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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

Happy New Year, 2025!

I hope you had a blessed and Merry Christmas and are looking forward to a wonderful new year!

It is natural to measure our lives in days, weeks, months, and years. As we grow older, time seems to pass more quickly. I am 75 years young and I can attest to the truth of the old saying, "the older you get, the faster time goes!"



Whatever experiences this past year has brought-whether joyful or challengingone thing unites us as believers: the hope we carry as we step into 2025. We look forward to the blessings God has in store for us, our loved ones, and our friends in the coming year.

The Bible offers us numerous passages to guide us, whether our expectations are earthly or eternal. Philippians 3 provides a particularly meaningful example of how we can approach a new year. Verses 13 and 14 contain a powerful directive from God through Paul's words to the Christians in Philippi:

"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (New American Standard)

Paul's words challenge us to set our focus on the future, leaving behind past distractions or burdens. As we adopt his mindset as a New Year's resolution, we align ourselves with the call to live in a Godly manner, walking daily with the Lord.

Robert Stringfellow, Publisher, 615-815-8765 publisher@nashchristian.com





ON THE COVER 20

Kent Christmas serves as Pastor of the thriving Regeneration Nashville church. Read his story about passion for ministry and powerful commitment and perseverance. See page 20.

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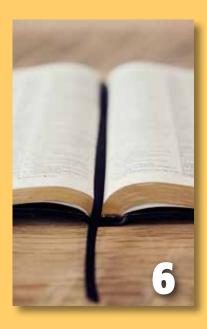
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Our House

Dedicate Your Home to God

It is a new and exciting year, fresh beginnings! One idea to help make 2025 a banner year, if you haven't already, is to dedicate your home to the Lord. As a realtor, I always encourage my clients, whether it is their first home or their tenth, to dedicate their home to the Lord. There is something special about making a conscious decision to invite the Lord to reign in your home, His presence fills the air! We have always done this in my own family. Our goal is that everyone that walks through our front door will experience the presence of God and His love.



If you have small children, they can be

involved in the dedication as well. You can anoint oil on the door frame and pray through every room.

Below are a few Scriptures for you to get started, as you will have your own to add to the list as well. The Bible is full of wonderful inspiration.

(Isaiah 32:18) *My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and is sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.*

(Joshua 24:15) As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

(Psalms 127:1-2) Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it: Except the LORD keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: For so he giveth his beloved sleep.

(Psalms 121:7-8) The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

(Proverbs 3:5-6) *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own under-standing; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

If you haven't already done so, you may want to choose one of these Scriptures or find another one that becomes your own family Scripture and hang it as well as teach it to your household.

- Rhonda L. Smart, rhondalsmart@gmail.com



THE BIBLE

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Misinterpreting Scripture: A Biblical Warning from the Daniel Penny Case

The tragic death of Jordan Neely, a homeless man with a history of mental health struggles, at the hands of Daniel Penny, a former Marine, recently sparked a firestorm of debate across the United States. Penny restrained Neely after Neely became violent and threatened passengers on a New York City subway. In an attempt to protect others, Penny placed Neely in a chokehold, which tragically led to Neely's death.

The case quickly became a flashpoint for larger debates on self-defense, justice, and social responsibility. Yet, amid the legal arguments, many have turned to Scripture,

legal arguments, many have turned to Scripture, using the Bible to either justify or condemn Daniel Penny's actions based on personal political or social views. This tendency to co-opt the Bible to support preconceived political or social positions is not new, but it is misleading and dangerous as it distorts God's Word.

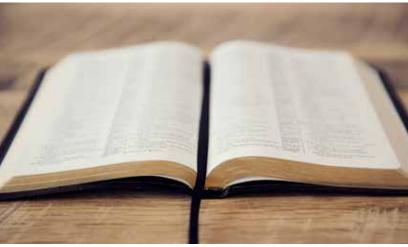
Progressive Christians: "Thou Shalt Not Kill"

Some progressive Christians, like Al Sharpton and Cheni Khonje, have been vocal in condemning Penny's actions. Sharpton warned that the verdict could set a dangerous precedent for "civilian vigilantism," where individuals take justice into their own hands, bypassing the law.

Khonje, writing in the Presbyterian Outlook, argued that Penny's actions violated the biblical commandment, "Thou shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13), citing the sanctity of life and comparing the incident to the violence of Cain against Abel. At the heart of this argument is the assertion that Penny's actions went against the sanctity of life and that Christians should never resort to violence.

However, this appeal to Exodus 20:13 is a classic example of using Scripture to promote a social or political agenda, rather than understanding it in its proper context. The commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" does not prohibit all forms of taking life; it prohibits murder—the unjust taking of life. The Bible makes a distinction between murder and self-defense, and using Scripture to argue against all violence, even in cases where it is justified, distorts its original intent.

The Bible consistently upholds the right to protect oneself and others from harm. In Exodus 22:2-3, for example, God allows for self-defense in situations where an intruder threatens one's life. Jesus



Himself, while teaching non-retaliation in the face of personal insults (Matthew 5:38-39), did not advocate for passivity when it came to imminent threats. In fact, He instructed those disciples who do not have a sword to sell their cloak to buy a sword (Luke 22:36). Not only does this acknowledge the need for self-defense, but it also highlights that some throughout Jesus' ministry were already carrying swords.

Conservative Christians: The Good Samaritan

On the other side of the debate, some conservative Christians have sought to justify Daniel Penny's actions by invoking the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). In this interpretation, Penny is seen as a "Good Samaritan" who acted heroically to protect others from harm. This view, while well-intentioned, also reflects a misunderstanding of the parable and how it applies to the situation.

The Samaritan does not resort to violence to stop the robbery or defend the victim but instead offers practical help and takes the injured man to safety. He further pays the innkeeper to continue to help the man.

Using the Good Samaritan parable to justify Penny's intervention in a dangerous situation conflates mercy with justice. While mercy and justice are both vital components of a Christian life, they are not interchangeable.

Mercy in the Bible is about showing compassion and care, especially to those who are suffering. It does not call for the use of force or violence as a means of intervention. The parable is not about self-defense or the defense of others. We are to show compassion and love for those we encounter in our everyday activities regardless of their social status or our societal lines of division.

A Biblical Corrective: Obedience to God's Word

The key to avoiding the misuse of Scripture is obedience to God's Word, not manipulation of it to fit our desires. Both progressive and conservative responses to the Daniel Penny case should be measured against the full counsel of Scripture, not "cherry-picked" verses that support predetermined positions. True obedience to God's Word involves interpreting Scripture in its proper context, seeking to understand what God is truly saying, and applying it in ways that align with His character.

In situations of self-defense, for example, the Bible upholds the sanctity of life and the right to defend oneself and others from harm. At the same time, it calls for wisdom, discernment, and mercy. Christians must be careful to ensure that their actions reflect the balance of justice and mercy that God calls for, recognizing that justice involves protecting the vulnerable, but mercy requires that we act with compassion and avoid excessive harm.

The Danger of Using Scripture for Political or Social Agendas

Both progressive and conservative Christians in the Daniel Penny case are guilty of using Scripture as a tool to support their political or social views rather than seeking to understand and apply it in a way that is true to God's Word. This tendency to mold Scripture to fit personal or ideological positions is a dangerous practice that can lead to distorted interpretations and a misrepresentation of biblical truth.

The Bible is not a political or social tool to be wielded in the service of our agendas. Instead, it is the living Word of God, meant to shape and transform our hearts, minds, and actions. When we use Scripture to justify our personal or political views, we are engaging in a form of idolatry, placing our own preferences above God's truth.

— 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.

This article first published by the Christian Broadcasting Network



SPECIAL FEATURE

Brought to you by: Community Partner Crain Law Group • www.crainlaw.legal

Some Legal Tips for a Happy and Safe New Year

The start of a new year can be a special time for both reflection on the blessings of the passing year and anticipation of things to come. For some, it is a time of determined resolutions; for others, a time for setting new personal or financial goals. Here are some legal tips to consider as you look ahead to the coming year.

1. Locate important documents like estate planning documents, deeds and passports and store them in a safe place and record their location. You may want to consider scanning these documents into a folder as well for a backup. If you have a family attorney, send a digital copy of these important documents to them as well.

2. Schedule an appointment with an attorney to review the need for any changes in estate plan, or to update any new beneficiary designations. This is particularly true if there have been any new additions to your family, or new healthcare concerns with any aging family member.

3. Set aside time for those difficult conversations with loved ones regarding their end-of-life wishes and discuss a plan so that these goals may be accomplished. 4. Consider getting a Health Care Power of Attorney for those family members and be sure to include your spouse.

5. Review your insurance policy limits and coverages. This is particularly important when it comes to your UIM, or under-insured motorist coverage. A growing percentage of drivers on the road today only have the minimum coverage, and many do not have any liability coverage.

6. Update passwords on all social media and digital applications. This should be a routine precaution every six months. Also, you may want to eliminate any social media apps or on-line accounts that you no longer use and purge your archives on Facebook or other media platforms. As a further precaution, you should investigate identity theft software to safeguard against hacking of your accounts.

7. Prepare and organize a folder for any required documents in the event of a traffic stop. You should have your title, registration and proof of insurance readily on hand.



8. If you serve on the board of a church or non-profit, it is critically important that you have an attorney review and recommend

any needed updates.

Several years ago, I got a telephone call from a long-time client who had just been admitted to the hospital with a terminal illness. There was a sense of urgency in his voice as he said: "Larry, I need your help! My will is so outdated. Could you please come see me to make some needed changes." Regrettably, this client passed away before I could get in to see him. I was thankful, at least, that I had discussed his eternal needs with him some months earlier, and he had made a decision to follow Christ.

On behalf of all of us at Crain Law Group, we join in wishing you a safe and prosperous New Year.



— Larry Crain, Crain Law Group, PLLC

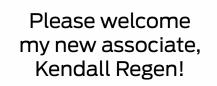




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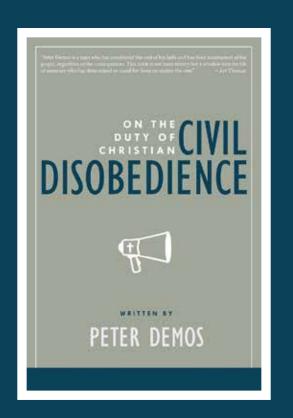
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SENIOR SCENE

Protect Your Privacy in the New Year

Click, click, and click. Many families go online to search for senior care options and without even realizing it, disclose personal, financial, care and medical information to companies that share this information with dozens of third party providers. Within minutes, they are bombarded with emails and phone calls asking



them to come take a tour of a property, set up a home assessment, or even meet with a financial planner. During a time of great stress and need, the last thing that families are worried about or understand is that their privacy is NOT being protected.

The HIPAA law passed in 1996 by Congress and implemented in 1997, is a combination of regulations aimed at reducing waste, fraud and abuse in the health care industry. It also enacts strict security standards for the protection of personal health information, but unfortunately it does not apply to many private interrelated companies dealing with senior care. Some companies vaguely disclose that they share private information to third parties, but most offer no disclosure and even seek to use the information for financial gain.

We believe that these practices are wrong. Our clients share personal details about day-to-day care, medications, memory loss, savings and retirement, and disclose intimate details about their loved ones' history and life. It is a sacred privilege to be in the position to receive this information and guide families to true solutions. Since our founding, we have committed to protect their rights and privacy and follow many of the HIPAA guidelines voluntarily. We do not fax or email their information out to third parties without their written or expressed consent and we never track their activity or identity thru our website.

How to protect your privacy online:

- Avoid filling out "contact" forms unless you trust the website
- Locate and read the organization's privacy and 3rd party data sharing policies
- Be careful what you share: Only share information that you're comfortable making public. Don't post anything you wouldn't want to be seen by others.
- Protect your devices: Keep your computer secure with anti-virus protection, regular software updates, and by turning it off when you're not using it.
- Use strong passwords: Create unique, hard-to-guess passwords for each of your accounts. You can use a passphrase, which is a string of words that's easy to remember.
- Be cautious of emails: Don't open or forward emails from senders you don't recognize, or that seem suspicious.

Families need guidance and TRUE advocacy. Although there are many genuine kindhearted advisors working in this field, we must hold companies accountable and encourage them to improve their practices. We wish every-one a blessed and safe 2025!

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

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SECRETS FROM THE STUDIO

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What Do You Need to Leave Behind?

It's 2025 and many of us are thinking about setting goals and New Year's Resolutions. Invariably we come up with plans to save money, eat healthier, and spend more time with family and friends. One year

a Bridges guest challenged me to swap the New Year's Resolution idea with asking myself this question – what do I need to leave behind? I thought it was a loaded question BUT I learned that it had the potential to yield incredible life changing results.

Are there habits, attitudes, toxic relationships that need to go? What about self-doubt and worry? Do you want to stop second guessing yourself and end negative self-talk? Do you (or I) want to bring any of that into a brand-new year? Of course we don't. So how do we stop holding on to the practices that don't serve us well? There is no "magic sauce" but there are principles that will lead us to freedom. Let's consider these principles as we enter 2025. Unplug. Uncover. Upgrade.

Unplug? Sound impossible? How can anyone "unplug" with all of the devices and technology in this world? I didn't say it would be easy, but I will say that unplugging enables us to disconnect from the endless stream of information and reconnect with yourself and loved ones. If you unplug before bedtime, you may find that your quality of sleep improves. Experts say that even 15 minutes a day away from devices can help bring you peace and clarity. Can you leave behind your devices for just 15 minutes a day?

Uncover. What if you committed to leave behind living by the "busy badge" and traded it for living to uncover the truths found in God's Word. Renewing your mind and changing the way you think comes by reading and living by

MIGHTY MEN

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Are You Ready for WAR? A Message Tailored for Men

As men, we often face unique challenges in our journey of faith. Whether it's balancing the responsibilities of work, family, or personal aspirations, our path can sometimes feel like an uphill battle. You might find yourself thinking, "Every step forward is met with a setback."

Many Christian men experience this in their spiritual lives. You might be progressing in your walk with the Lord, growing in grace and maturity, and then suddenly, you're hit with a challenge. It could be past failures, a recurring sin, or societal pressures that question your faith. Satan is quick to exploit these moments, trying to convince you that you're unworthy of God's grace. He might bring up past sins, whispering doubts about your integrity and worth.

It's in these moments that we must engage in W.A.R. – a battle plan tailored for Christian men: Wash in the Blood of Christ: Understand that your journey with Christ isn't a one-time event but a daily commitment. Just as you wouldn't consider a single shower sufficient for a lifetime, your spiritual cleansing through Christ's sacrifice is an ongoing process. Daily confession, reliance on Jesus, and obedience to His word are essential. Remember Romans 8:1, "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Silence Satan's lies by continually returning to the cross, recognizing the freedom you have from sin and death.

Armor Up for the Fight: The battle we face as men of faith isn't one that can be won with physical strength or worldly strategies. It requires God's armor (Ephesians 6:10-18) to stand against the devil's schemes. Whether it's in the workplace, within your family, or in your personal life, be vigilant and prepared. The armor of God equips you to stand firm in truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God.

Refill with the Power of the Holy Spirit: The fight is exhausting. It's not enough to be cleansed and armored; you must also be filled with the Holy Spirit's power. This power is renewed through

God's Word. Some more good news here is that experts say that people who read the Bible 4 times per week consistently are happier and make better decisions. Can you leave behind "busy" 4 days a week consistently to read God's Word knowing that by doing so you'll find what really matters?

Upgrade. We've all found ourselves in a rut every now and then. How about we skip the rut this year and head straight for the upgrade. The upgrade that happens when we leave behind the relationships and things that no longer serve us well. The time we invest unplugging and uncovering will help us decide what we need to leave behind. Sometimes taking the time to review James 3:17 helps us find the answers to what we need to leave behind. *But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.* James 3:17 NLT

Is this relationship/decision pure? Is gentleness a hallmark of this relationship/decision? Is this relationship/decision based on sincerity? When we decide to leave behind the things and relationships that no longer serve us well, we are on our way to the freedom that God desires for each of us.

Today's Secret from the Studio: When you find what you need to leave behind – you discover the freedom you've been dreaming about.

— Monica Schmelter is the host of Bridges on the Christian Television Network. Bridges airs in more than 50 million homes as well as streaming platforms and on demand. Monica and her husband live in Murfreesboro, TN. They have one son and recently welcomed a beautiful daughter in-love into their family.





prayer and scripture, the primary means by which the Holy Spirit revitalizes us. Even in the toughest battles, when you feel weary and overwhelmed, prayer and God's Word will sustain and empower you.

So, to my fellow Christian men, are you ready for WAR? Rise each day, prepared to face your spiritual battles with strength, faith, and the full armor of God.

— Mark W. Koch is an Author, Inspirational Speaker and Hollywood Film Producer. To order a Free Copy of, "The First Hour" for Men 30-Day Journey, Visit www.thefirsthour.com and use promo code NCF







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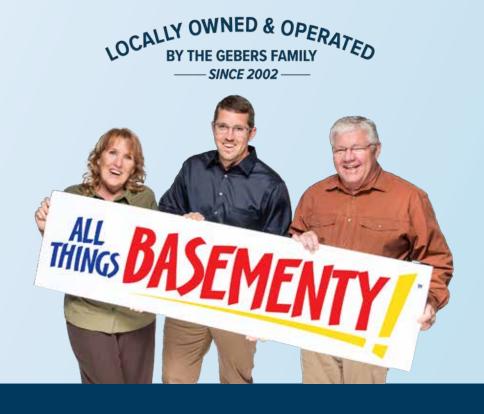
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SPECIAL FEATURE

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Transforming Lives at Solace Oral Surgery and Dental Implant Center: Excellence in Nashville

At Solace Oral Surgery and Dental Implant Center, we're not just in the business of oral healthcare we're in the business of transforming lives. Nestled in the heart of Nashville, our practice is a beacon of hope and a source of renewed confidence for patients. We are honored to be recognized as a Center of Excellence by Nobel Biocare, a distinction that reflects our commitment to clinical excellence, innovation, and patient care.

Our mission is simple yet profound: to alleviate pain, restore function, and create beautiful, life-changing smiles. With dental implants and advanced procedures like the All-on-4, we provide solutions that go beyond temporary fixes, offering sustainable, transformative outcomes that empower patients to live their best lives.

Meet Dr. Jaime Romero: The Smile Savior

At the helm of our practice is Dr. Jaime Romero, affectionately known as the "Smile Savior" by his patients and peers. With years of advanced training and a heart for service, Dr. Romero has earned a reputation as one of the top specialists in his field, consistently recognized by Nashville Lifestyles for over a decade. Under his leadership, Solace Oral Surgery has become synonymous with precision, compassion, and transformative care.

Dr. Romero believes in the power of a smile and understands the deep connection between oral health and overall well-being. He's a dedicated practitioner who spends countless hours refining his skills and staying at the forefront of the latest techniques in oral surgery and implantology. Whether performing a complex full-mouth restoration or extracting wisdom

teeth to relieve pain, his commitment to excellence shines through in every procedure.

Eva Angelina Romero: The Heart of Our Practice

Behind the success of our practice is the tireless dedication of Eva Angelina Romero, whose vision and leadership have helped Solace Oral Surgery flourish. Eva's passion for creating a welcoming, patient-centered environment ensures that every person who walks through our doors feels valued and cared for. From managing operations to engaging with patients and giving back to the community, Eva's influence is deeply woven into the fabric of our practice. Together, Jaime and Eva have built a legacy of compassion, innovation, and service.

Our Team: The Pillars of Solace

At Solace Oral Surgery, we are proud of the exceptional team that supports our mission. From our skilled clinical staff to our warm and friendly administrative team, each member plays a vital role in delivering an unparalleled patient experience. Our team is committed to walking alongside our patients on their journey, whether they're overcoming years of dental pain, reclaiming their confidence with a new smile, or learning about their treatment options.





We take a collaborative approach to care, ensuring that every treatment plan is tailored to the unique needs and goals of our patients. Our emphasis on patient education and empowerment means that individuals leave our office feeling informed and confident about their health and treatment choices.

Changing Lives with Dental Implants and All-on-4

One of the most powerful ways we change lives is through dental implants and the All-on-4 procedure. These cutting-edge solutions are more than just replacements for missing teeth; they're lifelines for patients struggling with pain, discomfort, or low self-esteem due to oral health issues.

Dental Implants: By mimicking the natural structure of teeth, dental implants offer a permanent solution that restores function and aesthetics. Whether replacing a single tooth or multiple teeth, our implant treatments help patients smile, eat, and speak with confidence.

All-on-4: This revolutionary technique allows patients to regain a full arch of teeth with just four strategically placed implants. The procedure not only provides a functional and natural-looking smile but also significantly reduces recovery time compared to traditional methods.

A Commitment to the Community

Our care extends far beyond the walls of our office. Giving back to the Nashville community is a cornerstone of our practice. Through initiatives like the Smile for Christmas Giveaway we provide free Allon-4 procedures to individuals in need, offering them a fresh start with a new smile. We also partner with

organizations like Hope Smiles and Interfaith Dental Clinic to bring quality oral care to underserved populations.

Dr. Romero's passion for service is shared by the entire Solace Oral Surgery team, and we are continually looking for ways to make a positive impact. Whether supporting local non-profits or hosting events that educate the community about oral health, we are dedicated to making Nashville a healthier, happier place.

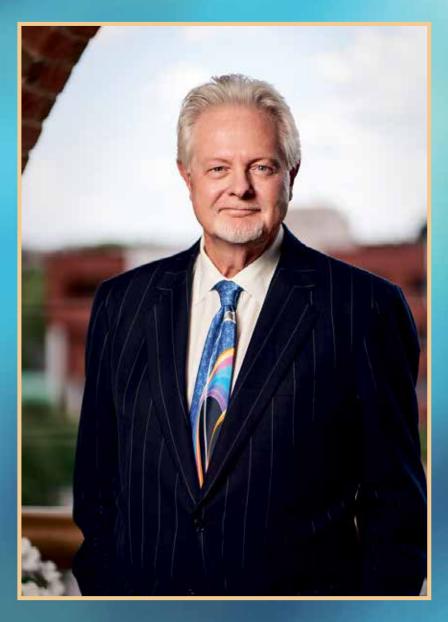
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Whether you're seeking relief from chronic pain, exploring the possibility of dental implants, or searching for a team that truly cares about your well-being, Solace Oral Surgery is here for you. Together, we can create a healthier, brighter future — one smile at a time.

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BUSINESS TODAY

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



Frontier Wins BBB Torch Award for Ethics for the 2nd Time!

For the second time, Frontier Foundation & Crawl Space Repair received the BBB Torch Award for Ethics! Presented by the Better Business Bureau of Middle Tennessee & Southern Kentucky, the BBB Torch Award for Ethics "honors marketplace role models who have set extraordinary examples within (their) community." Additional finalists inside the large category include United Structural Systems (USS) and All-American Pest Control Inc. Frontier feels honored to be chosen amongst **Dustin and Brittney Gebers** such highly esteemed businesses.

Established in 1998, the BBB Torch Awards, as well as the Better Business Bureau's mission, are to foster trust within the marketplace. Torch Awards for Ethics commends organizations demonstrating integrity and a steadfast dedication to ethical conduct across all facets of their operations. By celebrating companies like Frontier





Foundation & Crawl Space Repair, the BBB Torch Award for Ethics inspires businesses of all sizes to prioritize ethical practices, thereby safeguarding the integrity of our market.

To win this award, companies were asked to demonstrate their abilities in four categories: character, culture, customers, and community. As a family-owned business in a highly competitive market, it is of utmost importance for Frontier to lead with integrity and exemplify the very values that this company was founded upon; Faith, Respect, Wow Service, Passion, Loyalty, Integrity, Excellence, and Determination. Together, these serve as a guiding light for all employees, aligning their efforts towards a common goal. Frontier makes it a priority to actively engage with the community, encourage employee involvement in community service, and contribute to community programs.

"Frontier's application stood out because of how much you do for your community and everything your organization does to set up your employees for success!" said James Horn, Executive Director of the BBB serving Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky.

At Frontier Foundation & Crawl Space Repair, we strive to provide each and every customer with "WOW!" service, treating our customers as we would our own family. As the only foundation and waterproofing company to win the BBB Torch Award for Ethics in our area, we will continue to uphold the standards that come with winning this prestigious award.

> — Hannah Moulton, Content Marketing Specialist Frontier Foundation and Crawl Space Repair www.trustfrontier.com

BODY & SOUL

Discovering Healthy Self-Love as a Christian Entrepreneur

As someone who deeply values hard work, I was surprised when God put the message of "healthy self-love" on my heart a few years ago. Self-love? "Ew! Gross! We shouldn't love ourselves as Christians. Also, who has time for that?" I certainly didn't. I was too



busy adulting and trying to grow my self-discipline business. But after years of helping people grow in their self-discipline—a godly fruit—I found that their struggle wasn't due to a lack of desire to lose weight, manage time better, or whatever area I was helping them in. They struggled with self-discipline because of a lack of self-respect and self-love. This led me to learn the importance of healthy self-love. But what about Christians? Aren't we supposed to deny ourselves? Didn't Paul say in Romans that there is nothing good in us?

Well, as Christians, we know from Matthew 22, the greatest commandment Jesus gave us: to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind. And the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. Was that a typo? No, it wasn't. We must learn to love ourselves in a godly way before we can properly love our neighbors.

The world's version of self-love is completely selfish, but thankfully, scripture guides us on what true love looks like. Love appears in the Bible 300-800 times, depending on translation. 1 Corinthians 13 gives us a comprehensive passage on it: "Love is patient, love is kind..." So, let me ask you: Are you patient with yourself? Are you kind to yourself? Getting back to my dilemma: How can I "self-love" if I am a hard-working business owner?

The Answer Lies in Grace.

As entrepreneurs, we are often our own toughest critics, working long hours and pushing ourselves to the limit. But God gives us rest and perfect peace when we are fixed on him, reminding us that our worth is not measured by our productivity or achievements. Grace allows us to recognize that we don't have to do it all on our own. It's about trusting in God's timing, acknowledging our limitations, and understanding that we are worthy of care and compassion.

Embracing grace as entrepreneurs means giving ourselves permission to rest when needed, forgiving ourselves when we fall short, being patient and kind to ourselves, and finding peace in knowing that God's love for us is unconditional. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, we can continue to grow, both personally and professionally, without burning out or losing sight of what truly matters. So, as you continue to work diligently and build your business, remember that healthy self-love isn't about doing whatever you want; it's about stewardship, taking care of the vessel God has given you—your body, mind, and spirit—so that you can continue to serve others with excellence. Practicing healthy self-love will make you a better spouse, parent, friend, and leader.

*— Brianna Cacamese is a Christian entrepreneur and self-love coach at Self-*Love Starts Now. With a degree in psychology and years of experience in personal growth, Brianna helps individuals and businesses balance hard work with healthy self-love and grace. Connect with Brianna at www.SelfLoveStartsNow.com or Brianna@SelfLoveStartsNow.com.

THE HOME FRONT

Brought to you by: The Lee Company • www.leecompany.com

Simple Ways to Winter-Proof Your Home (Without Breaking the Bank)

Winter can be beautiful, but it's not always gentle on your home. Freezing temperatures and icy conditions might test your property's limits, but a little preparation can make all the difference. The best part? You can tackle most of it yourself – no need to break the bank or call a pro for every fix. Here are a few easy, budget-friendly ways to help your home brave the winter chill.

Wrap Those Pipes Up

Think of your pipes like you would your kids heading out into the cold: they need layers, too! Pipes in unheated spaces, like basements, garages, or attics, are especially prope to freezing. Insulation closure of

are especially prone to freezing. Insulation sleeves are

affordable, simple to install, and available at your local hardware store. A little time spent insulating now can save you from a burst pipe and a costly headache later.

Cover Up Outdoor Faucets

Outdoor faucets, or spigots, are often overlooked, but they're prime entry points for freezing air. Foam spigot covers are an inexpensive solution that blocks icy drafts and prevents residual water from freezing in your pipes. Quick to install and easy on the wallet, they're a small step that can make a big impact on your plumbing.



Keep the Water Flowing

Believe it or not, a dripping faucet can work wonders when temperatures plummet. Why? Because moving water is much harder to freeze. Just a small, steady drip from an interior faucet will keep your pipes safe during the coldest nights. Worried about wasting water? Catch the drips in a bucket and use it to water plants or clean around the house!

Seal Up Windows and Doors

Cold drafts don't just chill your home ... they spike your energy bills. Take a few minutes to check windows and doors for any gaps or leaks. Caulk and weatherstripping are inexpensive fixes that seal those

trouble spots and keep warm air where it belongs: inside. For an extra boost, consider plastic window insulation kits. They're simple to use and work wonders for retaining heat.

Need a Helping Hand?

Sometimes, even the best DIYers need backup. If winter's challenges seem bigger than you can tackle, like frozen pipes or a sluggish HVAC system, Lee Company has you covered. From repairs to tune-ups, our team is here to ensure your home stays warm, safe, and cozy all season long. Visit us at leecompany.com to learn more.

- Your Lee Company Home Services Team

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BUSINESS **T**ODAY

What Is a 501(c)(3)?

Technically to be non-profit under section 501(c) (3), an organization must be organized and operate exclusively for exempt purposes as defined by the IRS code, and none of its earnings may benefit any private shareholder or individual. In this article we'll explore the nonprofit designation in a bit more detail.

There are three terms that businesspeople use interchangeably: 501(c)(3), nonprofit, and tax-exempt. These designations can be combined to describe one organization but, separately, they mean different things, as the short video to the right explains.

• A nonprofit is simply a corporation that has been created for nonprofit purposes.

• A 501(c)(3) is a nonprofit that has been recognized by the IRS as being tax-exempt because of its charitable programs.

• Tax-exemption is the result of a nonprofit organization being recognized by the IRS as organized for any purpose allowable under 501(c)(3) regulations.

501(c)(3) Essentials

• Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code permits federal tax exemption of nonprofit organizations, like public charities and private foundations.

• These nonprofits are regulated by the US Department of the Treasury through the Internal Revenue Service.

• Organizations that qualify for 501(c)(3) determination include corporations, trusts, and community chests, but the majority are basic nonprofit corporations.

• One key distinction of a 501(c)(3) is the federal income tax deductibility of donations.

• Many states allow 501(c)(3) organizations to be exempt from sales tax on purchases, as well as exempt from property taxes.

• Nonprofit, bulk rate postage discounts are available from the Post Office to qualifying organizations.

Types of 501(c)(3) Organizations

501(c)(3) organizations are defined by one of three primary categories: public charities, private foundations, and private operating foundations.

• Public charities are organizations with active charitable programs. These include churches, ministries, animal welfare agencies, and schools. Most of their revenue comes from public donations or from the government. To remain a public charity, a 501(c)(3) must receive at least 1/3 of its donated revenue from a broad base of public support. In addition, public charities must maintain a governing body that is mostly made up of independent, unrelated individuals.

• A non-operating, private foundation doesn't operate charitable programs directly but provides grants to other nonprofit organizations or to individuals. Their revenue may come from a small group of donors or families.

• A private operating foundation maintains active programs similar to a public charity. Most of their earnings must go to charitable programs. 501(c)(3) Rules and Restrictions

• 501(c)(3) organizations are highly regulated with very strict rules for their activities and their governance.

• None of the net earnings of a 501(c)(3) can unfairly benefit any director, officer, or private individual.

All assets of a 501(c)(3) are permanently dedicated to a charitable purpose.
If a 501(c)(3) organization ceases operations, all remaining assets must be

distributed for a charitable purpose.



• A 501(c)(3) cannot intervene in a political campaign or endorse a candidate for public office.

• 501(c)(3) compliance requirements exist at both the state and federal levels. Annual filing requirements include a corporate annual report, IRS Form 990, and state charitable solicitations registration and renewal.

How Can A.C.T. Intl Help?

Starting a nonprofit can be complicated. You should be doing the ministry you're best at - not worrying about paperwork and bookkeeping. A.C.T. comes alongside over 700 Christians artists, speakers, and musicians to provide the

support their nonprofit needs to do the work they are called to. We can help get your nonprofit set up, equip you for fundraising, and provide all the back office support, bookkeeping, tax preparation, and more.

> — Dr. Byron Spradlin, President, ACT International www.actinternational.org

MISSION MAKERS

Brought to you by: The Salvation Army, Nashville <u>www.salvationarmynashville.org</u>





The Salvation Army Pathway of Hope program provides individualized services to families with children who desire to improve their quality of life. Teeanna's family entered the program after participating in one of The Salvation Army youth engagement activities not fully understanding what it would mean for them.

Teanna says, "Signing up was an easy process to go through and my girls love the people that we come in contact with. The Pathway of

Hope program offered a lot of things that I didn't know existed. They help you go to school if you'd like. They actually helped me fix my car! That was big benefit right there that I wasn't expecting." For Teanna's oldest daughter, it opened up ideas for her future. "One of the ladies at The Salvation Army sent me a text about going to a college tour and we ended up going. I didn't know that my daughter actually is thinking about going to the college. The Salvation Army helped her realize there were more possibilities than just staying stuck at what you're used to. Now she's looking into doing hair, but she also wants to be a Lawyer."

"I'm so thankful to the Salvation Army. They open our minds up to possibilities that we did not see or could imagine. The Salvation Army is a very positive place to be, and it makes a difference."

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

Chinese New Year Steinway Concert

Tuesday, 1/21/25, 5:30pm or 7:30pm (2 showtimes)

Steinway Piano Gallery 4285 Sidco Dr, Nashville, TN, 615-373-5901

Free admission, food, wine and music! Business casual attire

A Wang Foundation for Sight Restoration musical event

RSVP: Ella Morrissey, ella@wangvisioninstitute.com, 615-525-3314

Chinese Violin Erhu Dr. Ming Wang. MD, PHD Cello Deidre Emerson, MA Guitar Carlos Enrique, MA







About the event host, Dr. Ming Wang, MD, PhD

The film "Sight" (angel.com/sight, \$12) is based on the autobiography "From Darkness to Sight" of Dr. Ming Wang (drmingwang.com), Harvard & MIT (MD, *magna cum laude*); PhD (laser physics), co-starring Greg Kinnear.

As a teenager, Ming had to play the Chinese violin erhu to escape hard labor and poverty. He came to America with only \$50. Dr. Wang invented Amniotic membrane contact lens, which has been used by tens of thousands of eye doctors in nearly every nation throughout the world, and has helped millions of patients.

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.

Special Feature

Williamson County Public Library System and AutismTN Will Launch New Inclusive Kits and Program for Autistic Patrons

The Williamson County Public Library System has partnered with AutismTN to launch new items designed to make our library more inclusive and welcoming for Autistic patrons, neurodiverse families, and the entire community. Thanks to funding from the KFC Foundation, they will soon offer:

Sensory Kits: Available for use in the library, these kits include stim aids and other tools to enhance comfort during library visits or at home. Understanding Autism: Embracing Neurodiversity and Autistic Culture

Saturday, January 25 3 p.m., Main Library in Franklin



Updated Collections: Books and materials authored by Autistic people, offering neuro-affirming perspectives and valuable insights into neurodiversity.

As part of this project, AutismTN will also host a free public program, "Introduction to the Autistic Neurotype," on Saturday, January 25, 3:00 p.m. at the Main Library. This engaging session will explore Autistic experiences and ways to create a more inclusive community.

Library Director, Jessica Jeffers - "We are thrilled to introduce our new sensory kits and expanded collection of neurodiverse-friendly books to better serve and support our community. At WCPLS, we believe in fostering an inclusive environment where all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can discover, learn, and engage with the world around them. These sensory kits are designed to create a calming and interactive experience for individuals with sensory processing differences, while our new book collection reflects a variety of neurodiverse perspectives. We're proud to work with AutismTN to foster greater understanding, inclusion, and accessibility in Middle Tennessee".

These new resources are expected to be available in January, and we encourage everyone to come explore how Williamson County Public Library is evolving to better serve our community. We're proud to work with AutismTN to foster greater understanding, inclusion, and accessibility in Middle Tennessee.

For more information about these resources and programs, visit www.wcpltn.org or learn more about AutismTN's work at www.autismtn.org.

Franklin Friends of the Library Makes Generous Donation

At the annual luncheon held by the Franklin Friends of the Library, the group proudly presented a generous donation to the Franklin Library. These funds will be used to support the library's collections, staff development and other initiatives designed to enhance



the community's access to knowledge and resources. "We are incredibly grateful to the Franklin Friends of the Library for their W generous contribution," said Jessica Jeffers, LI Library Director. "Their continued support



enables us to further our mission of providing educational resources, fostering a love of reading, and ensuring that the library remains a vital and welcoming space for everyone in our community."

The annual luncheon, attended by Library Trustee members and Friends of the Library members, provided an opportunity to celebrate the partnership between the Library and the Friends group. Attendees heard about the latest developments at the library and how the donation will be put to work in the year ahead.

The Franklin Friends of the Library is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the library through advocacy, and volunteerism. Their efforts play a crucial role in sustaining the library's growth and ensuring that it continues to serve the needs of the Franklin community.

Fourth Annual Love Our Libraries Event

The Williamson County Library Foundation will hold our fourth annual LoveOur-Libraries Event on February 20, 2025. The purpose of this event is to raise funds in support of the library. We are reaching out to you since you are a vital part of our community and you have made an investment in Williamson County and its people. The author event in early 2024 allowed the Foundation to support the library in these ways:



• Summer Reading for tots through adults

• Literacy programs to get kids reading and keep kids reading:

1,000 books before Kindergarten and 500 books before middle school • Software to enable online registration of the new study rooms (opening fall 2024!)

• Public awareness campaign

Our author event on February 20, 2025 features local author, Andrew Marnassis and his book, *Strong Inside* in conversation with the Voice of the Predators, Pete Weber (who knows about ALL sports, not just hockey). Sponsorship and support of this event will allow the library to:

- Support new collections and services
- Provide interactive screen-free alternatives for kids
- Provide cultural performances and programming (think opera, ballet, science, craft days)
- Learning Kits for at-home learning
- Help with the startup of the new Bethesda Library

The Library is for everyone. People are there every day learning, working, meeting, collaborating, reading. This resource is free to all Williamson County residents. Thank you for helping us serve our community.

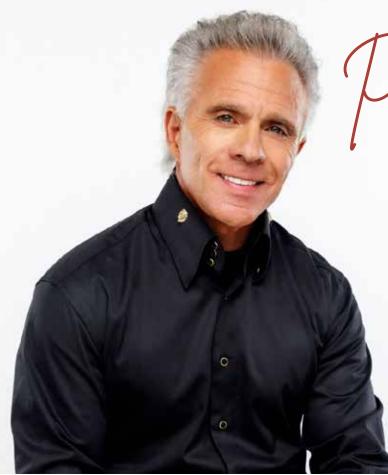
— Deborah Reschke, Volunteer Outreach Coordinator Deborah.reschke@williamsoncounty-tn.gov



We would like to share a sincere thank you to every donor and volunteer who joined us to spread LOVE BEYOND Christmas and into 2025 for their neighbors.

May you all have a blessed New Year!

Visit **SalvationArmyNashville.org** to learn about the programs and services offered here in our community and to see how you can engage!



as for Ken Wishmas: Bringing a Powerful Message

of Hope to Nashville

When Kent Christmas first arrived in Nashville almost four decades ago, he found himself homeless and searching for direction. But a new family and a newfound passion for ministry led Christmas down a path that today has him serving as the pastor of the thriving Regeneration Nashville church and authoring a new book based on his faith journey.

His own story is a powerful one of commitment and perseverance that has given Christmas a powerful message to convey. "I want to let people know that it doesn't matter how small your beginnings are or how much adversity you go through," he said. "If you're faithful to God, whatever you sow will come back. I give people hope, because we have seen so many successful stories in our ministry."

A Divine Journey to Nashville

Christmas was born in California and raised in Washington, where he answered the call to preach when he was just 17. He pastored in California, but never had much material or "earthly" success at churches there. "I answered the call and knew that was what I wanted to do, but I never had great success," Christmas recalled. "I evangelized and worked in small churches, but it was hard work."

He came to Nashville because of a family situation, stopped preaching for a time period and found himself homeless. It was at a homeless ministry that Christmas met his wife Candy (Hemphill) and they began working together. "We married and I've been in Nashville now for 40 years," Christmas said. After marrying in 1987, the Christmases traveled the world evangelizing while Candy also sang Gospel music. In 2004, Candy began The Bridge Ministry to feed Nashville's homeless population and in 2006 they felt the call

to start a church in Nashville and founded Resting Place Church. Its first home was a corner of The Bridge's warehouse. "Our first service had two people other than me, my wife and my son," he said. "We grew to around 150 members after persevering through a lot of work. Our goal was not to have the biggest church, but to be a place where people felt the presence of God."

In time, however, the church would grow in ways Christmas could have never imagined. First came a slow-but-steady increase in membership and then the opportunity to move into a warehouse adjacent to the Bridge's warehouse. Resting Place continued to grow until the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Due to stay-at-home orders, the church closed its doors and moved to an online format. While offering online services, the Christmases felt a shift and decided to rename their church Regeneration Nashville.



In 2020, Christmas spoke at a service in Washington D.C. that he said was truly a divine moment. "People posted it, then it went all around the world. It had several million hits. It didn't do much directly for our church, until December as we got ready for Sunday services," he said. The day was snowy and icy and, because of the weather, Christmas doubted they'd have no more than 40 in worship. But as the service time approached, his wife told him that the church was packed and they were running out of room. "The sanctuary was jam packed an hour before church started," he said. "We put chairs out, but more people kept coming. There were 600 people, up against the walls and in every available spot."

From that moment on, the church began to grow. They rented a larger facility, where they have been for the past three years; and on early 2025 they will begin having services in their new, Regeneration Nashville Church. "The spirit of God settled on our church and we began to grow supernaturally," Christmas said.

> While the physical, in-person Regeneration Church continues to grow, Christmas said that its online presence has seen the greatest impact. The church has cultivated a diverse and engaged online audience, with people from around the globe tuning in to experience its uplifting services. This vibrant digital presence reflects Regeneration Nashville's commitment to connecting with individuals across cultures and borders, creating a dynamic, worldwide community. "We aren't doing anything differently. We're just having church and all of a sudden God said 'okay.' Our faithfulness to God for all these years has come to fruition," Christmas said. "Here I am at 70 years old, seeing God do things I've prayed about for decades." According to Christmas, the experience has taught him and his team that none of them can take personal responsibility for the growth and impact of their church. "It's taught us that no one can take credit for it," he said. "It's a God thing."

Nashville Christian Family

www.NashChristian.com

20

Turning Sorrow into Joy

Christmas published his first book in 2024, using it as an opportunity to tell his story and testimony. Turning Sorrow into Joy: A Journey of Faith and Perseverance focuses on how Christmas' story upends what is generally associated with pastors and other Christian leaders. It shares how God used Christmas' experience as a rejected, unsuccessful, jobless, penniless pastor to do important work through his ministry. "You will learn how God took Kent from floundering small-town preacher to world-renowned pastor, from brokenness to healing, from adversity to blessing, and from despair to victory," according to the book's description on Amazon. Christmas said that the book has received positive feedback, and he looks forward to even more people reading it. "I want to give people hope," he said. "I want to encourage people that God can use them no matter what."



The Importance of Christian Families

His own journey as a husband and father has inspired Christmas to encourage other Christian parents to be diligent in their commitment to their children. His oldest son from his first marriage passed away two years ago and he has two grandchildren through him; he and Candy have two adult children (Jasmine Brady, 37, who serves as Regeneration's worship leader and Nicholas Christmas, 31, who serves as its missions and youth pastor).

At Regeneration Nashville, they focus on tools for families to grow closer to Christ. Children, youth, and parents are all integral to the church's ministry. According to Christmas, however, the greatest influence on a child is not a pastor, a teacher, or a church–it's a parent. "Parents have to create a godly environment for kids," he said. "We need to get our kids to church and we also need to stop letting social media raise our kids. Be aware of what your kids are seeing, and don't let a screen be a babysitter." Parents must work hard to create intentional relationships with their spouse and children–and to do the same thing with God. "The number one key is to have a prayer life," he said. "As a young man, I made a commitment to pray an hour a day. I want to be in conversation with Him. People know who Jesus is, but they don't know Him," Christmas added. "At our church, I want to introduce that idea to our members. I want to introduce them to Christ in a real way."

Looking to the Future

Regeneration Nashville has grown into a thriving community with a significant global footprint. Each week, its Sunday livestream and weekly podcasts are enjoyed by audiences spanning 50 states and nearly 100 nations, a testament to its far-reaching impact. The church began humbly but embraced a transformative vision when the Christmases rebranded it as Regeneration Nashville, marking the start of a new era.



Located in the revitalized Rivergate area, Regeneration Nashville's new stateof-the-art facility stands as a beacon of growth and excellence. This beautiful and modern space is designed to support the church's mission while serving as an inspiring home for worship, community, and outreach. It's a new location, a new time, and a new season, Sundays at 10:30 am and Wednesdays at 7:00 pm.

Christmas is excited about the future of his family's ministry at Regeneration. "We really think we're going to impact the area," he said. The Bridge ministry also remains active, with nine employees and a 20,000-foot ware-

house to accomplish its important work to Nashville's homeless community.

At 70-years-old, Christmas said that he has no thoughts of retirement. He, in fact, feels more rejuvenated than ever before. "I feel like I'm just stepping into what I was born for," he said. "I'm grateful to God for everything, and I know that the best days for the church are ahead."

Regeneration Nashville www.regenerationnashville.org

 Cheryl Wray is a freelance writer, former sports reporter, book author, and coordinator of the Southern Christian Writers Conference. She also writes about Southern sports, travel, and culture at www.cherylwray.substack.com.















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YOUTH NEWS

Unlocking the Power of Youth Harmony: "Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders"

As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, it's clear that the future of our world rests in the hands of our youth. The next generation of leaders, innovators, and change-makers are currently sitting in classrooms, participating in extracurricular activities, and engaging with their communities. But how can we harness the energy, creativity, and idealism of our youth to create a brighter future for all?

One of the most powerful ways to empower our youth is through the concept of "youth harmony." This refers to the idea of bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives to work towards a common goal. By fostering an environment of collaboration, mutual respect, and open communication, we can help our youth develop the skills, knowledge, and character necessary to become great leaders of tomorrow.

When young people come together in harmony, amazing things can happen. They begin to see beyond their differences and focus on their shared humanity. They start to appreciate the unique perspectives and strengths that each person brings to the table. And they develop a sense of empathy, compassion, and social responsibility that stays with them for the rest of their lives.

One of the most significant benefits of youth harmony is the development of leadership skills. When young people work together towards a common goal, they begin to take on different roles and responsibilities. Some may emerge as natural leaders, while others may develop skills in areas

such as communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. By providing opportunities for young people to practice leadership in a supportive and collaborative environment, we can help them develop the confidence, competence, and character necessary to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Youth harmony also plays a critical role in promoting social cohesion and community engagement. When young people from different backgrounds come together, they begin to break down stereotypes and build bridges of understanding. They develop a sense of belonging to a larger community, and they start to see themselves as active contributors to the world around them. By fostering a sense of social responsibility and community engagement, we can help our youth become more empathetic, compassionate, and committed to creating positive change in the world.

Furthermore, youth harmony provides a unique opportunity for intergenerational learning and mentorship. When young people work alongside older adults, they gain valuable insights and perspectives that can help shape their values, attitudes, and behaviors. They also develop important skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are essential for success in all areas of life. By bringing together people of different ages and backgrounds, we can create a powerful learning environment that benefits everyone involved.



In addition, youth harmony has the potential to drive positive social change and promote sustainable development. When young people come together to address social, environmental, and economic challenges, they bring a unique set of skills, perspectives, and energies to the table. They are more likely to think outside the box, challenge conventional wisdom, and develop innovative solutions to complex problems. By empowering our youth to take action and make a difference, we can create a brighter, more sustainable future for all.

As the Bible says, "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." (Colossians 3:16, NIV) This verse highlights the importance of coming together in harmony, teaching and admonishing one another, and expressing gratitude to God.

Moreover, Jesus teaches us to be the light of the world, saying, "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16, NIV) This verse emphasizes the importance of letting our light shine before others, so that they may see our good deeds and glorify God.

In conclusion, youth harmony is a powerful tool for empowering our youth and creating a brighter future for all. By coming together in unity and harmony, our young people can foster a sense of community, promote positive change, and inspire others to follow their example. As we strive to build a more just, equitable, and sustainable world, let us remember the importance of youth harmony and the role it plays in shaping the leaders of tomorrow. May we continue to support and empower our young people, that they may become the light of the world and shine brightly for all to see.

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

BEST BOOKS

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Dr. Ming Wang Hosts Monthly Zoom about New Book



Dr. Ming Wang's 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 Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm, RSVP at 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 (bur 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, www.drmingwang.com.

— Leona Walthorn



TEACHABLE **M**OMENTS

The Name of Jesus

In a number of Christian faiths, January is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus. This devotion emphasizes the reverence and honor given to the name of Jesus, reflecting on its significance and power. He is after all, the Word made flesh. The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus is celebrated on January 3rd. This focus encouraging the faithful to meditate on the name of Jesus and its importance in their spiritual lives.

According to early Christian tradition, the name "Jesus" was divinely chosen and revealed by God through an angel. In the New Testament, specifically in the Gospel of Matthew (1:21) and the Gospel of Luke (1:31), an angel appears to both Joseph and Mary, respectively, instructing them to name the child Jesus. The name "Jesus" is derived from the Hebrew name "Yeshua," which means "God saves" or "Yahweh is salvation." This name signifies the mission of Jesus to save humanity from sin and bring about salvation.

The angel's message to Joseph in Matthew 1:21 is particularly clear: "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." This underscores the purpose and divine mission of Jesus as the Savior.

In Hebrew, "Yeshua" translates to "Joshua" in English. The name "Jesus" is derived from the Greek translation "Iesous" (Iŋσοῦς), which was used in the writings of the New Testament. Over time, "Iēsous" was transliterated into Latin as "Iesus," and eventually into English as "Jesus."

Eight days, after his birth, Mary and Joseph, presented Jesus at the Temple. This was where Joseph declared his son's name as "Yeshua BarJoseph" (Jesus, son of Joseph). This act also carries profound theological and cultural importance.

Fulfillment of Prophecy: The name "Yeshua" (Jesus) means "God saves," highlighting Jesus' mission to bring salvation to humanity. This aligns with the prophecies in the Old Testament about the coming of a savior. Human and Divine Identity: Declaring Jesus as "Yeshua BarJoseph" emphasizes his dual nature. He is both fully human, being the son of Joseph, and fully divine, as the Son of God. This dual identity is central to Christian theology.

Cultural Context: In Jewish tradition, names were significant and often reflected one's heritage and mission. By naming him "Yeshua BarJoseph," it situates Jesus within the Jewish cultural and religious context, fulfilling the Law of Moses and connecting him to the lineage of David.

Public Declaration: The presentation at the Temple was a public event, marking Jesus' official introduction to the Jewish community. This act of naming by Joseph would have been a formal acknowledgment of Jesus' identity and mission.

Symbol of Obedience: Joseph's obedience in naming Jesus as instructed by the angel (Matthew 1:21) reflects his faithfulness to God's will. This act of obedience is a model for all believers.

This moment is a beautiful convergence of divine revelation, cultural tradition, and theological significance, underscoring the profound mystery of the Incarnation. Using the Power of the Wisdom of Three, our Lord gave us a three-pronged connection with Jesus' lineage through Joseph, Mary, and

God. These connections are unifying, profound, and perfect in theological significance.

Lineage of Joseph

In the male-dominated culture of the time, lineage and inheritance were typically traced through the father. Joseph, being a descendant of King David, legally placed Jesus within the Davidic line, fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah would come from David's lineage. This legal recognition was crucial for Jesus to be accepted as the rightful heir to David's throne.

Lineage of Mary

Mary, also being from the line of David, provided the biological connection to David's lineage. This bloodline connection through Mary emphasizes Jesus' true humanity. The virgin birth underscores the miraculous nature of Jesus' conception, highlighting that while he is fully human, his birth was divinely orchestrated.

Lineage of God

The divine paternity of Jesus, being the Son of God, establishes his divine nature. This connection is central to Christian belief, as it affirms that Jesus is not just a human prophet or teacher, but God incarnate. This divine lineage underscores the unique nature of Jesus as both fully human and fully divine, capable of bridging the divide between God and humanity.

This threefold connection beautifully encapsulates the mystery of the Incarnation, where Jesus is both the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy and the divine Savior of the world. It highlights the perfect union of human and divine in Jesus, making him the ultimate mediator between God and humanity. Even though, many people are and have been named Joshua, make no mistake, there was, is, and forever will be only ONE, Jesus.

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

PARENTING POINTS

New Year, New Season of Single Parenting

Do you have a single parent tribe or at least two people to do life with during your single parent season? I enjoyed this part of my own journey for seven and a half years and tried to be very intentional with how I planned my "family time" and my "alone time."

Family time can be defined in a variety of ways: 1) time with my biological children; 2) time with my children and extended family; 3) time with my children and other single parent families... the list can go on. The most important part of this is to continue to highlight and celebrate being a family, even when there is just one parent present. The love and stability of a single parent family can be a complete blessing and delight to the children in the family – the kids all take their emotional cues from the parent. If the parent operates and is intentional to have family game nights, family devotions, family trips, family movie nights and make family memories, then those will be a positive and powerful part of the kids' childhood.

The other important part of this season of single parenting is how a person spends their "alone time" when the kids are with their other parent. First, we want to be sure our cup is full and that we are spending quality time with the Lord. Just like a car cannot operate without fuel in the tank, we cannot operate at our best without our Spiritual life being active and the top priority! Instead of getting on social media and Facebook, let's get our face in the Book



of Life and allow the Word to permeate and ignite hope and healing within us. When the Lord is our stability and our top priority, then we can function with more joy and hope than if we are spiritually depleted. Sometimes this means we literally sit down and open the Bible and just start reading. It doesn't always "feel good" when we start; however, the Lord promises to be Present and to meet us individually and to refresh our spirit. When we start with the Lord and then add in healthy, Godly friends to spend time with, our "alone time" doesn't seem so alone. I also suggest finding other people to serve - elderly people, disabled people, homeless people. Finding others who can truly benefit from our time and our friendship is a way to give God's love to others and it has a powerful way of refilling our own tank at the same time.

As this new year begins, it is the best time to start new habits and develop new hobbies. Let your kids know that you are excited about planning family time every month and draw them into the gameplan. Then also

make an intentional "God plan" to spend time in the Word, followed by a "fun plan" with others while the kids are away so that when the kids return you are replenished and spiritually healthy. The Lord will be with you ever moment of every day – you are never alone! 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. Psalm 103: 17 "From everlasting to everlasting, the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children."

— Tammy Daughtry, Founder of CoParenting International. For more free resources please see www.CoParentingInternational.com



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SPECIAL FEATURE

Archaeologists Uncover Earliest Known Evidence of Christianity North of the Alps: 'Unusual for this Time'

The earliest known evidence of Christianity north of Italy was recently unveiled by archaeologists, who call the discovery one of the "most important testimonies of early Christianity." The artifact, publicized by the Frankfurt Archaeological Museum last week, is called the Frankfurt silver inscription. Discovered in 2018, the inscription has been analyzed and studied for years before finally being released to the public this month.

The Frankfurt silver inscription is an engraving on silver foil that consists of 18 lines written in Latin. It dates to between 230 and 260 A.D. and was discovered wrapped in a small silver amulet. In a press release translated from German, the museum explained that the artifact was found in a third-century grave in Hesse, Germany, in what was once the former Roman city of Nida. The inscription begins, "In the name of Saint Titus, Holy, holy, holy! In the name of Jesus Christ, God's Son!"

Saint Titus was a first-century Christian missionary and disciple of Paul the Apostle. The inscription also calls for the amulet to protect "the man who gives to the will the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son." "The heavenly, the earthly and the underground, and every tongue confess (to Jesus Christ)," the text concludes. Written in Latin, the inscription took several weeks to decipher due to its deteriorated condition. Archaeologists needed to "digitally unroll" the silver foil, which had been (Frankfurt Archaeological Museum) crumpled for around 1,800 years. Using computed tomography and stateof-the-art technological equipment, the text was finally decrypted in May. It was then translated over an extended period

"Sometimes it took weeks, even months, for me to have the next idea," Goethe University professor Markus Scholz said of the translation process. "I brought in experts from the history of theology, among other things, and piece by piece we have approached the text together and ultimately deciphered it." Scholz added that the inscription was "very sophisticated" and called its author "an elaborate writer."

of time.

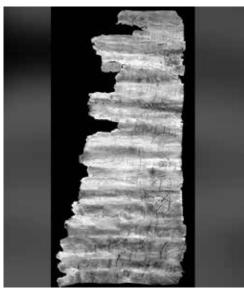
"It is unusual that the inscription is completely in Latin," Scholz said. "This is unusual for this time. Such inscriptions were



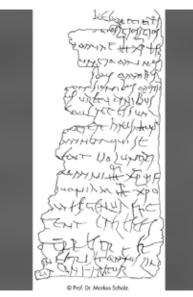
Experts recently decoded and released the earliest evidence of Christianity north of the Alps found in a third-century grave. (Frankfurt Archaeological Museum)

usually written in amulets in Greek or Hebrew." Not only is the inscription not written in Hebrew, it doesn't reference Judaism at all, nor does it contain any pagan elements, which makes it even more unique.

"It is unusual that there is no reference in the inscription to any other belief besides Christianity," the museum's press release added. "Usually until the fifth century, a mixture of different faiths can always be expected with precious metal amulets of this kind. Often



The early Christian inscription was written in Latin, which was unusual at the time.



The silver foil was "digitally unrolled" and translated by experts. (Frankfurt **Archaeological Museum**)

there are still elements from Judaism or pagan influences."

"But in this amulet neither Yahweh, the almighty God of Judaism, nor the archangels Raphael, Gabriel, Michael or Suriel are mentioned, no forefathers of Israel like Isaac or Jacob. And also no pagan elements like demons. The amulet is purely Christian." The press release called the artifact "one of the most important testimonies of early Christianity worldwide."

"So far, there has been no such early, authentic proof of pure Christianity north of the Alps," the statement explained. "All [other] finds are at least around 50 years younger."

"There are references from historiography to the first Christian groups in Gaul and perhaps also in the province of Upper Germania in the late second century," the statement added. "However, certain evidence of Christian life in the northern Alpine regions of the Roman Empire generally only comes from the fourth century AD."

"These 18 lines, experts agree, will enormously enrich previous research on the spread of Christianity and the late period of Roman rule on the right of the Rhine."

— Andrea Margolis is a writer for Fox News Digital and Fox Business. Readers can send story tips to andrea.margolis@fox.com.





PARENT WITH PURPOSE

Implement Important Skills at Mealtime

More and more parents are realizing the importance of mealtime. But a shared family meal is about more than food. Children can learn new and essential skills at mealtime.

Manners. Kids learn to say "please" and "thank you" when asking for a dish. Other table manners could include keeping elbows off the table, sitting straight, and waiting to speak after swallowing food. Learning these basic manners will help kids feel confident in spaces outside of the home.

Social cues. If two people are talking, guide your kids to watch for clues about when a conversation will end or where to interject. Eye contact is essential when speaking or listening to another person. Of course, all phones and toys should be put away so the focus is on each other, not objects.

Conversation. This can be a time to discuss complex topics. You'll want the kids to listen graciously and not interrupt. You also are teaching them to think critically before speaking. (I provide weekly conversation starters on my Social Media accounts.)

Building up one another. Encourage others during the week. On birthdays, go around the table and have each person say something kind to build up the birthday boy or girl. You can do this for adults, too.

Prayer. Meals are a natural time for kids to learn to pray. Start with rote or memorized prayers and branch out to personalized ones. Pray not only for the food but also for immediate concerns.

other. Our family implemented a "No Manners" night. I knew from these nights that our kids knew their manners because they broke every one of them.



Trying new foods. If you're a busy mom, you may want to skip this. But trying foods from other cultures can expand the palette and prepare your kids to make or eat unusual dishes.

Set examples of a healthy marriage. Your kids are watching you. They can feel tension but also sense a deep, abiding love. Leave your private discussions for later when it's just you. Kids should see Dad serving Mom and Mom serving Dad. When there's a healthy marriage, peace reigns.

Bible reading. A friend used the breakfast table for a time of family devotion. Everyone arrived at a specific time, and they read and discussed the text. As the kids grew and schedules interrupted this time, the mom left the devotion on the table for the kids to read, and they discussed it later.

The purpose is not to implement all nine ideas at one meal but to try one or more to create a safe and welcoming space around the table for everyone.

— Sally Cressman is the author of The Dance of Easter. She posts family conversation starters on Facebook and Instagram each Thursday.

Having fun. The table should be where the family can relax and enjoy each

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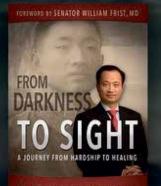
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(from left) Jim Daly, Chuck Swindoll, Anne Graham Lotz, Colin Smith, Alistair Begg, Adrian Rogers, Tony Evans, Charles Stanley, Janet Mefferd, Richard Hamlet, Michael Youssef, Robert Jeffress And Many More!

HASSLE FREE ZONE

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Messy Kid's Room – Get the Kids Involved With Cleaning!

Kids cleaning—it's not a sight all parents see every day. Cleaning a messy kid's room includes the following steps:

Kids' Cleaning Tips: How to Clean Your Room

If you're a kid or teen reading this, thanks for studying the art of cleaning your room! Knowing how to clean your room the right way will save you time and leave you with a room you're happy to spend time in. Plus, as you know, it's easier to focus on your homework if you have a clean space. You can do this. Just follow these steps, and you'll have the clean room you need, fast:

• Put away your clothes: Are there clothes thrown around the room?

Hang up the ones you can wear again, and put the dirty ones in the laundry basket/hamper.

• Make your bed: If your sheets haven't been washed in a week or two, take them to the laundry room with your dirty clothes. Once your bed is made, you can use it for organizing your stuff. For example, you can group together all your books or school supplies on the bed so you can put them all away at once.

• Take care of the clutter: Toys, books, dirty dishes, video game controllers ... Put everything where it belongs

• Put dirty toys in a neat pile so you can clean them later: Toys will never get cleaned if you just keep putting them back where they go, right?

• Clean your dresser, desk and any other surface: Put some warm water and a few drops of dish soap in a bucket. Dip a clean cloth in the bucket, and wipe down all the hard surfaces. Or you can use some pre-moistened wipes. Don't forget to clean your doorknobs, window sills, bookshelves, computer and other surfaces that collect dust. Dry everything with a towel when you're done.

• Clean any glass: Use glass cleaner and a soft cloth or paper towels to clean your bedroom mirror and windows. Newspapers or coffee filters also work great as cloths for clean, streak-free windows and mirrors!

• Vacuum the furniture: Are there crumbs in your chair or on your bedspread? Vacuum them off with a brush attachment. Try to do this about once a month.

• Clean the floor: Save the floor for last because it can get dirty when you're moving everything around. First, make sure you pick up any coins or other small things that could accidentally get vacuumed or swept up. If you have carpet, vacuum the entire floor, including under the bed. If you have hard-wood floor, vinyl or something else, sweep the entire room with a broom and dustpan. After that, use a mop (or just a towel dipped in your cleaning bucket) to clean the stuck-on dirt.

Fun Ways to Clean Your Room

• Music: Cleaning is always more fun with the right music. If you're cleaning with others, have a dance battle while you clean! If you're by yourself, work on your moves.

• Hoops: Whether you're throwing away trash or putting clothes in the laundry hamper, why not make a game of basketball out of anything that isn't breakable.

• Breaks: It's OK to take breaks after finishing a big task. Use your break time

to play a quick video game, get a

snack or do some jumping jacks to get your heart pumping. Then get back to cleaning!

• Mop Socks: Spray wood or vinyl floors with a cleaning solution, put on a pair of clean, fluffy socks and start sliding! Your socks will clean up the dirt while you have fun. You may want to use a pair of socks that are close to retirement, as they'll get extremely dirty in the process.

• Hidden Gems: Have someone hide a few prizes – like some snacks or a few dollar bills – in the messy room. That way, you (the kiddo) can discover prizes while you clean.

Age-Appropriate Chores for Kids

Consider these options, and play it by ear based on how your child responds. If your kid loves cleaning, congratulations! But usually it's more of a balancing act to see what chores give your children purpose without overwhelming them

Chores for kids, ages 2 to 5:

- Put toys away
- Dust
- Stack books and games
- Put clothes in hamper
- Use a handheld vacuum in small areas

Chores for kids, ages 6 to 8:

- Any of the above chores
- Make their bed (to the best of their current ability)
- Sweep floor
- Sort laundry

Chores for kids, ages 9 and up:

- Any of the above chores
- Hang clean clothes
- Clean glass and surfaces
- Vacuum and mop
- Change sheets
- Clean toys in dishwasher or the sink (without bleach or harsh chemicals)



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ENCOURAGING WORD

Buzzards, Bats, Bumblebees, and People?

Buzzards

If you put a buzzard in a pen that is 6 feet by 8 feet and is entirely open at the top, the bird, in spite of its ability to fly, it will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of 10 to 12 feet. Without space to run, as is its habit, it will not even attempt to fly but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.



Bats

The ordinary bat that flies around at night,

a remarkably nimble creature in the air, cannot take off from a level place. If it is placed on the floor or flat ground, all it can do is shuffle about helplessly and, no doubt, painfully, until it reaches some slight elevation from which it can throw itself into the air. Then, at once, it takes off like a flash.

Bumblebees

A bumblebee, if dropped into an open tumbler, will be there until it dies, unless it is taken out.

It never sees the means of escape at the top but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will seek a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.

People

In many ways, there are lots of people like the buzzard, the bat, and the bumblebee.

They are struggling about day in and day out with all their problems and frustrations, not ever realizing - that all they have to do is look up!

God is waiting and desires to hear from you, He cares for you!

— Author Unknown

"Don't worry or be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, humbly let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7 ESV"

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall]direct your paths." Proverbs 3: 5-36 NKJV

"We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps." NLT

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

HASSLE FREE ZONE

Ants, What to Do?

After a long day, all most of us want is to get home and curl up with a tub of ice cream or that apple pie from the weekend. Well, it turns out so do sugar ants. Have you ever walked into your kitchen and found a swarm of bugs trying to crawl off with that forgotten piece of candy your toddler left on the counter? Well, those are sugar ants for you! Sugar ants, also known as odorous house ants, are attracted to anything sweet. They can march in long lines, invading your countertops and pantry, searching for crumbs, or spilled sugar.

How Can You Tell if You Have a Sugar Ant Problem?

• Live Ants: Spotting a bunch of ants crawling around on your floor, in your cabinets, or on your countertops is the first obvious red flag.

• Outdoor Nests: These sneaky critters love to set up camp under parking lots, driveways, and sidewalks. Keep an eye out for small dirt mounds popping up from cracks in the concrete or asphalt. If they're close to your building, they'll likely find their way inside.

• Frass: Carpenter ants are the culprits behind this one. They love to build their nests inside walls, tunneling through damp or rotten wooden beams. And what do they leave behind? Piles of sawdust and debris called frass. Not exactly the decor you were going for.

• Swarmers: When a sugar ant colony is thriving, they produce winged reproductives. So, if you spot ants with wings buzzing around your windows or doors, Houston, we've got a problem.

• Chewing Noises: These insects, especially carpenter and pavement ants, can make some noise. You may hear them as they go about their business of building cozy homes inside structures. The larger the population, the louder and more noticeable the chewing noises.

How To Get Rid of Sugar Ants In Your Home: Clean, Clean, Clean

First things first, it's time to channel your inner cleaning superhero. Sugar ants are always on the lookout for food sources, so keeping your kitchen and dining area squeaky clean is crucial. Regularly wipe down countertops, sweep up crumbs, and vacuum any areas where food particles might have fallen. Don't forget to clean your pet's feeding area as well because ants are not picky eaters. By eliminating their food supply, you'll make your home less appealing to these sweet-seeking critters.

Seal the Entry Points

Sugar ants are tiny and can find their way into your home through even the tiniest cracks and crevices. Take some time to inspect your windows, doors, and other potential entry points. Seal up gaps and openings using caulk or weatherstripping. This will help prevent new ant scouts from finding their way inside.

Remove Temptation

To win the war against sugar ants, you need to eliminate any temptation in their path. Store food items in airtight containers, including sugar, honey, and other sweet treats. Don't leave fruit or food scraps uncovered on your countertops. Keep your pantry organized and regularly check for any signs of ant activity.

Professional Pest Control

Do keep in mind these tips can help limit infestations, but it is most recommended to contact a licensed pest control company. Pest control professionals have the knowledge, experience, and tools to tackle sugar ant infestations effectively. Waynes Services can identify the source of the problem, treat the affected areas, and provide you with a tailored plan to keep those pesky sugar ants at bay. A professional touch is the best way to ensure a sugar ant-free home.

— Meredith Boyd, Brand Marketing Specialist – Waynes, www.callwaynes.

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Prayer?

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TEACHABLE MOMENTS An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

Fear and anxiety are universal experiences of human beings and in the Buddhist culture there's an interesting phrase with metaphor that is often used to address and manage one's fears: "Invite your fear in for tea." In my very early years as a psychotherapist, I began my career as both the Executive Director and full-time therapist establishing the first mental health center in a northern county of Tennessee, adjacent to Kentucky.



One of the very first individuals I consulted with was a 4 ½ year old youngster, who we will call Johnny. Johnny's father was in the medical profession and

spoke to me one day at the hospital because he was very worried about his son's health due to his fear of eating any solid food. Apparently, this incident happened when Johnny had bitten off a large piece of apple which got stuck in his throat. Understandably, this was very frightening to Johnny and since the incident johnny had essentially refused to eat any solid food. The physician and his wife had concocted several energy nutritional drinks, but their son continued to lose weight, and therefore the physician asked me if I would help their son and of course I agreed to see him first thing the next morning. I had never dealt with this type of issue, but I have begun to think of a couple of possible options.

Early the next morning I visited two or three grocery stores looking for the largest, prettiest red apple that I could find. Finally, I found it and went to my office, and it was not long after that Johnny arrived and immediately he saw the huge bright red apple sitting on my desk. Johnny immediately commented, with a frightened look on his face "did I know that he choked on a big piece of apple.... I felt I was going to die!" I said "yes, and that must've been really scary!" Little Johnny continued, "I'm really afraid to eat anything now." I empathetically nodded with him. We talked probably for 20 minutes about everything that was interesting to Johnny and then I said: "Johnny, if I can do something magical with this apple, I don't think you would be afraid of it." He looked at me curiously, and I further stated, "if I can place this apple in my hands and break it in half (sort of like in Karate) would you eat ½ this apple while I ate the other half"?

For about a half a minute he studied the proposition and smiled at me and said I don't think you can break the apple in two pieces"! Well I confessed to Johnny (I really believe it's so important to always be honest with a client) that I never attempted to break an apple in half, but my son and I we're just becoming involved in martial arts and I said I don't know if I can break it in half but if I did will you eat your half of the apple as I eat my half? He affirmatively answered yes! (Now here was the challenge could I do it... I never had, but I believed I could).

I confidently picked up the apple and said to the apple I think I'm going to split you into two so that my friend Johnny can enjoy this delicious apple as well as myself. Johnny was absolutely focused on the apple and especially the way I held the apple and so I intensely focused on the apple.... mustering all the energy I had, and I perceived the apple broken and then I grabbed tightly and slightly twisted my hands, and suddenly there was a loud snap, and the apple was split in two. We both were surprised! I handed Johnny his half of

the apple and I took a bite out of mine and said now it's important to eat this whole half apple one little bite at a time and not to be in a hurry. Also, I had a little bottle of water for each of us as we nibbled away on the apple for 15 minutes or so, that is until only the core was left! We talked a lot about eating and enjoying what we eat, savoring the flavor etc. As we finished up, Johnny was excited to walk out and show his mom and dad the tiny core that was left of the huge apple. That was the only time I saw this cute, pleasant young man, who skipped along with his parents as they walked out of my office. A few weeks later in conversation with his parents,

I came to understand that Johnny did not have any further eating problems, but he was much slower and deliberate when he ate, especially when he ate large red apples!

The moral of the story....Invite your fears to come have dinner! You will be surprised how much you will grow and become a better version of you!

- Tim Lynch PhD. Licensed Clinical Psychologist

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Spiritual Goal for January

START on the Right Foot

Joshua 24: 15

God created all things that exists...and then made a man and a woman...giving them the ability to make choices. In other words, they were not robots that had to perform as they were programmed. We are in that linage...and here we are on the first day of 2025...with the ability to make choices...in the way we think... what we believe...and how we decide to live...not as a robot but as a free-thinking person made in the Lord's Image.

Let's begin this new journey TODAY with some tried and proven wisdom. Our Scripture reference will help us "start on the right foot".

Joshua said, "Choose for yourselves TODAY whom you will serve...but as for me...and my house...we will serve the Lord."

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for giving us the choice of free-will. You would not have been true to Your character had You done otherwise. We appreciate Your servant Joshua...and how he showed wisdom in leading the nation of Israel with Your Spirit as his Guide. We make the same commitment TODAY.

Lord, a life without You...would be a foolish mistake. We choose You...and ask that You accept our heart-felt praise...admiration... and gratitude for creating us...and allowing us to be ONE with You TODAY and forever. Let it be. Let it be ... PLEASE.

— Ralph E. Vaughn

PLAN OF SALVATION

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

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

God's Plan of Salvation

God created us to honor and serve Him

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

Each of us has sinned against God

Romans 3:10: As it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one" Romans3:23: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God and Heaven Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Good works cannot ever earn God's forgiveness and Salvation Titus 3:5: not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

God loves each of us

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

Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place, paying the penalty for our sin Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

We each must accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior

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

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

To accept Christ into your heart and life, pray a simple prayer along these lines - "Dear God, I know that I am a sinner and I am sorry for my sins. I know that Jesus died for my sins and the sins of the world. Right now, I ask Jesus into my heart and receive Him as my personal Savior. Forgive me of my sins, thank you for saving me through the blood of Jesus. Please Lord, help me live for you. In Jesus name, amen."

All scriptures are taken from The New King James Version of the Holy Bible. If you do not have your own Bible, email publisher@nashchristian.com and we will make sure you receive one.

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MONEY MATTERS

Dave Ramsey's EntreLeadership

So, You Want to Buy a Business....

Dave,

It's always been a dream of mine to buy and own a business. A few weeks ago, *I was approached with an opportunity that could make this dream come true.* How do I know if what I'm being offered is a good deal and if I'm ready for something like this?

Lee

Lee,

Buying a business can either be one of the greatest purchases of your life, or one of the biggest mistakes you've made. And I'm going to do my best to keep you from making a mistake.

I want you to think seriously about a few things and keep some questions in mind. Then, at the end, if you still think buying is a good idea by the end of this article, you might be in business.

Imagine waking up on a Monday morning one year from now. Are you still enthusiastic about this line of work? Your vocation needs to be a vacation. Otherwise, running a business is too much work. If you're only in it for the money, you're setting yourself up for failure, because there isn't enough money in the world to make you work as hard as you'll have to work running a small business.

Think about spending some time around the business. Sit in there for a week to see how it operates, and learn all the ins and outs. Then, if you're truly invested and passionate about this new business opportunity, move on to my next question-what's the business worth?

A business is only worth the income it creates. It doesn't matter if it's in a really great location, or if it's a well-known brand name. Those things have no value if they're not creating income, so figure out the net profit of this business.

Notice that I said net profit, not just sales. When determining the business's worth, you need to focus on all three areas-gross revenue, expenses and the profit it generates as a result. Become an expert on the business's financial performance. Ask to see their past three years of financial statements, so you know what you'd be getting yourself into. Once you've done that, ask what you'll make on your money. You can make about 12% with a good mutual fund, so if you're going to take the risk of buying a small business, you'll want to make at least 20% on it.

Another number to look at is the book value. If you collected all the receivables, and you sold all the equipment and the inventory and closed the business, what would you have in your pocket? That's the book value. If the

business currently has \$40,000 in inventory, \$30,000 worth of equipment and \$30,000 in receivables, the book value of that business is worth \$100,000. Somewhere in between net profit and book value is a fair price. If the net profit of this business is \$60,000 and they're asking \$185,000 for it, then that's a pretty good buy. But you need to really get into their books and make sure their numbers are real.

And even if you're great with numbers, it's a good idea to find a financial expert to help you through this process. It's an extra set of eyes to review and verify all the documents and give you an unbiased opinion on the deal.

Next, what are the costs of running the business? As you're researching what the business is worth, you'll come across the costs of keeping the business running while you're researching what the business is worth. But your homework doesn't stop there.

Take time to really examine the business and understand everything that goes along with keeping it afloat. This includes employee payroll and benefits, insurance, taxes, contracts, inventory, leases, cash flow-and anything else that helps run the business. Take time to think about the future, too. Do you

> want to keep the business where it's at, or grow it? What are your five-year goals for this business? Are there any expenses you may need to factor in to get there?

Finally, what's included? When buying a business, you need to find out exactly what's included in the asking price. How are they deciding the value of their business? Does the price include current inventory? Office equipment? Furniture? Get a list of everything that's included from the seller and what kind of condition it's in. And don't just take their word for it. Go check out their stuff yourself. It's also important to know all the baggage that might be included in this buy. Are there any debts or liens involved?

You don't want to buy a business only to find out you bought someone else's problems.

One of the best benefits of buying an established business is that customers are included. The business should come with at least something of a reputation (hopefully a good one) and customers already in place. But be aware, many sellers will try to exaggerate how much their reputation and customer base are worth in finding their selling price. That's why studying their books and knowing their customer satisfaction is so important.

So, how're you feeling about things now, Lee?

— Leadership and small-business expert Dave Ramsey is the CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored eight national bestselling books, including "EntreLeadership," and he's a host of "The Ramsey Show" and "The EntreLeadership Podcast."



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