Each of us has sinned against God

Romans 3:10: As it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one"  
Romans 3:23: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

#### The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God and Heaven

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### Good works cannot ever earn God's forgiveness and Salvation

Titus 3:5: not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

#### God loves each of us

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

#### Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place, paying the penalty for our sin

Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

#### We each must accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior

Romans 10:9: that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:13: For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

#### To accept Christ into your heart and life, pray a simple prayer along these lines

*"Dear God, I know that I am a sinner and I am sorry for my sins. I know that Jesus died for my sins and the sins of the world. Right now, I ask Jesus into my heart and receive Him as my personal Savior. Forgive me of my sins, thank you for saving me through the blood of Jesus. Please Lord, help me live for you. In Jesus name, amen."*

*All scriptures are taken from The New King James Version of the Holy Bible.*

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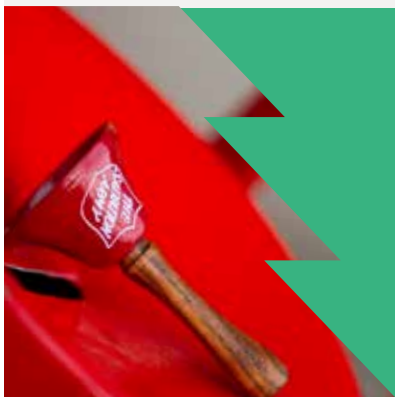
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