

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

Billy Graham Rapid Response Team



This week, during National Police Week, tens of thousands will gather in Washington, D.C., to honor law enforcement officials killed in the line of duty. The week of remembrance began as a day—May 15—which President John F. Kennedy proclaimed to be Peace Officers Memorial Day in 1962. For Chad Stillman, a former police officer from Wisconsin, this week is a sobering reminder for him of God's grace. As far as he's concerned, the unmerited mercy of his heavenly Father is the only thing that kept him from becoming one of the fallen. It's been almost 16 months now, but many details of that deadly Jan. 17, 2018, day are forever etched into Chad Stillman's mind. On that day, the 16-year veteran with the Racine (Wisconsin) Police Department was involved in a shooting.

He remembers feeling helpless in the moments that followed. But he and his partner Peter Boeck—who had attended Bible study together the night before—knew they weren't without hope. Standing together in the snow that cold January day, the police officers sought refuge in Christ while medical personnel tended the suspect.

"We walked over to the side, and we held each other's heads and we prayed," Stillman remembered. "We prayed for that man laying in the backyard, that he wouldn't die, and for his family and for our community because we knew it would never be the same again."

It had been a relatively quick encounter. A traffic stop turned into a foot chase. The suspect had a weapon and reportedly refused to drop it despite requests from the officers. Reports further indicate the suspect later pointed his firearm at the officers. They relied on their training and immediately neutralized the perceived threat on their lives.

The suspect later died on the way to the hospital, and the Racine County District Attorney determined there was no "basis to prosecute the law enforcement officers involved." But that one harrowing moment of gunfire changed everything. People protested. Some individuals made death threats against Stillman, his family and others. His heart broke as he watched the news and learned about officers nationwide who died in similar incidents. Fifty-two officers—that's one a week—were killed by gunfire in 2018. This year, just 20 weeks into 2019, 18 officers, including Mooresville (N.C.) Police Officer Jordan Sheldon, have been shot and killed in the line of duty.

"I was watching all these officers hurting and that's when I decided I've got to make this count," Stillman said. "It was an agreement between the Lord and I, but me telling the Lord, 'You spared me for a reason, and that reason wasn't for me to do something for myself. I need to make this count.'"

His determination wasn't without angst, though. He worried about his family, his fellow officers—would this shooting cost their lives? Would he be permitted to return to the only job he ever wanted?

"It felt unbearable at times," Stillman said. "I had to constantly remind myself of who God is and how big He is and how He wasn't surprised by this."

"He knew this was going to happen. He wasn't caught off guard, and He doesn't waste anything in His economy. Those truths are what kept me from going insane. I could tell myself and completely believe that God, 'You have this even though my mind is completely out of control. You've got me right where You want me apparently.' I want to be drawn into that."

So, when a post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis sidelined his police career, he leaned into what God had for him. Police work, he said, was the only thing that ever came naturally to him.

But God, it seemed to Stillman, was preparing the Midwesterner for another route. Connections were made and before too long, Stillman was uprooting his family and moving 800-some miles southeast of Racine to North Carolina's largest city. He began work later that year with the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team (RRT) in its law enforcement ministry.

"I think being in law enforcement ministry has helped in healing me a bit because I'm able to focus on the needs of others more than myself," Stillman said. "I think there's a goodness in the way God designs us to benefit when we're focused on others."

Stillman prays with a man during Officer Jordan Sheldon's Celebration of Life last week in Mooresville, North Carolina. Since deploying to Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team has responded 15 times to police-involved shootings and/or related civil unrest. The RRT has 229 crisis-trained individuals in its strategic chaplain ministry.

Last week, the Rapid Response Team deployed to Mooresville, North Carolina, after Officer Jordan Sheldon was killed during a traffic stop. Kevin Williams, an RRT manager and former member of law enforcement himself, watched Stillman share the peace of Christ with hurting police officers.

"God is using him in a very unique, specific, gifted way," Williams said. "I mean, he's created for such a time as this, if I can say it like that, with his career and experiences. Through his trauma and suffering and pain and everything, now God's turned that caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly flying around. He knows how to perfectly connect with his fellow brothers and sisters that are actively serving that have to deal with evil seven days a week, 24 hours a day."

Every situation is different but Stillman and his fellow crisis-trained chaplains do their best to bring the peace and comfort of Jesus Christ wherever they go.

"[Law enforcement] is a tough job, so in our position we get to come into these tough spots and help officers through what they're dealing with," Stillman said. "Really there's no secret potion but there is a relationship with One Person. You can endure it a lot more easily when you know the hope of Christ. That's why I love what we do."

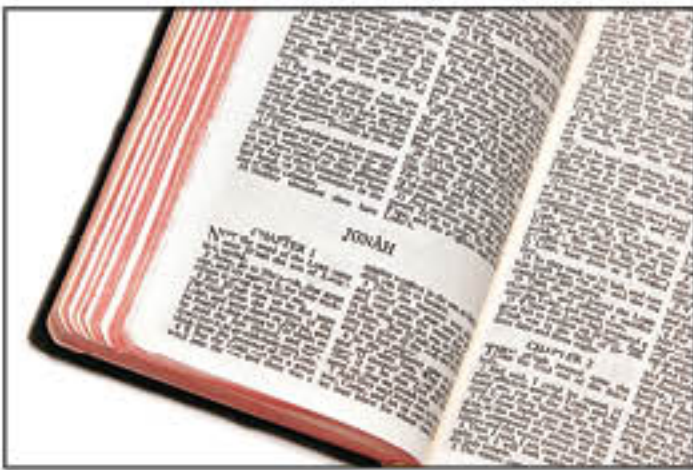
Is God Calling You To
Something Greater?

By Brian Barrier
Burke County



We have all heard the phrase, “the Lord works in mysterious ways”, right? Many people may even quote that as a bible verse. According to Wikipedia, it’s origin probably came from a Christian Hymn written in 1773 by William Cowper entitled “Light shining Out of Darkness” where he uses a similar phrase. God does tell us in Isaiah 55:8-11, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (KJV) We will never completely understand why and how God works and how He can use anything or anyone to accomplish His will here on earth – at least not while we are here. For the past 11 years, I have enjoyed a comfortable sales management career. I have learned managing outside sales, business management, video editing, website design, and many other important skills, but I was just meandering through life with no real zeal for doing God’s work. Inside, I knew there had to be more to my Christian walk and to my life. My wife, Michelle and I along with our two sons have attended a local church in the small Enola community just outside of Morganton, North Carolina. We suffered the loss of a few family members unexpectedly the past few years that shook us up, but we have continued to be blessed and somewhat content. Now you can probably see where this is headed, right? Only as God can orchestrate, He started putting things and people in place years ago to accomplish His purpose. I believe that I first met Doug Harrell back in 2013 when he visited the automobile dealership where I was the sales manager. Naturally, I thought he was there to sell us advertising in the Blue Ridge Christian News but what I didn’t really grasp at the time is that he was there on a mission for Jesus Christ! We agreed to advertise in the paper and continued to do so over the next 5 years. I enjoyed the friendship Doug and I developed over the years and I looked forward to our time together each month as he would usually stop in just to say hello and see if we needed anything. It was on one such visit in 2017 or 2018 that I told Doug how I would love to be part of such an important ministry someday. Deep inside, I felt unworthy and didn’t believe God could ever really use me for something so important. And besides, Doug wasn’t driving up in a high-dollar European vehicle so it couldn’t pay a whole lot! He commented that he wasn’t getting any younger and maybe someday he would be ready to hand off the paper to someone else, but he didn’t expect that to be anytime soon. (After all, he was on a mission from God). Several months later, during another visit to the dealership, I learned Doug was experiencing some health issues and he commented that he might consider selling the paper a little sooner than he thought but I didn’t get the impression that he was ready to give it up. He asked me if I was serious when I told him I wanted to be involved in such a ministry and I again said yes, but in the back of my mind I didn’t really believe it would happen. For the next 5 months, I became so unsettled at work. I can’t even explain it properly. Looking back, I know now that God through the Holy Spirit was working on me but at the time, I just felt frustrated at work constantly. The owner of the dealership was so kind and accommodating and my team there were great. It made no sense. Finally, I decided to leave the dealership and really didn’t have a solid plan to provide income for my family. I called Doug just to let him know that I was leaving the dealership so that he could stop by and get another contact for the advertising there. I started adverting to do tractor work and since I had a life and health insurance license, I put some ads on social media to generate income. I felt so unsure and out of place with what I was doing. Doug called and asked me to have lunch with him to which I agreed. During lunch, I told him what I was doing and he asked if I wanted to do sales for the Blue Ridge Christian News in McDowell and Burke counties along with insurance and tractor work and that would give me some time to decide if I REALLY wanted to possibly take over the paper one day. I thought that was a great idea, so I planned on coming to their office in Spruce Pine to sign an agreement to work on a commission basis. I finally got to meet Doug’s wife, Barbara at the office and we had a great visit. Somehow, I left there without signing any kind of agreement and went back to Morganton. I can’t even explain how that happened! I kept feeling a tug in my heart (from the Holy Spirit) telling me that I needed to buy the paper and commit to God’s work full time. I was so upset and confused that I hardly slept at all. I kept feeling like God was saying, “Brian, you are 47 years old and haven’t done anything for Me or to further my kingdom, it’s time”. It was like I had no control over what happened next. I constructed an email and sent it to Doug. I told him I wanted to buy the paper and I offered all the money my wife and I had saved, my 401k...everything! I couldn’t even believe I was doing this. I knew the paper wouldn’t be able to pay us very much and I would probably never put the money back into savings or retirement. I just kept seeing Matthew 6:31 when Jesus said, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (NKJV) I knew the paper was a valuable tool for God’s work and it had to carry on. Doug replied to my email that he and Barbara would talk about it and pray about it and would try to get back to me by Monday or Tuesday the following week. I kept telling myself all the reasons I should not be

doing this and how it was a big mistake and that I wasn’t worthy to take on this ministry. I was on my knees at the alter during church that Sunday and prayed for God to forgive me for every sin known and unknown and then said I would commit to this work in the name of Jesus if He was sure I was the one to do it. I was pretty much a nervous wreck by this time. When we got home from church, I had a voicemail from Doug. In my mind I almost wanted him to say they couldn’t or wouldn’t do it. Doug’s voice said they knew God had put it on their heart that I was to be the person to take over the Blue Ridge Christian News and they wanted to go forward with it. I cried and doubted everything. Satan was working hard to put doubt in my mind. I asked my mother-in-law, Cathy Pritchard if she would be willing to help with editing and accounting at the paper. She had recently retired from the Burke County Health Department and I thought she would enjoy having something to fill some of the time. I also really NEEDED her. That following Monday Cathy and I got in the car to drive up to Spruce Pine. As we were driving, she said something like, “so we’re going up to their office in Spruce Pine to meet them and talk about the paper and maybe about you buying the paper, right”? I guess it never occurred to me that maybe I hadn’t told her I had already agreed to buy the Blue Ridge Christian News! I said, “No, I actually bought the paper already so we’re going up to learn how to manage it”. I am sure you can imagine what she was thinking! Almost immediately, I transferred all the money I had to Doug and Barbara and we started the process of a crash course in managing the paper. The past few weeks have been a real whirlwind of learning new things, meeting new people and praying that God would continue to bless this mission of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ through the paper. Each day I wake up and pray and ask God to lead and guide me. I commit to knocking on doors and telling our story all day to potential advertisers and God has been faithful to soften hearts and provide the revenue to keep the paper moving forward.



Just like Johah not wanting to go to Nineveh or Moses giving God so many excuses about why he wasn’t the right man to go to Pharaoh, we can all be hesitant to say yes to God’s calling on our lives. The flesh of this world gets in the way and pride becomes our stumbling block. Perhaps our past sins make us feel unworthy and not useful. God assures us in His Word that once we call on the name of Jesus and submit to Him, we are washed clean as snow and our sins are not only forgiven but erased! Jesus reminds us in Matthew 9:37, “Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few’.” (NKJV). If you feel the Holy Spirit tugging at your heart today, don’t run away. Make the decision to say yes. Whatever happened yesterday is in the past and will be forgiven through the sacrificed blood of Jesus. Don’t let the enemy make you believe that you can’t be used by God because, as we see so many examples in the Bible, that God uses ordinary sinners like you and me every day!!

Brian Barrier is a life-long resident of Burke County, U.S. Army Veteran, a member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church and Publisher of the Blue Ridge Christian News.

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"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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The Bridge Church of WNC

207 Pinebridge Avenue
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.bridgewnc.org

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

Sunday Service 10:30AM
Wednesday Service 7:00PM
Church Office M-F
9:00AM-3:00PM

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280 Chapel St.
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828-765-6590
www.berrychapelbaptist.com

Pastor - Steve Williams

Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening Care Meal/
Ministry - 5:30 PM
Wednesday Evening
Service 7:00 PM

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Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC
828-584-8212

Pastor - Steve Bietz

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday
Praise, Prayer & Proclaim -
7:00 pm
www.morgantonsda.org

Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.
Morganton, NC 28755
(828)-675-9284
www.fccn.org
www.fccnradio.org

Pastor: David Gillespie

Sunday School - 10:00 am
Worship Service - 10:45 am
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00pm
"The steps of a good man are
ordered by the Lord:
And he delighteth in his way."
Psalm 37:23

Altapass Baptist Church

3631 Altapass Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
828-765-0660
altapassbaptistchurch@ccvn.com
www.altapassbaptistchurch.org

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield

Sunday School - 10:00am
Worship - 11:00am
Sunday Evening - 7:00pm
Sunday Youth Program - 7:00pm
1st & 3rd Sunday
(Conductors for Christ ages 5-11)
2nd & 4th Sunday
(Teen Discovery ages 12-18)
Wednesday - 7:00pm

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Grassy Creek Baptist Church

793 Old NC 226 Hwy
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828-765-4620
www.grassycreekbc.org

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Morning Worship 11:00am
Sunday evening 6:30pm
Wednesday:
J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) 7:00pm
Seekers (young adults) 7:00pm
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West Burnsville Baptist Church

222 West Burnsville Church Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828)-682-3990

Pastor: Terry Long

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Morning Service: 11:00 a.m.
Evening Service: 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Service 6:30 p.m.

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Dr. Luke A. Lane

8:30am - Early Worship
9:45am - Sunday School
11:00am - Worship
6:00pm - Evening Worship

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

4527 Hwy 19E
Plumtree, NC 28664
828-765-6919
www.plumtreepresbyterian.org

Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.org

Sunday School 9:45 am
Worship Service 11:00 am
Life Groups Tuesday-Thursday evenings, 7:00 pm
Fusion Youth Wednesday's, 6:30 pm
Healing Services 2nd Sunday of each month, 6:30 pm

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you
and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that
will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you
ask in my name.

Bear Creek Baptist Church

327 Bear Creek Road
Bakersville, NC 28705
www.bearcreekbaptist.com

Reverend Bruce Cannon

Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 10:45 AM
Discipleship 6:00 PM
Evening Worship 6:45 PM
Wednesday Worship 7:30 PM

**"For God so loved the world, he
gave his only Son..."**

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

2907d US Hwy 70 E
Morganton, NC
828-475-2040

Pastor Barry Mahorney

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study-10:00am
Sabbath Worship - 11:30am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday - Praise, Prayer &
Proclaim - 7:00pm
www.greathopesda.com

Pine Branch Baptist Church

48 Church Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone: (828) 765-9101
www.pinebranchbaptist.net

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

Sunday School • 9:45-10:40am
Worship Service • 10:45am
Sunday Evening • 6:30pm

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St. Lucien's Catholic Church

695 Summit Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone (828) 765-2224

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Wednesday Faith Formation
6:00 pm
Food Pantry Wed. 1:00-
4:00pm

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

125 Tappan Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-9411
www.sprucepinefbc.com
www.splfbc.blogspot.com

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

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Sunday Worship - 8:30 and 11:00 am
Sunday Evening - 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm

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Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

11090 Hwy. 226 South
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.sprucepineumc.org
spumc3@bellsouth.net
828-765-7446

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

Sunday School - 10:00am
Sunday Worship - 11:00am
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Something Reaffirmed for Me

By Rev. Mark Creech

A few days ago, I preached for a community Revival service held in a convention center in Goldsboro, North Carolina. Several churches participated. The people who provided the Christian music for that event were stupendous. I've never heard better singing at any church, gospel concert, or church event.

As I waited to be introduced, unbeknownst to anyone, I started to fret a little about whether the message I had prepared would be suitable for the situation. On the large marquee outside the building, it read something to the effect: "Come hear a message of hope from Dr. Mark Creech."

I thought to myself, did I understand the purpose of this event? Maybe those who invited me are expecting something other than what I've planned to say - maybe the organizers, as well as this audience, are expecting only sweet and encouraging remarks - something that unifies everybody - something that makes people feel good about their lives and gives them a sense of well-being, and certainly nothing negative.

My message was titled, "It's a Bad Thing When God Dies." It's about the way we may not deny God outright, but live as though He were dead. It highlights what one might call practical atheism, where we don't repudiate God's existence, but we live as though we don't need Him.

Because the message had a number of references to things political like our nation's Christian heritage, the growing acceptance of socialism, the wholesale acceptance of evolution and the manner in which it has contributed to the demise of the sacredness of human life, racism, and even a rash of school shootings in recent years, I worried it might not be appropriate for the occasion. I thought that many might be deeply offended at me, and it could be a bad start for the meetings.

I found myself silently and earnestly praying. As I prayed, the witness in my spirit was saying, "Stay the course. Stay the course."

I said in my prayer:

"Lord, I know that you gave me this message. In this sinful day and time, these words are not popular, but they desperately need to be heard. Give me the grace to preach it - no matter what happens - no matter if some people end-up with scowls on their faces - no matter if some walk out - no matter if I am shamed in some way because of it.

This moment is not about me. It is about people truly hearing a word from God. How can there be hope - hope for reconciliation between you and sinners - if we don't first understand the ways we've offended you - the ways we've drifted - the ways we've gotten off the right paths and onto the wrong ones?"

The message was laced through and through with the hope that God provides through the blood of Jesus Christ, but it confronted people with the need to repent - a message by nature quite negative. It challenged them to make a choice - to choose God - to choose Christ.

After the message, a number of people came forward to make commitments to Christ. One person, whose face seemed to express a godly sorrow, came forward to receive Christ as his Savior. At the end of the service, pastors present came forward to share with me what a powerful message they thought I had delivered. Moreover, get this: more than one told me, it was a perfect message for the occasion.

It was a reaffirmation for me that if preachers would make a mark for eternity, they must obey the Lord by their willingness to sometimes, even many times, preach the hard things. If the truth is told, there hardly ever seems to be an appropriate time to preach the hard things, if you catch my drift.

It also reaffirmed for me that making politics, based on a biblical worldview as a part of the sermon, is a way of presenting the Gospel in a relevant way, and does not turn people away from Christ. Instead, it becomes the springboard for presenting him to the masses.

All glory to God!

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-0606



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Special Day of Prayer for the President

Dear Friend,

Along with 250+ Christian leaders, I am asking followers of Christ across our nation to set aside next Sunday, June 2, as a special day of prayer for the President, Donald J. Trump.

President Trump's enemies continue to try everything to destroy him, his family, and the presidency. In the history of our country, no president has been attacked as he has. I believe the only hope for him, and this nation, is God.

This is a critical time for America. We're on the edge of a precipice. Time is short. We need to pray for God to intervene. We need to ask God to protect, strengthen, encourage, and guide the President.

We know that God hears and answers prayer. He can soften hearts and change minds. He is all-powerful, and He rules over the affairs of nations. The Bible instructs us to pray for those in authority, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" (1 Timothy 2:2-3, NKJV).

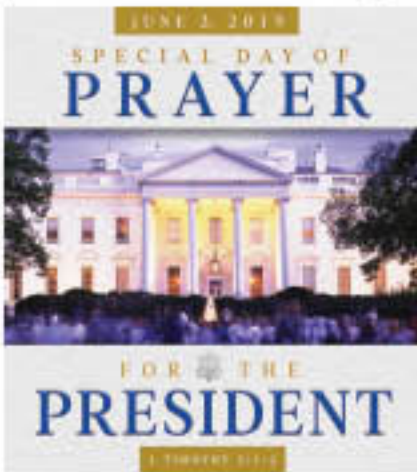
On June 2, we ask that pastors would lead their congregations in praying for the President, that Sunday schools and other groups would join together and pray, and that individuals and families across the country would have a special focus on praying for the President that day.

Would you please join us in prayer and tell others so that we can have as many people as possible praying?

Sincerely,

Franklin Graham
President,
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
& Samaritan's Purse

Reverend Franklin Graham is President and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief organization.



I was enjoying that flight — that wouldn't be any fun — but because I KNEW WHERE I WAS GOING!

And that's how it is with us as Christians too. This world is a journey that is often just like a plane trip: it can be uncomfortable, confining, frustrating, even painful. "In this world, we have tribulations." Jesus promised us that. We WILL have trials; we will have difficulty and suffering. But IN those things, we can persevere, and we can have a real joy, because we know these things won't last forever — AND WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING!

— We are going to an eternal mansion in heaven.

— We are going to receive our imperishable crown.

— We are going to the rich inheritance our Heavenly Father is keeping for us up there.

— And most importantly, we are going to be with the Lord, who Himself will be everything we have ever longed for.

And so, because we know where we are going, we persevere. We can put up with what we must put up with here. Yes, our trials are real; they're not just an "illusion" — but they're only temporary. And God is bringing good things even out of the bad. And He's testing our faith for us and others to see, and He will reward us for what we've done as we held to our faith.

The question for you today is, is this true for YOUR life? DO you really know where you are going, and does it really make a difference in your life?

I loved visiting with Frank & Ima Jean Smith and their family the other day at his surgery. Some of you know Frank has an aneurism on his heart, and so the anesthesiologist was telling him before he went in, "if that aneurism bursts during this surgery, then Jesus has come for you, and there's nothing we can do." Frank was unfazed. He just smiled and looked at him and said, "I'm ready." I love that. Frank knows where he is going — and that makes all the difference, for him, and for his family.

The question is, is YOUR faith real enough, to make that kind of difference for YOU? Does it make a difference for the way you face death — and does it make a difference in the way you face your trials in life? If it doesn't, can — if you'll truly give your life to Jesus today!

Shawn Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. His messages and devotionals are available at www.shawnethomas.com

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Father's Day

By Michelle Barrier
Burke County

As this June issue of the Blue Ridge Christian News is soon going to print, I am looking forward to the holiday that we will celebrate this month, Father's Day. I teach elementary school in Caldwell County and took this opportunity to ask my 4th graders if they had anything they wanted to say about their dads. Here are some of their comments:

"My dad is great. He is kind, loving and friendly. He is there when we need him. He lets us run and play." - Carissa
"My dad is the best. He always does a lot of stuff for me." - Trinity
"My Papa is best. He chose me." - Dee
"My dad is a trucker and he lets me ride in his truck. He is the best!" - Khloey
"My dad is special because we look and act like each other. He makes me laugh when I am sad. He always wants to play with me. He is always there when I need him." - Devon
"The reason I love my dad is because he cares for me. If something happens in baseball, he will be there for me. If I get hurt, he will be there for me. He lets me play any sport. He makes sure I get to school every day. And if I am sick, he is right there with me. I love my dad!" - Eli
"My dad is the best because he gets me just about everything I want and what I need. My dad plays Xbox One with me and takes me fishing and swimming. I love my dad." - Alex
"My dad works hard for us. He plays video games with me and helps me when I need it. He helped me with my homework when I had the flu. He is very funny and makes me laugh really hard." - Aiden

My mom and dad had me when they were still very young. I can remember many times as a child thinking how young my parents were. I think that because of that, my dad was very playful and funny growing up. He was always making us laugh by doing silly things or saying something funny. I always enjoyed spending time with him. He would put me on his lap and let me help mow the grass. I remember him holding on to the back of my bicycle as I learned to ride and letting go as I went flying down the front yard. His nickname for me was "Goose", and I loved to snuggle on his lap and hear him call me that.

He was also very smart and skilled with his hands, and I loved to help him in the garage or when he was building something. One time, he bought a 57 Chevy and had it towed to our garage. He would spend hours out there working on that car. I remember just going out to "hang out" with him while he worked. As I got older, he started building furniture - just pieces for our house and his family. He would always let me and my brother "help" him, and he was always patient with us because he knew we were learning - probably just as he had from his father.

My dad and mom split up and divorced when I was in college, and I will not lie, it broke my heart. The man that I had loved for 20 years like no other, walked quietly out of my mother's life and, essentially, out of mine for a while too. We have found a way back to one another, but it has never been the same since then. I am sure that there is regret on all sides. But, I do have very precious and happy memories of my childhood with my daddy.

Luckily, for both my mother and me, she was blessed to find my stepdad, Mark, several years later. It was not difficult to love Mark. He was a kind man and loved my mother fiercely. He had several nieces and a nephew, but no children of his own. And, his heart was open and willing to love me and my brother as his. As I finished college and moved back home, he and my mother married, and our family seemed complete again. I married, and my child, Luke, became his grandchild and best friend. Mark was a Christian man and loved the Lord with all he had. He modeled that Christian love with everyone he met. He became a Godly role model for our entire family.

Tragically, Mark developed lung cancer a few years ago. He fought a long, hard battle with the cancer, never giving up his faith in his God and secure in the knowledge that he would rest safely and quietly in the arms of his Jesus at the end. Another father slipped quietly away from me on a cold winter night a year and a half ago into the waiting arms of his Savior.

Although these memories of my fathers are bittersweet, I must remember that we all have a heavenly Father that loves us even more than our earthly ones do. We have a promise from Him that He will "never leave us, nor forsake us" - He is always with us. He wants good things for us and provides a way for us to receive Him and those blessings through the shed blood of His Son, Jesus.

This Father's Day take time to tell your father how much he means to you - both your earthly one and your heavenly Father!

Michelle is a 4th grade teacher in Caldwell County. She attends Pleasant Hill Baptist Church.



Charity suffereth long, [and] is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8



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One Day With God

By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell Counties



*And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children
and the hearts of children to their fathers. (Malachi 4:6)*
Fresh from an inspiring three-and-a-half-day special
event with volunteers leading a Kairos Prison Ministry Re-
treat, the Community Funded Chaplain's attention is now
directed toward the next major event that falls within the
parameters of responsibilities associated with this position.
That event is known as One Day With God.

One Day With God Camp at AMCI (Avery Mitchell Correctional Institution)
is scheduled for September 28, 2019 and is an opportunity presented to offenders
who qualify to participate to spend an entire day within the gates of the institu-
tion interacting with their children. One Day With God Camps are conducted by
Forgiven Ministry Inc. out of Taylorsville, NC. They recruit and train volunteers
to lead these camps, providing quality directed activities that create lasting memo-
ries for the children and their Dads. Games,
singing, t-shirts that the children and their fathers
sign, recreational activities, arts and crafts and
more keep the day moving, with a focus through-
out on forming connections and HAVING FUN!
I have personally been present for several of
these camps and have witnessed the remarkable
power of God to provide memorable moments
that sustain the children and the fathers for
months on end!

These camps are made possible through gra-
cious contributions of time, money and effort
given by those who want to help these children
receive the Blessing of their fathers! Churches,
individuals, civic groups and other organizations can impact the lives of these
families by contacting:

Forgiven Ministry
PO Box 117
200 Macedonia Church Road
Taylorsville, North Carolina 28681

You can find them online at forgivenministry.org and they are also on Face-
book! But for AMCI to have a One Day With God Camp this year, we need for
caring people to help us! We need financial donations (can be sent directly to
Forgiven Ministry) or made to:

High Country Prison Ministry
PO Box 161
Crossnore, NC 28616

Please mark that your donation is for the One Day With God Camp at Avery
Mitchell Correctional Institution!

Thank you so much for helping us make this day a gift to these children and
their incarcerated fathers! God Bless You for helping make the Truth of Malachi
4:6 available in ways that will change the lives of all who are present on that day!

Or, if you would like more information contact Chaplain Jody Griffin at joseph.griffin@ncdps.gov

*Jody Griffin is pastor of Central Baptist Church in Spruce Pine and Community
Funded Chaplain at Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution.*



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- Friday, June 14-Marion Thrift Stores & Countryside BBQ
- Friday, June 21- Hobby Lobby & Culvers Restaurant-Arden
- Friday, June 28-Walmart & Tommy's Restaurant-Weaverville

Life Lessons

By Doug Harrell
Mitchell County

Determining our reactions to those things around us and the things that we are dealing with on all levels in our lives makes so much difference in our everyday lives. Our outlook is one of the things that we can determine. We cannot always control the deck of cards that we are handed in life, but how we play the deck makes all the difference in our internal joy and peace of mind. We will face hardships, family challenges, sickness, death, joyful moments and sorrow filled days in our lives. The critical thing that I have found to be my refuge is to get in the word each morning and concentrate on the promises of God found there. For this Life Lessons I want to share a couple of my daily devotions from this past month. As of today, I have published a daily devotion on social media for 499 days straight, not missed a one, and I know many of you have read them, but many do not have access to my Facebook page.

We serve a great God, one that cares and loves us EVERY day, not just on the good days. Yesterday I was starting to bale hay and the baler broke belts that wrap the roll of hay. Down for the count with about 20 acres of hay on the ground! The choice is to get totally upset and stressed or to go with the flow and work toward getting things put back together and moving on with a change of plans. We control our attitude. Situations do not control unless we let them. With God's help, we can remain upbeat and look forward, even when we face daily challenges. Psalms 139:14, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." Psalms 139:17-18, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee." When we focus on God's love for us we become aware that all things do work for good for those that love Him as is said in Romans. Don't sweat the small stuff that happens, give praise for the things around you and trust God to see you through the valleys. God is good, so good, all the time!

I read and reread Psalms 37 several times this morning and it really made me stop and think. If I am not careful, I will watch the news for a few minutes, and it will get me totally irritated with the mess going on in our county and the world around us. Psalms 37:1-11, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." It is critical that we believers stand firm on our convictions, that we not bow to the demands of the world, that we let others see Christ in our lives each day. It is also critical that we're not overbearing and proud in this stance, but humble, yet resilient, unwavering, but meek in the Lord. We can disagree, and in many cases, we must stand up and do this, but not do it with anger but true conviction. Make sure you are on the right path and stay true to God's holy word as you travel the pathway of life today.

Life, It is really all about Jesus! We as mortal human beings are going to have challenges in life and struggles that are beyond our ability to handle. There will be circumstances over which we have absolutely no control and the only avenue to peace in our souls is in the name of Jesus. Yes, we need to keep our heads up and move forward, but we can only do this by surrendering to our Lord and Savior and laying our burden on His shoulder. Matthew 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Pray without ceasing, trust in the Lord with all your heart, mind and soul. Matthew 6:31-34, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Our worldly cares cause us strife. Our minds cannot wrap around things that happen to us and our families at times. Spend time in your prayer closet and lay your burdens at the feet of Jesus. It is all about His grace.

Doug Harrell is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, Owner of Harrell Hill Farms, Inc, a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.



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Get Away the Right Way

By Dan Qurollo
Burke County

Without a doubt, our culture is way too busy. Every day, we find ourselves scrambling in a mad dash against time to attempt to accomplish more than we will most likely ever be able to accomplish. It seems that every time we turn around, another deadline is looming around the corner. We finish one just to face another, and the daily grind continues.

God designed our bodies with the need for rest. He created the world in six literal twenty-four-hour days and then rested on the seventh. Obviously, God was not fatigued from creation, but He exemplified the importance of rest and instituted the principle of working six days and resting on the seventh. This is how God designed our bodies to function.

In addition, Jesus also exemplified throughout His lifetime the need to simply "get away from it all." Matthew 14:23 describes a time "when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone." At other times, he instructed his disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Matthew 6:31). Clearly, there were times when it was necessary to get away to obtain much needed rest and relaxation.

Most people look forward to the summer months because it provides one such opportunity. Whether it is a trip to the beach, the mountains, or some other favorite destination, such times are often greatly anticipated because they provide us with an opportunity to "get away." These times can be great sources of encouragement and strength, as we take a much-needed break from the stress of life.

However, we must avoid the ease of taking a break from the things of God. We can be assured that Satan does not respect our time away from it all and take a week off from trying to tempt us to sin or ruin our testimony. Furthermore, it is possible to gain physical rest but remain spiritually malnourished. We must not allow ourselves to drift from God, even when we are on vacation. This summer as you get away, I challenge you to do so the right way. Determine to spend some quality time each day with the Lord in Bible study and prayer. In doing so, you will get away the right way and experience the benefits of doing so.

Pastor Dan Qurollo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website www.morgantonbaptist.net or find us on Facebook and YouTube.



Parkway Playhouse Presents:
The Dixie Swim Club

By Hunter Taylor
Yancey County

Burnsville, NC: Five Southern women, whose friendships began many years ago on their college swim team, set aside a long weekend every August to recharge those relationships. Free from husbands, kids and jobs, they meet at the same beach cottage on North Carolina's Outer Banks to catch up, laugh and meddle in each other's lives.

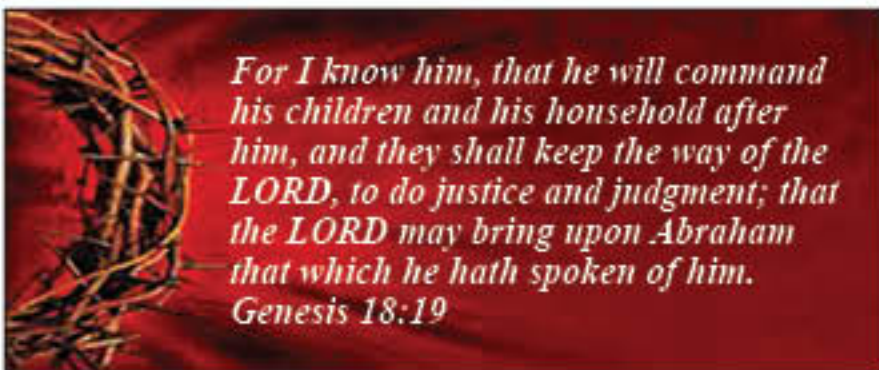


Jenny Martin, Alesia Bryant, Tabitha Judy, Alexa Edelman, and Roberta Whiteside.

Hunter Taylor is the new Coordinator of Education at the Parkway Playhouse.

Performances will be held on June 1st, 7th, 8th, 14th, and 15th at 7:30pm. There will be matinee performances on June 2nd and 9th at 3pm. Tickets range from \$11 for children to \$22 for adults. All performances are at the historic Parkway Playhouse theatre, located at 202 Green Mountain Drive in Burnsville, NC. Tickets can be purchased by visiting the Parkway Playhouse Box Office (open 1-5pm Thursdays through Saturdays), calling 828-682-4285, or by visiting parkwayplayhouse.com. This production is generously sponsored by ProPat LLC.

For more information about Parkway Playhouse, including performances, classes, and volunteer opportunities, please call 828-682-4285 or visit the Parkway Playhouse website at www.parkwayplayhouse.com.



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Association for Gravestone Studies to Meet at Gardner-Webb in June
International Organization Plans Lectures, Guided Cemetery Tours and Other Activities

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Association for Gravestone Studies (AGS), an international organization that promotes the study of grave-stones from historical and artistic perspectives, will hold its annual conference at Gardner-Webb University June 25-30. The event includes lectures, an art exhibit, guided cemetery tours, slide presentations, exhibits, classes, and documentation and conservation workshops.

Dr. June Hobbs, GWU professor of English, director of Undergraduate Research and the Fay Webb Gardner Endowed Chair of Student Success, is a member of the association. She submitted a proposal for GWU to host the event and is helping to coordinate speakers and activities. She and conference co-chair, Dr. William Harding, are expecting nearly 125 people to attend and have received reservations from members in Australia and Canada.

"Members of the association are a diverse group," Hobbs observed. "We have some artists, art historians, literary people like me, and people who just like all this stuff. The greatest living tombstone scholar is a nurse. She has written a great deal and is very knowledgeable."

Hobbs became a member of AGS in the 1990s, when she was working on a book about hymns by American women. "I took a tour of Sunset Cemetery in Shelby (N.C.), and the most startling thing to me was standing in front of one of the older stones, I saw a slightly revised version of Fannie Crosby's 'Safe in the Arms of Jesus,'" she recalled. "I had an epiphany that the culture I was studying via hymns was also the culture of the graveyards."

She searched the internet for cemetery studies and found the AGS website. "I sent in a proposal for a paper and went to my first conference and made the best friends of my life," Hobbs shared.

She is a past member of the AGS Board of Trustees and served as editor of "Markers: The Annual Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies" for eight years. In 2017, she received the AGS Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award, presented annually to an individual for exceptional service to the field of grave-stone studies.

Highlights of the AGS Conference at GWU include tours to Oakdale Cemetery in Hendersonville, N.C., and Riverside Cemetery in Asheville, N.C. Oakdale features the angel that inspired the title for Thomas Wolfe's book, "Look Homeward Angel." Wolfe's father was a stone carver, and Riverside has 16 of his carved stones that are signed. The Wolfe family is buried there, and it's also the resting place of O. Henry.

Tours are also planned to Steele Creek and Elmwood cemeteries in Charlotte, N.C., and to Sunset Cemetery. Participants also have the option of attending a conservation workshop to repair stones at Sunset Cemetery.

Dr. Joyce Brown, GWU professor emerita of English, is the keynote speaker. Lectures throughout the week will explore the symbolism of gravestone carvings, tales about gravesites, and other historical topics. An art exhibit on cemetery imagery, a first for the conference, will be on display. Featured are the works of Anne Tait, a printmaker, painter and stone carver, and Lynne Baggett, a photographer and graphic designer.

Conference registration is open to the public, and participants may register for part or all of the event. The afternoon and evening lectures are free to attend and will be held in Tucker Student Center. The full schedule and more information is available at www.gravestonestudies.org. Registration deadline is May 25.

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A funny picture of Dr. June Hobbs with the Doris Marie Seward stone on the campus of the University of Indiana.

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The Surprising Legacy Of Doris Day: Why Service Changes The World

By Jim Denison



Doris Mary Ann von Kappelhoff was born on April 3, 1922. Known to the world as Doris Day, she recorded 650 songs and appeared in thirty-nine feature films.

She was voted Top Box-Office Female Star for four straight years during the 1960s. Her television appearances spanned from 1949 to 2009. She received lifetime achievement awards from the Grammys and the Academy Awards. In 2004, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

However, her death yesterday at the age of ninety-seven was not announced by a Hollywood studio or record label—it came from the Doris Day Animal Foundation. She had a passion for animals that began in her teenage years and led to her creating the Doris Day Pet Foundation, the Doris Day Animal League, and the Doris Day Horse Rescue and Adoption Center.

The killer who became a servant

On the opposite side of the social spectrum, Christopher Smith grew up in Oakland, where he played with a girl in his neighborhood named LoEshé Lacy. Her first name was a combination of two words from Nigerian dialects that in English mean "to love" and "life."

Smith came from a dysfunctional family and spent time in foster care before running with local gangs. On October 20, 1997, seeking to avenge the shooting of one of his friends by a rival gang, he spotted a car he thought was driven by one of his intended targets. He and three other gang members opened fire.

He did not know that LoEshé was inside. He learned the next morning that he had killed his childhood friend.

Sentenced to twenty years to life, Smith began attending group meetings in prison. He told CNN that he began examining his behavior and the harm he had done. Once he held himself accountable for his actions and could forgive himself, he says, "I felt like now I could go from being an offender to being a servant."

Then came the day in April 2018 when LoEshé's father, Donald Lacy, met with Smith and forgave him. Lacy later supported Smith's parole. Both are now working on ways to help hurting people.

According to Lacy, "This life and this world can be so much better if we just all put a little more effort into being compassionate."

Are you Hoshea or Joshua?

In Numbers 13:16, before Moses sent the twelve spies into Canaan, He re-named Hoshea ("he saves") as Joshua ("Yahweh saves"). Joshua later led the children of Israel to follow God's command in crossing the flooded Jordan River. He led them to march around Jericho, trusting God for its destruction. He led them into the land God promised them through Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).

At every step, "Yahweh saves" was the theme of his life and leadership.

You and I must decide whether we will be named Hoshea or Joshua. Whether we will depend on ourselves or on God. Whether we will seek to serve ourselves or to serve our Savior.

Two ways to be Hoshea

One: We are Hoshea when we serve others to impress them with our service. When we give to the needy, Jesus taught us to "sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others" (Matthew 6:2). When people praise us, an insidious temptation is to deflect their praise with the humility that impresses them with our humility.

Two: We are Hoshea when we serve others to advance ourselves.

In Numbers 16, Moses confronts an uprising that would have cost him his leadership and the nation its future (vv. 1-3). Among the rebel leaders were Levites who were called "to do service in the tabernacle of the LORD and to stand before the congregation to minister to them" (v. 9). Now they wanted to replace Aaron as high priest (vv. 10-11).

In my years as a pastor, I knew people who would do anything to serve the church. However, their larger motive was to run the church they served.

How being Joshua serves Jesus?

In today's reading in My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers states that we are saved "in order to manifest the life of the Son of God in our mortal flesh." How? "It is the disagreeable things which make us exhibit whether or not we are manifesting his life."

When circumstances are easy and everyone treats us with respect, it is easy to be kind and gracious in response. But when people demean us and we serve them anyway, they see that something is different about us.

As Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Seen in this light, Chambers notes that opportunities for selfless service are "the means of manifesting how wonderfully perfect and extraordinarily pure the Son of God is."

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve."

You may never become a movie and singing legend. Hopefully, you will never need to forgive the killer of your child. But your life can still change an eternal soul and glorify your Lord.

As Martin Luther King Jr. noted, "Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve."

The way to know whether you are a servant today is to see how you respond when you are treated like one.

Jim Denison Ph.D speaks and writes on cultural and contemporary issues. His daily column is distributed to more than 113,000 subscribers in 208 countries. See more on the website www.denisonforum.org. Copyrighted and printed by permission from Denison Forum.

Fishing, Failure and Resurrection

By Tracey Jessup

"Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing...After this he [Jesus] said to him [Peter], 'Follow me.' " --- John 21:3, 19

I love the outdoors, but I do not consider myself an outdoorsman. I have never hunted, and I am not skilled at camping (except for the backyard variety). Growing up, I did go fishing every once-in-a-while with my dad and older brother, and I vividly remember the last time I went fishing. My son was in elementary school. One of his best friends was quite the outdoorsman and had a birthday party at a catfish lake not far from our home in Boiling Springs. Because I was close friends with the father of the birthday boy, I was invited to tag along. I had not planned to fish, but was glad to be there since my son's fishing experience was very limited to say the least. The boy's grandfather announced that he would give a dollar to each child when they caught their first fish. Almost as soon as their lines hit the water, the kids excitedly began reeling in the fish. Once the fish were safely on shore, the grandfather took an individual picture of the children with their prize catch, all of which were catfish of a respectable size. Then, after the fish were released into the water, the grandfather, as promised, gave each child their dollar bill.

Against my better judgment, I was lured (pun intended) into the fishing expedition. After what seemed like several minutes of not getting a bite, I finally felt a tug on my line. Not to be outdone by the kids, I proudly began reeling in my own prize catch. Soon, the laughter of kids filled the banks of that catfish lake as they saw the smallest crappy fish in the history of fishing dangling from the end of my line. Recognizing this Kodak moment, the grandfather asked me to pose for the camera. I had to turn the fish horizontally simply for it to be seen in the picture. Then, as if to put an exclamation point on my failed fishing excursion, he reached into his pocket, pulled out a dollar bill and handed it to me.

Today's scripture records a fishing trip, which believe it or not, was a bigger failure than mine. Following the news of the resurrection and even having seen the risen Lord, Peter and the disciples returned to their boats, fished all night, and caught nothing. Jesus, knowing their failure, calls to them from the shore and encourages them to try the other side. When they do, they are unable to haul in the catch because it was so large.

I am convinced that after arriving on shore, Peter vividly remembers the eyes of Jesus seeing his earlier failure – not a failure to catch fish, but a failure to identify himself as a follower of Christ. He had bragged "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you...Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you" (Matthew 26:33, 35). But three times the people challenged him as one who followed Christ, and each time Peter denied even knowing Jesus. But now, in spite of Peter's failure, the resurrected Jesus stands on the shore with the same invitation extended to Peter only a few years earlier by the Sea of Galilee. And in spite of our failures, the resurrected Jesus issues the same invitation to us. "Follow me."

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your grace and mercy which offers us a second chance, regardless of our past and regardless of our failures.

Dr. Tracy Jessup serves as vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University. He is a graduate of Gardner-Webb with a B.A. in Music and earned his M. Div. degree at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches in the undergraduate department of religious studies and enjoys the opportunity to serve the local church through interim pastorates, pulpit supply, and preaching revival services. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Christian and Anna.



Hidden in a List

By Marlene Houk
Burke County

1 Corinthians 2:10 "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

My short-read book, named Hidden in a List, emerged from a study of the list of named women in the Bible as revealed by Herbert Lockyer in his book, All the Women of the Bible. Their names weave in and out of the tapestry of Scripture, some famous, others obscured, and many whose stories are conjoined. But, disguised in plain sight, three secrets march across this list. And their power has the potential to abolish fear, vanquish insecurity, and establish a legacy.

Have you ever read a list and realized something significant or found hidden pictures in a sketch? Or, perhaps you've looked at old family photos that meant nothing until the comments by a relative brought them to life.

Lists indicate important information. An article on www.bbc.com unmasks a reason behind the prices of a popular list, the menu. It says, "Dan Jurafsky, a professor of computational linguistics at Stanford University, performed a study that analyzed the words and prices of 650,000 dishes on 6,500 menus. He found that if longer words were used to describe a dish, it tended to cost more. For every letter longer the average word length was, the price of the dish it was describing went up by 18 cents (14p)."

The article goes on to reveal a secret to increasing sales by 3,500% on a menu list. The following is a description written by the British retailer Marks & Spencer that includes a pudding: "This is not just a pudding," one advert declared. "This is a melt in the middle, Belgian chocolate pudding served with extra thick Channel Island cream." Secrets in lists are indeed treasures to be found.

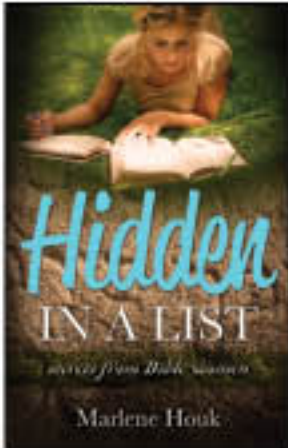
God has designed lists in the Bible to uncover significant truth, and one of these is a list of named Bible women. Subtle messages emerge among their names. If studied enough, glimmers of powerful secrets shine from amid the scratchy folds of boredom. These secrets grapple with the issues of life. And, when applied, they win the battles of anger, worry, and confusion every time.

These names in the list range from three letters to the longer women's names with twelve letters, but all indicate the importance of names from God's perspective. And the most significant implication of their names being recorded is that they point to the "name above all names" as declared in Psalm 8:9 which says, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."

Sometimes, studying this list together and listening to others' comments help us to understand why God would have embed within a simple rollicall of Bible women, transforming truths. As He has ordained, when we delve into the Word of God together, hearing a multitude of viewpoints and perspectives opens many truths to us. Like learning a new instrument causes us to hear its own unique voice among the many lilting strains and catchy tunes of our favorite music, so learning these secrets in community ignites the flame of passion for Scripture. And this fresh new insight travels onward, creating a legacy of eternal value.

I must confess. This article camouflages the treasures hidden in the list of named Bible women revealed in my book. All three secrets drift through this article, thinly veiled within these words. Should you want to read Hidden in a List: secrets from Bible women, enjoy your journey of discovery!

Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Backstage Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net



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Standing on the Real Thing

Dr. Terry Cheek
McDowell County



I am probably giving away my age but here goes. I remember the 1970's and an old Coca Cola commercial. The soft drink advertised itself as the real thing. That was a very effective commercial for Coca Cola. It was on TV for a long time. Many people believed Coca Cola was the real thing when it came to soft drinks. Truth was, Coca Cola was only one choice among many. Jesus isn't like that, He is the real thing and the only choice for eternal life and salvation from an eternal Hell. This month lets look at "Standing on the real thing."

2Corinthians 4:8-9 *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; (9) Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;*

Are you familiar with the term "knockoff?" If you are, you know it is an imitation of an authentic product. Many of our designer clothes, handbags and watches, for example, are being copied using cheaper materials and processes; they may look authentic but they certainly are not. Arguably everything in our life can be imitated using cheap and unsatisfying knockoffs. Have you ever considered Christianity as having many knockoffs? These knockoffs of Christianity pop up like weeds in the human landscape. In postmodern America many people are drawn into and engage in a bogus proclamation of a cheap gospel that weakly imitates the real thing. The true gospel is easily recognized when we accept the Bible as the inerrant, inspired word of God. The true gospel must be proclaimed by people whose lives have been changed by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and reflect its truth, through our life as messengers of that salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Then and only then can the real gospel have a real proclamation and impact.

True Christianity can also be identified by persecution. We're all familiar with persecution by execution. However, during the twentieth century in America persecution evolved to develop and embrace the practice of social, cultural and ecclesiastical transformation. From government and theological figures, to sports and entertainment celebrities even Universities and Seminaries began to attack with intent to transform fundamental Christianity. This resulted in new presidents and laws like Roe Vs. Wade and marriage and divorce laws which no longer reflected the authority of the Bible. Abortion became legal on demand, while marriage and divorce became a legal contract instead of a spiritual commitment. Man may have interfered in Gods design's, but we did not change God's Word.

The Theological landscape was changed also. This change I personally believe made the most damaging impact to American culture. With the invasion of liberal theology in the late 19th and early 20th century came a fundamental change in the way people read their Bible. The fallacy of no longer accepting the Bible as inerrant or inspired became engrained in American churches. Today a great deal of America wrongly views the Bible as a book of myth's and stories. In fact, the Bible accurately describes everything from the creation of our planet and humanity to our fallen sin nature which has led to the miseries of history.

All of these and many more can be considered knockoffs of Christianity. They may flow well in the atheistic classroom, but they lack any real substance. There is nothing in them to benefit humanity. Maybe a short motivational lecture that requires refreshing on a regular basis. We too often pay someone to do this under the heading of religion. There is a better way and a permanent way, but it is a narrow way. It is the real thing, Jesus Christ.

A Personal relationship with Christ will result in a transformed life that reflects the true gospel and its power to lead others into that same saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The character of a truly born again Christian reflects the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ and the promise of the only all knowing, all powerful and ever present God to redeem mankind from the death of sin.

Crime, corruption and deception are running rampant across our nation. Drugs and alcohol seem to have a stronger grip on us than at any other time in history. More troubling is the impact these evils have made in our churches.

The true church is challenged today like it has never been challenged in history. The devil no longer comes at us head on, today he comes to church and sits down among us, tempting us to pursue a knockoff version of Jesus Christ. It may be liberal, or it may be legalistic. Either way it will lead us down a road that takes us farther away from the Lord, when He wants us to be closer to Him. There is much more to be said about Jesus being the real thing. But time and space have brought us to another conclusion. It is my prayer that something has been written that encourages your walk with the Lord. Until we meet again, either in print or in person, may God bless you. Keep the real thing, Jesus Christ, the most important thing in your life!

Terry is the Executive Director and broadcaster of The Inspiring Word media ministry. You can contact Terry by email at theinspiringword@gmail.com Or by visiting www.theinspiringword.org



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O	D	D		B	R	E	D		R	E	M	E	D	Y

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Sudoku Solution

1	9	7	3	5	6	2	8	4
3	5	4	8	2	1	7	6	9
2	8	6	9	7	4	3	1	5
6	7	3	5	4	8	1	9	2
9	4	5	1	6	2	8	7	3
8	1	2	7	9	3	5	4	6
4	3	9	2	8	7	6	5	1
5	2	8	6	1	9	4	3	7
7	6	1	4	3	5	9	2	8

Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story

By Doug Harrell

I think this was the only event on the farm with Clint that he really wanted to hit me between the eyes, and I cannot say that I would have blamed him at all. I promise it was all unintended! We were pumping the manure out and Clint lifted the intake nozzle out of the manure and we lost suction, and when I turned to look to see what was happening I turned the outlet toward him, at about that same moment he reinserted the intake in the liquid, guess what happened?! Liquid manure blew off his hat, covered him from the head down, running off his mustache and dripping from his chin. I have never in my life seen such a mess. God help me but I could not help but laugh! On to live another day.

The Funny Farm

By Clint Pollard

Many of you have written or called about Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm. It seems that you take great pleasure in my many foibles and near-misses with danger. Also, some of you question my veracity - that would be TRUTH telling - regarding these tales. A couple things you should know: clearly the Lord is protecting me from myself and the myriad monsters and events that seek to snuff me out; and these stories are absolutely true (not to say I don't exaggerate a teeny tiny bit ☺) Now get a load of this.



Ancient Cow Manure!

My friend Doug, along with yours truly (Farmer Clint), set out one balmy morning to construct a new critter chute, or cow tunnel, or cow funnel, or whatever it is you call the slender little space where cows unknowingly go before they meet the head-gate. Ya know, this farming business gets tricky if'n you don't know what you're doing so I try to stand back a wee bit when we tackle a new challenge.

Now one would imagine that constructing a narrow chute/tunnel/funnel would be simple, some 2X4's, 4X6's, 3/4" plywood, screws and electric screwdriver, and a 2-ton head gate. Simple enough, right? Wrong answer!

Ya see the choice location for our construction project is the "Aunt Mae Barn", so called after Aunt Mae Byrd (Doug's Aunt). An aside, I've learned over the last many months that Doug and Barbara are related to everyone in Mitchell County and beyond. So, if you're local please feel free to drop by for dinner with your distant relatives, anytime ☺. Really, tell Barbara that Farmer Clint sent you.

Anyway, the floor of the Aunt Mae Barn is not a floor, of course. (Even I know you don't put floors in a barn, what dya think I'm simple?) So, the floor is really the ground, but in this barn it's not really the ground because GROUND IS DIRT. Oh no, we can't have dirt ground on Harrell Hill Farms - this GROUND is 100% cow patties, about 6 feet deep and at least 100 years old.

Now you are likely saying, "So what is your problem, Farmer Clint?" Hundred-year-old cow pies must be firm and packed down! True enough...unless the tin roof of the barn has holes in it the size of Haley's Comet and we've just had torrential rains. Another question I have for the Lord some day, how come it doesn't rain when you need it on the crops, but it pours when you have to dig in cow manure?

As we walk - actually slog - into the barn it is clear this will be a story for the ages. I'm talking knee deep in ancient cow manure, so thick and gooeey I can barely lift one foot in front of the other. And, naturally, when I take a step the bovine feces splatter all over me and the surrounding area.

Doug has another brilliant idea; we will submerge a small bilge pump in the liquid dung and pipe it right out the window. I am constantly amazed the ingenuity required to be a farmer...but I'm learning so very much!

Naturally it is MY JOB to hold the little pump under the water/prehistoric mastodon dung while Doug props the hose on the windowsill. That was working just fine until I allowed the pump to rise slightly losing its vacuum. With a look of frustration and disdain Doug turned to tell me to hold the pump deeper in the muck and mire.

As he addressed me (a bit too harshly in my opinion) the hose pipe dislodged from the window and took dead aim at ME. I dropped the pump into the sludge, causing it to suck even harder, and I was blasted with the full force of a cow manure firehose! I was immediately blinded; I ingested heaven only knows how much grainy, putrid cow droppings; my ears filled to overflowing...I was totally deluged by an E-COLI shower! I dared not scream lest I swallow a terminal dose, I could not run as my fully submerged boots seemed forever vacuum-held a foot below the surface dung. My shirt was bursting buttons, my pants heaped high, petrified manure dripping from my hair...I thought Doug was going to pass out! Once he finally regained composure he FINALLY aimed the manure stream back out the window.

Gasping for air I looked at my friend, "Ya know," I said, "if any other human on planet earth did that to me, they would die right now!" With that crooked smile and a twinkle in his eye, Doug replied, "Yeah, but it's me, huh? And we are friends. Wanna go have some lunch?" (Lunch? How can anyone think about lunch after that? Hmmm, sounded like a good idea to me.)

Returning to the farmhouse I began hosing myself down, hose down my shirt, down my pant legs, head to toe, when Barbara peeked out the door, "What are y'all doing?" she asked. "Oh, just got into a bit of a mess," I explained, "and don't want to drag it into the house." Doug chuckled, "Pollard, you are a trip!" Indeed I am.

Comic relief on Harrell Hill Farms, once again I dodged a bullet - death by e-coli emersion. Thank you, Lord!

Humbled in the Hills,
Farmer Clint

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9:15 The Star Spangled Banner

9:45 Fireworks

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1:00 The Jack Town Ramblers

2:30 Newtown

4:00 The Po' Ramblin' Boys

5:15 Jams Performance

5:30 Dinner Break

6:00 Newtown

7:30 The Malpass Brothers

9:00 Junior Sisk

10:30 Fireworks

Stage #2

1:00 Red Clay Revival

3:00 Freewheelin Mamas

5:00 Noah Proudfoot & Botanicals Band

Saturday, July 6th - Emcee- 92.1FM The Big Dawg

1:00 BJ Boughman

2:30 City Rhythm Jazz Band

4:00 Maya

5:00 Jams Performance

5:30 Dinner Break

6:00 Gotcha Groove

7:30 Love Canon

9:00 The Cleverlys

Stage #2

1:00 Love Canon

3:00 Butterbeans Band

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Hope and Wait

By Timothy Tron
Burke County

"But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" -Romans 8:25-27



Through the lush vegetation, he pushed. Behind him, darkness and danger had pursued him like demons from another realm. There had been many near misses; moments when it felt as if the very life had been sucked from his lungs. As he neared the edge of the jungle, the light from beyond beckoned, like a welcoming host waving their guest home.

He was so close.

Each day as he had neared the edge of the dark realm, he could feel the grip of death lessen. Each new day, there was an increased hope, like that of a child expectant of the excitement of opening their gifts on Christmas morning. At first, the feeling was barely noticeable, but as the sound of release from beyond the infirmaries of bondage slipped away, he could feel a growing anticipation of eagerness stir within his blood.

Yet, he could not see what was to come.

He thought back to the verse which echoed in his mind like the raptor's call off the nearby canyon walls, "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." A chill passed through his bones as its meaning resonated with his soul.

Evil had stalked him like a dark predator, walking in the shadow of each footstep. The multitude of workload and stress it placed upon his life was nearly to the point of an unbearable burden. Yet, he pushed on; praying for strength, guidance, and wisdom every waking moment. There were times when his foot would slip on the path, and the weight of those shackles would throw him to the ground. Each time he would moan under his breath, gritting his teeth, as he pushed upward, looking for what little ray of hope that flickered through the somber canopy above. Questions clouded his mind as Satan attempted to confuse him, trying to distract him long enough to make him lose his way and give up. When the roar of tumult would overwhelm him, he would pause, bending over and holding his knees as he sought air to breathe, like the fighter pausing between rounds; then he would drag his weary frame back into the fray.

Each time he gained momentum, as if the clouds overhead had parted and a

slimmer of light would escape to the forest floor, the darkness would slam him once more, like a mule kicking him in the stomach. Nauseating helplessness would momentarily overwhelm his spirit as he would stumble backward; dazed, confused, and humiliated by what all was said of his inescapable ineptitudes as Satan tried to make him lose courage. The taunts would cut him to the core, as if the prince of darkness knew what mattered most and would use those words to slice his soul to the very marrow of his existence. As he lay upon the sod, barely breathing, the darkness would leave, feeling accomplished for what it had done. Behind it, the man closed his eyes and prayed in a whispered breath, "God, I need you like never before. If this is the path you want me to take, then show me the way. If this is not, then show me the door to take, for I cannot do this, nor have I ever done this without you."

As the man's face looked up from the earth, overhead a fluorescent butterfly lit upon a branch of forest fern nearby. Amongst the deep recess of the darkness, its radiance lifted his spirit momentarily, like the wings of that insect, fluttering upward, then gently floating away. He could feel his on soul rise upon the occasion, and a temporary moment of repose warmed his being. He closed his eyes and pressed it into his memory, for it was the only reprieve from the oppression he had known it some time.



The days would turn into months.

Each new month brought the repeated episode of the man being beaten down, again and again, until his health began to deteriorate. It seemed as the darkness was winning. But the man had not lost faith, and in his faith, there was eternal hope; a strength greater than the darkness could compete, for the gates of hell could not prevail against it. Each day, his journey brought him closer to the end, and each day, victory was nearer than before.

Satan knew he had won, but as he watched in earnest, he could not stop the man from continuing to move onward, never stopping, never giving up. He used every means possible to stop his progress, but nothing seemed to dissuade the man from his point of focus. It was if he had another life within that the darkness could not penetrate; a light within.

As the pathway neared the end, the man felt his spirit begin to soar. Each new day, each new breath, the life he once thought had gone was now returning, but unlike ever before; clearer, more vivid, more alive than ever before. It was as if he had died and was born again.

Death had lost its grip, and his victory was with God, through Christ Jesus. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, the edge of the deep wood opened, and there before him lay the vastness of eternity. The glory, in all its splendor, was more than his mind could grasp. Tears filled his eyes as the expanse of beauty flooded through his eyes, warming his soul from without, to within. The marrow of his being had been infused with something greater than any feeling he had previously known, as if an agape love, charity for which no expression could be summoned, touched an inner precept that he had not known until now.

The words flooded his soul like the voices of a thousand waterfalls, whispering a roar into his being, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The man sat and wept as God welcomed him into the fold, for his heart was now healed.

We may never know the journey someone is on in this life, nor the tribulations through which they are struggling. We can each in our own way be a ray of hope, a brilliant butterfly to their being with nothing more than a smile, a warm welcome, or just simply a kind hello.

Seek to empathize with your neighbor, colleague, or family member. Remember, "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Smile, and be patient, for, in the end, hope will guide you.

We may not see the next door, but with hope, and faith, we will know that when it opens, it will be the will of God.

And most importantly,
Thanks be to God.

Timothy W. Tron lives in Collettsville, NC. with his family. He is the former Director of the Trail of Faith in Valdese, where he still volunteers and helps with tours. He now teaches Math full time at Watauga High School in Boone. He is the author of a new Christian series, "Children of the Light," with the first book being, "Bruecke to Heaven," and his recent book, being the second, "The Light in the Darkness." He is an active blogger, artist, and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from UF, and is a Lay Speaker. He can be reached at twtron@live.com

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National Day of Prayer

The National Day of Prayer 2019

By Monica Henley-Kritz
Mitchell County

The 2019 National Day of Prayer celebration in Spruce Pine began on Thursday, April 25 with 7 days of repentance, leading up to the National Day of Prayer. Each day was a focus on 1 of the 7 areas of influence in our nation. On Thursday, the focus was on the military, and the featured speaker was Preacher Daniel Whetstone, our Associational Missions Director. We opened with music and closed with a time of prayer. On Friday, the focus was on business, and the speaker was Pastor Jason Kritz. The special time of music was shared by Wendy Ellis, as we felt the presence of THE LORD, and we had a special time of prayer. Saturday's focus was on education with the speaker being Pastor Brandon Pitman, as well as Preacher Josh Forbes. Music was provided by Eric Moore, and we prayed together in a prayer circle, lifting our voices up to GOD. We didn't meet on Sunday, but local churches were encouraged to have a prayer time devoted to the area of the church. Monday was our 5th day of prayer, and the focus was on the government with Pastor Steve Williams speaking. The music was presented by Fritz and Joy Young, and we closed with our prayer circle. The family was the main focus on Tuesday. Pastor Bobby Joe Green was the featured speaker, and music was provided by Brenda Jones. We closed in community prayer in repentance for where we have failed GOD in this area of our nation. The 7th day of prayer had a focus on the media and was spoken of by Pastor Rocky Branch. Preacher Dallas Renfro shared a song and once again, we closed with a circle of prayer. Each day was so unique in its' own way. A common thread seemed to be woven into the music with a message of encouragement in every song. Our heart-felt thanks go out to all who participated and attended. I truly believe every heart and life was touched for the better!

On Thursday, May 2, we held two gatherings at Riverside Park in Spruce Pine, 12:00 noon and 6:30 p.m. The 2019 theme was "Love One Another", and the theme verse was John 13:34, where JESUS says, "...love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The 12:00 service began as I welcomed all of those in attendance. We were so blessed to have Tri-County Christian School to come and share songs with everyone. Alexis Buchanan sang the solo, "King of the World", and the school sang together as a group, "The Answer". Rain had begun to fall, but that did not deter those students and teachers. They sang with all of their hearts in praise to THE LORD and hopefully, the music rang out over our beautiful town. Our Spruce Pine Mayor Darla Harding was in attendance and led everyone in the 2019 National Prayer for America. What a sweet sound echoing in the park, going up to GOD...prayers in unison! It was made even more special, when we realized that the same prayer was being prayed all across our nation! Then, Michaela Murdock sang and played the song, "Who Will Go to America". Toward the end of this solo, a loud clap of thunder rang out over our celebration. Some were startled, but some commented that GOD was applauding. As I spoke, I reminded those gathered that we need to turn to GOD in repentance, asking HIM to forgive us for leaving our first love, (as HE speaks of in Revelation 2:4) ...our first love being HIM. This time, we had a large prayer circle, and we linked arms in a symbol of unbroken unity and strength.

The 6:30 p.m. gathering began with beautiful sunshine and warm temperatures. Katie Blair, a student from Bethel Christian Academy prayed THE LORD's prayer and did so from her heart. Fritz and Joy Young led us in worship and praise music and helped to point our hearts to the real reason we were there...to praise GOD, repent of our sins, and call out to HIM for help and guidance for our town, our state, and our nation. Mayor Darla Harding once again led us in the National Prayer for America, as we all prayed with her. Prayer was our closing, and it seemed that no one was in a hurry to leave, which really touched our hearts. A special thank you is extended to Jason Kritz and Dawson Yelton for their sound set-up every day, and thank you to all those who helped them with lifting and loading and unloading.

So, as we go about our day-to-day business, whether it is in the workplace, or in the school, or in the market place, or even in the home, let this be our motto...that we love one another! This world desperately needs to see GOD's Love!

Mrs. Monica Henley-Kritz, County Coordinator for the National Day of Prayer Associational Prayer Coordinator Monica is a member of Crabtree Chapel Baptist Church, where Jason is the pastor.



And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11:25

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And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. Luke 15:20-24



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Today's Apostasy

By Billy Graham

Recently I have been studying a word that is used, sometimes carelessly, by many Christians today. It is the word apostasy, which comes from the Greek apostasia. The English word is derived from two Greek words. Putting them together they mean "to stand away from" or "to abandon" one's faith.

Most people think of an apostate as a person who has denied the theology of his faith. But the Biblical teaching about apostasy goes far deeper than that. The "falling away" mentioned by Paul to the church at Thessalonica indicates that apostasy affected every area of life. The word is so strong and so emphatic that it suggests a complete breakdown of morals, ethics and spirituality.

Paul wrote, "That Day [the day of the Lord] will not come unless the falling away comes first" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The context of this passage would indicate that "the falling away" refers not only to the abandonment of intellectual belief but also to an abandonment of morals and an abandonment of the love that is to characterize all Christians at all times.

Paul used the same word again in 1 Timothy 4:1-2, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron." In his second letter to Timothy, he warned: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Notice that Paul spoke of ears that do not want to hear the truth because they love their lusts and immoralities so much.

"I AM CONVINCED THAT A TREMENDOUS BATTLE IS GOING ON IN THE MORAL REALM. SATAN, WORKING THROUGH SOCIETY'S OBSESSION WITH SEX, IS CAUSING EVEN MANY CLERGY TO FALL. THERE ARE MANY WHO ONCE WALKED CLOSE TO CHRIST, WHO KNEW THE JOY OF SINS FORGIVEN, WHO CARRIED INFLUENCE WITH THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, BUT WHO FELL TO THE ANCIENT TEMPTATION OF SATAN."

Paul listed the types of sins that these people who fall away will fall into: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power ... always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 7).

What a picture of thousands of professing Christians today—people "having a form of godliness but denying its power." This is a picture of Satan releasing against the church all the diabolical powers at his command. The main objective of Satan against the church is to create a "falling away," a decline of moral and spiritual power.

As I have studied this word in the Scriptures, I am convinced that there are three kinds of apostasy that Satan is perpetrating against the church.

First, there is moral apostasy. The Bible says, "The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). As Christians, we live in enemy territory; and Satan's purpose is to create an atmosphere of immorality, where even professing Christians will fall. I am convinced that a tremendous battle is going on in the moral realm. Satan, working through society's obsession with sex, is causing even many clergy to fall. There are many who once walked close to Christ, who knew the joy of sins forgiven, who carried influence with thousands of people, but who fell to the ancient temptation of Satan and succumbed to his subtlety and wiles.

Letters come into our office every week telling of the moral defection of Christians who have yielded to these pressures of Satan and become moral apostates. The Apostle Peter spoke of this type of people when he said, "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world ... they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20).

Many of those who fall victim to moral apostasy retain their theological orthodoxy. Theirs is an apostasy of life and not of doctrine. Like the professors of religion in Isaiah's day, they "draw near with their mouths ... but have removed their hearts far from [God]" (Isaiah 29:13). Their words, their teachings and their theology are all right. But in their hearts, they are far from Him!

There can be no greater inconsistency than an orthodoxy of words and an unorthodoxy of life. I know of a professor in a Christian university who is leading a double life; but because he is a good teacher and declares, "I believe the Bible from cover to cover," he is kept on—even though, from the point of view of the Scriptures, he has already departed from the faith.

No wonder Jesus asked, "When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). The Bible says, "Even the demons believe—and tremble!" (James 2:19). But this doesn't mean that the demons are saved. Our intellectual comprehension is not enough; it must be backed up by a life that has been "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20).

Second, there is theological apostasy. The Scripture says, "Some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1). In several places in the Scriptures, we are taught that a doctrinal falling away is a sign that we are living in the latter times and that Christ's coming is relatively near.

A bishop in England boldly announced that he no longer believes in a historical Christ; an American religious leader even went so far as to say that he no longer believes in a personal God. Tragically, this type of doubting and theological confusion has invaded many seminaries and many pulpits. In many of our seminaries



there is a mad scramble for scholarship, and people are sacrificing clear Biblical teaching upon the altar of so-called scholarship. Many come out of our seminaries today with no Gospel—they are confused and bewildered. I talked to a senior at one of the seminaries who said, "I have been robbed of my faith. I am now under psychiatric care."

The Bible warns that the time will come when the churches will not endure sound doctrine. The seven churches of the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation represent all the churches of all time. The Laodicean church is the last of the seven. Hear what Jesus Christ has to say to this church: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16).

"IN MANY OF OUR SEMINARIES THERE IS A MAD SCRAMBLE FOR SCHOLARSHIP, AND PEOPLE ARE SACRIFICING CLEAR BIBLICAL TEACHING UPON THE ALTAR OF SO-CALLED SCHOLARSHIP. MANY COME OUT OF OUR SEMINARIES TODAY WITH NO GOSPEL—THEY ARE CONFUSED AND BEWILDERED."

This third chapter ought to be read and pondered by every seminary student and preacher in the country. It shows how Jesus views a compromising church. It shows how He views a straddling, pussyfooting, equivocating, self-satisfied, proud, blind and poor church. Even though professing wealth and broad vision, in the sight of God it is naked and shameful.

Thank God that there are still believers and pastors whose knees have not "bowed to Baal" (see 1 Kings 19:18). God always has His "seven thousand" who remain true in a time of doctrinal apostasy.

Third, there is pharisaical apostasy. This kind of apostasy is evident in much of the religious life of America. These are the Pharisees whom Jesus so often scathingly denounced.

He said time after time, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matthew 23:15). He said, "You cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence" (Matthew 23:25). And He said: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:27-28).

The orthodox Pharisees had a pure theology, but it was all a shell and a mockery. They had become hard, cold, vicious and revengeful.

There are some today who have become victims of a censorious, critical and fault-finding spirit. They no longer preach a simple Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. They spend their time digging up all the ugly things they can find about other Christians. They have forgotten that the one distinguishing mark of the Christian is love and that "love will cover a multitude of sins" (see 1 Peter 4:8).

They produce very little of the fruit of the Spirit themselves, as listed by the Apostle Paul: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23).

They have lost the true meaning of 1 Corinthians 13, which gives the definition of love. Paul wrote: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-2).

Then Paul describes what love is: "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:4-6).

How the devil must rejoice when he gets Christians fighting one another, disputing with one another and quarreling among themselves.

As we see all this taking place in the church, our hearts become grieved and sick. We know that the enemy is at work—denying, dividing and destroying people of God and causing them to fall away from the Gospel in various ways. Some of them keep their intellectual faith but fall away into immorality or pharisaism. Others deny the faith, and this, too, eventually leads to despair and depression.

May God help us to turn to Him. May we have a great revival that will melt our hearts together, burn our consciences and drive us back to the altar with tears of repentance. A revival among Christians could change the whole process of history and reverse the immoral tide.



Obedient Heart Fellowship

Milk, Meat of the Word and the Agribusiness Model

By James Huskins
McDowell County



Real milk is delicious, and for thousands of years it was ubiquitous. Milk's use and preservation is an art form which has blessed us with untold varieties of cheese and fermented milk products. Even after decades of anti-dairy lobbying from every official source, and in spite of the success of the dairy industry in denaturing one of nature's most perfect foods, dairy is still the number one source of protein in the American diet.

Less than a century ago, dairy, along with every other area of food production, moved from a mostly home-based craft to a mostly industrial product. Anne of Green Gables was happy to milk her cow before school, but Rosie the Riveter was in a hurry to get to her factory job. Is it a coincidence that the knowledge and practice of God's Word—spiritual food—also experienced a steep decline as we handed over production of physical food to powers and systems beyond our knowledge or control? Consider the production of agribusiness milk.

The first step is accumulation. Processors blend the produce of thousands of cows. Some of them pass along bacteria from normal infections and injuries. Some milk is contaminated by poor handling. The most common contaminant is bovine fecal matter. Fresh milk contains vast quantities of beneficial, probiotic bacteria, but harmful bacteria find a fertile host. Accumulation means that every drop is exposed to something that makes people sick.

Next comes pasteurization: cooking to kill harmful bacteria which enter during accumulation. This step is necessary in the industrial model, but no one ever admits that cooking also kills the beneficial bacteria, destroys health enhancing enzymes, and negatively alters or eliminates proteins and vitamins found in fresh, raw, uncontaminated milk.

After the cooker, milk endures homogenization. The wonderful, health-promot-

ing butterfat in fresh cow milk comes in the form of large globules which rise to the top. Milk from our Jersey shows a cream line several inches deep within a few hours. We skim some of that cream and turn it into butter, use it in coffee and tea, pour it over fresh fruit...!

The dairy industry has decided that cream must not separate, so they process milk in high-speed centrifuges or force it through micro mesh screens to break the fat globules into tiny bits that mix with the milk. This supposedly makes milk "taste creamier," but it actually masks how little cream is included in "whole" milk. It also breaks up the leukocytes, bacteria, and everything else resulting from accumulation so that they are evenly distributed. This keeps the "added components" from settling to the bottom of the container as an unappealing sludge during transportation and storage.

After all the processing, milk is then packaged and marketed. Shoddy content is masked by slick presentation. Diminished nutrition is hidden by words like "enriched" or "fortified."

Now, consider the parallels between the way we get our milk and the way we feed our faith:

Most Christians have no idea that their "belief system" is the result of accumulation. Bible literacy tests tell us that many regular church attenders cannot differentiate between God's Word and ideas from Buddhism, Shakespeare, Benjamin Franklin, Kahlil Gibran, The Beatles, or popular preachers. Few believers are aware that almost every aspect of popular "Christian" holidays is taken directly from the same pagan worship practices that caused God to wipe out entire Canaanite tribes. This sordid accumulation of "spirituality" is only possible because sincere Christians have allowed someone else to tell them what they believe rather than work to acquire an intimate knowledge of God's Word.

As with pasteurization, many believers choose to "boil down" the Word of God. They find objectionable components in scripture, so they get rid of them. The New Testament makes it clear that the only way to love God is to keep his commandments. The Son of God says that God's law will be in full force for as long as Heaven and Earth remain. Yet, many believers insist that "grace" gives them license to violate God's clear instructions for living found in the first five books of the Bible.

Homogenization is a picture of the way believers force random information through the tiny aperture of our limited familiarity with God's Word. We believe what our preacher said or what we read in a book. I respect all those sincerely attempting to understand and teach God's Word, but no one else will stand in your place on Judgment Day. The only way to know God's perspective is to read The Book with an open mind. Most who read the Bible from the beginning to see what God says are changed.

The marketing of faith is a cliché. "Successful" churches are those with the largest numbers, the nicest buildings, the best entertainment. Jesus commissioned us to "make disciples." Disciples live as he lived. Remarkably few "church goers" appear to hold His standards.

"Grace" is the universal excuse, but grace is not license to sin. Scripture says that sin is breaking God's law. Disciples pursue holiness, not excuses. Grace is what allows us to live holy lives in the midst of a perverse culture. God loves us and offers salvation by grace through faith, but He does not save us to continue in sin. The resounding message of the New Testament is: "If you love Me, keep my commandments." The milk of salvation is easy to digest, but the meat of the Word tells us that, once we are saved, He insists on us leading lives of obedience.

Obedient Heart Fellowship believes that the entire Bible is true and relevant. We accept salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, and we attempt to love and serve Him by keeping his commandments. We meet each Sabbath—Seventh Day—at Abba's House, 72 South Main Street in Marion. 10:00 A.M. 828-460-7913

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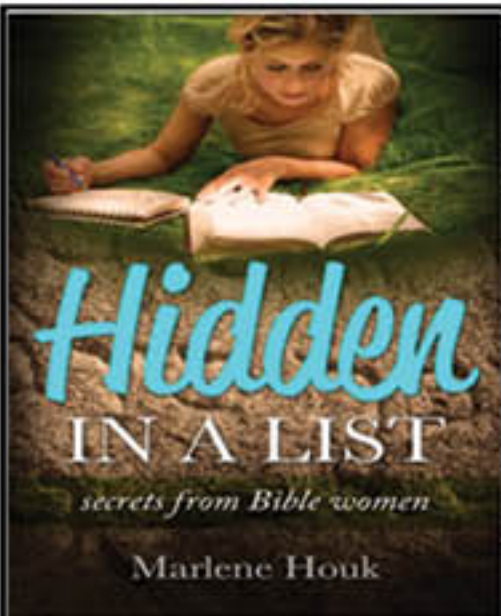
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Berry Chapel Baptist Church

What Dose The Lord Want From Me

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County



The Bible says in Deut. 10:12 "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, [13] To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"

God defines five basic requirements for His people in these verses. 1st His people are to fear Him, they are to hold Him in awe and live in His presence with Holy reverence. 2nd They are told to walk in His ways, not their ways, but His. They are not free to do their own thing; they are to follow the road He sets for them. 3rd They are to love Him, to set their affections on Him and Him alone. They are commanded to Love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). 4th His people are called to serve Him. They are to do His will, His bidding with all their being and be grateful for the privilege. 5th They are to keep His commandments. This is good advice for all to follow.

You might say "But we are under grace, not the law." And I say "Amen." It is not about what I must do, but rather, what I want to do, choose to do, and desire with my whole heart to do.

For so many Christianity has become a mere intellectual assent to certain beliefs. They have embraced the doctrines without the doctrine embracing them. Faith that never changes a life nor causes one to burn some energy for God is not true, saving faith. Christ made no apologies for requiring faithful service from His children. Jesus question is "Why do you call Me Lord, Lord and not do the things which I say?" Luke 6:46. Today, demonstrate that you are one of God's children, eager to love and obey Him at every time, which reminds me of a story I heard the other day about getting on the ball. The story goes there was a golfer who hit a ball and it landed on an ant hill. The golfer swung at the ball and missed it. His club plowed through one side of the ant hill, killing hundreds of ants. He swung again, duplicating the destruction on the other side of the ant hill. Still, the ball remained untouched. Finally one ant cried out to the other ants "if we want to save our lives we better get on the ball." The work of the church is not to gratify man but to glorify God: The Bible says 2 Corinthians 6:2 "... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." It's like the ant said we better get on the ball if we expect to do anything for the Lord.

Question of the Month;

If you aren't going all the way for God, why go at all?

Words of Wisdom

- You can't climb the ladder of success with your hand in your pocket. N/A
- The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your own arm. N/A
- Obstacles are those terrible things you see when you take your eyes off the Lord. N/A

Focus on Father

- Many fathers are finding out that a pat on the back helps to develop character-if given often enough, early enough, and long enough.
- The family tree is worth Bragging about if it consistently produces good timber and not just nuts.
- A Child isn't likely to find a father in God unless he finds something of God in his father.
- Whether a man ends up with a nest egg or a goose egg depends on the chick he married.
- Every father teaches, some by what he says, more by what he does, but most by what he is.

Steve Williams is the Pastor of Berry Chapel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine.

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Luke 6:27

Sample Day Trip

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Valley of Decision

By Alan Griffin



A glow from the sky in the east gives way to an amber light as morning fractures the darkness over the North Carolina mountains. A Ruffed Grouse is the first to speak into the new morning as sunlight from heaven reaches the tops of the highest hills. As the mountain shadows stretch out of the valleys the dew glistens like glitter across a green sea of lush vegetation. The chipmunk makes ready for the warm glow of the first light, and a turkey coos softly in the mist of dayspring. Now I can feel the light on my face as a frosty morning erupts with life, as it was on the first spring day of creation. Now, many years later, we come to the "Valley of Decision."

God's creation of the new day has been consistent in my lifetime. The sun, the moon, and the stars have all played a dance in perfect unison. The sun rises, the sun sets, the moon enters the stage in perfect timing, and the stars give forth their light just like a script that has been played over and over again. Stability has been around a long time, but that doesn't mean the times and the seasons won't be changing. We are entering an era of discontent where we will not be able to set our body clock on the rise of the sun. The birth of generations is ending, and the era of "dispensation of grace" will close with the sound of the trumpet from the seventh angel.

The "mystery of God" that has lasted two thousand years is near its final destination. Few have chosen to receive the power of its grace, which is so plentiful, so spectacular, and so inconceivable, and they now walk in the valley of the shadow of death. None of us is able to understand the cost of the grace that has been so freely given to us. Even the angels marvel as they witness the outpouring of this mystery to such an undeserving group of people that through its acceptance become children of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God* (1 John 3:1 NKJV).

Born in a time of delusion many are confused because the law of the land has distorted the law of God. The "Law of God" reveals that we are a miserable failure as a race of beings. Sinful beyond measure, unable to save ourselves, unable to please God, we go through life with a perpetual hangover, bouncing from one belief to another. *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near* (Joel 3:14 NKJV). We have been given the greatest gift ever to be offered to any being anywhere, yet we blindly walk a life of unbelief. Grace, unmerited mercy, is freely given to all who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. When we receive this mysterious gift we become righteous in the eyes of God; our sins are forgiven, and a relationship with our heavenly Father is made available to us through the Holy Spirit. Through this communion we are able to bear the trials and tribulations brought forth upon us as we journey through this life.



Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, so that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16). Grace is the medicine as Jesus Christ is our cure for all sufferings we encounter here on earth. Receiving grace is just the beginning because we become stewards of the grace of God, bestowing our blessings unto others. *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever!* Amen (Peter 4:10-11 NKJV).

Now, therefore, we walk according to the will of God because in the past we walked according to the flesh and no good came from it. Our past friends think it is unusual that we no longer run with them in excessive things so they speak evil of us, and they are quick to judge us for our actions. The end of all things soon approaches so we are to be sober, and watch unto prayer. Above all we are to love one another because love covers a multitude of sins. *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving many lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life* (Titus 3:4-5 NKJV).

Alan Griffin started the kidsnchrist ministries in November 1997. He has worked with inner city kids for 21 years. He found a need for specialized Biblical literature that would reach people of all ages and has been writing since 2005. The ministry has expanded their websites to reach around the world. *Kidsnchrist.com, millennialchristian.com, teensnchrist.com, seniorsnchrist.com, picture-verse.com, and soulworks-smallgroups.com.* We had an outreach of over 13,000,000 people last year with 36,000,000 impressions. If you have any questions for Alan you can reach him at alan@kidsnchrist.com

Ministering to the Bereaved
What To Do When You Show Up

By Dennis Love
McDowell County



Listen to what the Bible says in Job 2:11-13; "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came everyone from his own place.....for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights and none spoke a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great."

Notice in this text that Job's three friends showed up when he was going through a time of deep grief and they basically did three things.

- (1) They wept with him.
- (2) They mourned with him.
- (3) They said nothing to him.

His friends showed up and that is vital for us to do. But what do we do once we get there? Here's some things to consider once we show up and come face-to-face with the person who is grieving.

Listen More Than You Talk—Job's three friends showed up and didn't say anything. They let Job talk. Most people process their grief through talking. Here's a quote from a grieving person concerning those who simply showed up and said nothing.

A couple came over the night of the accident, and the only thing they said was "I'm sorry." And then they just sat there. They didn't feel the need to talk, ask questions, or try to comfort. They were just there! That was comfort. They may have said some things during the course of the evening, but mainly they were there to listen, not to talk or to give advice.

Weep With Them—What does v12 say that the three friends of Job did when they showed up during his time of grief? They wept with him. When you show up and weep with the person you are entering into their pain with them. It's better to cry with them instead of crying for them. Here's a quote from a grieving person concerning others shedding tears with them.

I had a friend who actually told me she was praying for God to allow her to carry some of our grief. She knew there was no way to shoulder what we were going through in the loss of our son, but it was such a precious sentiment that she would want to shed some of our tears with us.

Commit To Be There For The Long Haul—What grieving people need is a few friends who make it clear to them that they are going to be there with them over the long haul. Now, you cannot do it all. It takes an entire family of friends or an entire community to help nurture a grieving person back to life. One person cannot be the entire support system for a grieving person. Simply commit to do something you're good at doing or you enjoy doing. You may simply commit to them that you are going to be there for them over the long haul to pray with them. Here's what one grieving person said about another person who committed themselves to pray for them.

One friend told me recently that she has an alarm on her phone as a reminder to pray for me every day. This made me feel so loved and cared for! When someone says, "I'll be praying for you," I don't know if that means once a day, twelve times a week, or if they will even be praying for me at all. But to know that I have one friend who spends a few moments every day praying for me—and I know she does, because she has an alarm set on her phone for that sole purpose—that makes me feel remembered and cared for.

Dr Dennis Love is the Senior Pastor at Glenwood Baptist Church in Marion, NC. He and his wife Vicki have been married for almost 39 years and they have been in Marion for almost 5 years. They have two sons and three grandchildren.

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Warning Labels!

By David Valls
Mitchell County



Many times in today's world, we find warning labels on many things from household cleaners all the way down to music CD's. and even children's toys. The purpose of this is to protect us from potential harm. Many times, we are not aware that certain things are dangerous because we did not read the warning labels or follow the instructions. Now let's apply this to the Christian Life. God's word also contains not only the things that we should do, but also things that we should not do. When we don't follow these warnings, it's not a question of if something bad will happen, but when! God does not give us warnings to be a dictator or to be mean. God gives us warnings to PROTECT us from potential danger that He knows exists. Many times, we do not realize the danger that we're in, until we are already in the situation because we simply do not follow God's instructions in terms of what to avoid. He does this simply because He loves us, and He wants to see us be successful in our spiritual lives rather than being hindered by things that do much more harm than good. He also does this because it is His desire that we would be pleasing to Him and that we maximize our full potential as a Christian. Let us be ever diligent in heeding God's warnings.

David Valls attends Middle District Freewill Baptist Church in Buladean. I am from Mitchell County. I have been the adult class Sunday school teacher for the past 13 years.

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There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

The Furtherance of the Gospel
By Dr. Tom Walker

There is a very interesting verse in the Bible as to the spread of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:12 says, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."

It would do us well to look at the context of the verse, that is our consideration in this study. "Context" involves the setting of a passage or the contents before and after a statement. This is the only way to properly interpret the Word of God.

The late Dr. Warren Wiersbe gives the following background on this passage: "Paul wanted to go to Rome as a preacher, but instead he went as a prisoner! He could have written a long letter about that experience alone. Instead, he sums it all up as 'the things which happened unto me' (Phil. 1:12). The record of these things is found in Acts 21:17-28:31, and it begins with Paul's illegal arrest in the temple in Jerusalem. The Jews thought he had desecrated their temple by bringing in Gentiles, and the Romans thought he was an Egyptian renegade who was on their 'most-wanted' list. Paul became the focal point of both political and religious plotting and remained a prisoner in Caesarea for two years. When he finally appealed to Caesar (which was the privilege of every Roman citizen), he was sent to Rome. En route, the ship was wrecked! The account of that storm and Paul's courage and faith is one of the most dramatic in the Bible (Acts 27). After three months of waiting on the Island of Malta, Paul finally embarked for Rome and the trial he had requested before Caesar. To many, all of this would have looked like failure, but not to this man with a 'single mind,' concerned with sharing Christ and the Gospel. Paul did not find his joy in ideal circumstances; he found his joy in winning others to Christ. And if his circumstances promoted the furtherance of the Gospel, that was all that mattered!"

There is no doubt the Apostle Paul was keenly interested in the spread of the Gospel message. He said in I Cor. 9:16, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." The word "woe" is an exclamation of grief; it speaks of great suffering or sorrow. When the Gospel was not spread and furthered, it grieved the Apostle Paul and brought a great deal of suffering to him.

The word "furtherance" is a word worth studying. It is translated other places in the KJV Bible as "increase" or "proceed". It can mean to advance or spread.

We, as well, should be very involved in furthering the advance of the Gospel to our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. Since our Savior is interested in this matter, so should every single believer on the earth.

How can we further God's truth about Jesus and salvation at home and abroad?

By Preaching What We Believe

1 Corinthians 1:21 says, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." If we want people to be saved, we must preach or herald forth the Gospel of our Savior.

The lost world thinks our method of getting out the message sinners need to hear is a foolish way of doing things. Our message is foolishness to them that perish, but to us who are saved it is the power of God (Rom. 1:16).

If we do not let the people know about our Savior, people will not be able to hear and believe. Since the truth sets people free, they must listen to the truth from the lips of God's people. The world thinks there are many ways to Heaven, but according to John 14:1-3, there is only one way according to the Bible.

Faith is something that spreads. 1 Thessalonians 1:8 declares, "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing."



By Practicing What We Preach

Philippians 4:9 reminds us, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." We are to practice what we have heard preached and also practice what we preach.

James 1:22 says, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." If we do not practice what we preach, the Gospel will not be furthered. People are looking for folks who will live out what they believe. The life that is characterized by consistency, holiness, and godliness will have an unmistakable impact to a lost and dying world. The one who does not live as he preaches is guilty in the matter of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy points to one who is not genuine.

By Persuading Others To Witness

The reality of the matter is this: the more people we have witnessing, the further the Gospel will spread. Because men are lost, we need many telling them that Jesus saves from sin.

The way you encourage others to witness is to tell someone about Jesus before their eyes. By doing so, others will be emboldened through the boldness in the witness that you manifest.

By Participating In A Church With Unity

1 John 4:11 states the following: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." When God's people are loving one another instead of fighting and struggling against one another, the cause of Christ effectively advances. Our badge of discipleship is properly seen when we love one another as the people of God.

John 13:35 tells us: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

When the outside world sees how the love of God is in us and works to bring Christians together, the cause of the Gospel is advanced.

By Plodding On In Spite of Troubles and Trials

As I have already mentioned, you can find a list of things in Acts chapters 21-28, that happened to the Apostle Paul. These providential acts of God furthered the Gospel cause. If that is true in Paul's case, it will be true in ours as well. Many things that happen to us seem bad, when that is not the case at all. When life gets tough, by God's grace, keep on going, and other people will be moved to glorify God by your example.

By Praying for More Laborers

Matthew 9:38 tells us: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." If we want to see God's saving message furthered, we need to pray that God will call and send others out to evangelize at home and abroad. This is the least utilized and one of the most important matters in our prayer lives. Let's use our prayers to expand the distribution of the Gospel message.

Tom Walker is President of Foothills Baptist Bible College and Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Marion, NC.



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MY DADDY

By Joy Harwood Baldwin

*My daddy's eyes have seen a lot
My eyes are almost new
I hope that I can see the things
My daddy has seen too.*

*My daddy's hands are very strong
My little hands are frail
I hope that mine can do the things
My daddy does so well.*

*My daddy's feet can stand so tall
Mine are just learning to last
I hope my feet can follow
Up close to my daddy's path.*

*My daddy's heart is loving
He's tender and so kind
He wants the very best for me
All this I hope he'll find.*



Joy is a resident of Madison County, where she now lives with her husband, Danny Joe Baldwin. She is currently a member of Mt Zion Baptist church in Marshall, NC. As a previous member, she calls Forks of Ivy Missionary Baptist Church in Weaverville, "home away from home". She is currently singing with the Gospel Group "Jonah's Voice" out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song "Homecoming" will soon be heard by many.

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Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care Announces New Name to Reflect its Growing Geographic Region

Burnsville, NC— May 20, 2019 — Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care, a treasured local not for profit organization, located in Yancey County, announced that after 37 years it is changing its name to Compassionate Care Western North Carolina.

"We are incredibly excited to launch our new name and our new logo," said Ronnie Gregory, Chief Executive Officer at Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care. "For 37 years, we have been providing comfort, compassion and excellent care to our patients and their families at one of the most difficult and vulnerable times in their lives."

"Over the years, we have expanded our services to areas outside of Yancey County in order to provide others with the superb level of care that they deserve when facing a serious illness. While our physical office is in Yancey, our reach includes Mitchell and Madison Counties, as well as, the far northern portion of Buncombe County. Therefore, we have changed our name to one that is more inclusive of the entire geographic area that we serve. It is important to know that we have staff members who live in the expanded territories that we serve. So, we will have neighbors taking care of neighbors," Gregory said.

The organization has worked to keep its name change confidential up to this point to unveil it to the community collectively. The new name, logo, and website had not been updated for many years and was no longer reflective of the progressive and geographic nature of the organization.

The new logo is a carefully considered unique design called "The Star of Compassion". This is to reflect the fact that the patients and families served by the agency are treated like stars and the people who work for the organization are stars of their profession. Two bold colors were chosen to identify the top two service lines of the agency, hospice and palliative care.

According to Gregory, "Our new name, logo, and tagline reflect our core mission of providing compassionate care. We are the right choice for patients and families in Western North Carolina who want to experience the best quality of life possible for as long as possible. We provide wonderful care when you need it most."

For more information please contact:

Ronnie Gregory, CEO

828-682-9675

ronnieg@hospiceofyancey.org

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. John 13:34-35



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Bear Creek Baptist Church

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

How many times have we been witness to it? Troubles come our way and greatly disturbs us, only to have God's peace quickly come to comfort our hearts and quieten our spirits as He provides His sweet assurance that all will be well.

What a blessing to know that everything that comes our way is something He has first-hand knowledge of and experience with! The Bible identifies the Lord as our merciful and faithful High Priest. The Apostle Paul in Hebrews 4:15 states, *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."*

Several truths come forth from that verse that comfort us. First, Jesus is our High Priest. He intervenes and intercedes for us before the Throne. He is our advocate before the Throne of Grace to secure mercy, grace and help in time of trouble. Second, He who is our intercessor the one who omnisciently and experientially knows what we are dealing with because He experienced all types of problems and cares Himself. Not only does He know about our troubles because He is our Omniscient God, He does also because He was in the flesh and experienced all the problems known to man in His own body. Imagine, the One who can help us understands fully our problems and cares.

But the best news about His omniscience is in Hebrews 4:16 which states, *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."* He knows, He cares, and He also helps! He is omniscient, but He is also omnipotent. He has all power and uses that power on our behalf.

Rejoice with me today that our God knows all our sorrows and has all power to help us in our time of need. He has promised that He would never leave us nor forsake us. He will always be our help in time of trouble.

If you or your loved ones are experiencing difficulties, rest with me that Jesus knows and cares. Paul said, *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"*. (Philippians 4:7)

Rev. Bruce Cannon currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Bear Creek Baptist Church in Bakersville. Formerly he served as Director of Missions for the Bladen Baptist Association and has served on the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.



Evangelism Explosion International

The One Thing We Can't Do In Heaven...

By Rev. John B. Sorensen



As Christians, we often focus so much on our heavenly home that we forget we have a unique opportunity right now. Witnessing is the one thing we can do here that we won't be able to do in Heaven. Jesus' last command—to take the Gospel into all the world—can only be accomplished while we are here on earth.

Eternal life does not begin the day we leave this life, but the day we trust Christ for our salvation. So, while living in Heaven in God's presence forever is our ultimate destination, we can have life abundantly right here, right now. Part of that abundant life is sharing it with others.

Every believer is charged with, and has the privilege of, proclaiming the Gospel to our lost and dying world. And yet, a majority of those who claim to be followers of Christ will not even attempt to share the Gospel with another person this year. They have found eternal life in Christ, yet they are keeping it to themselves.

Evangelism is not a gift bestowed to a few chosen people. As Christians, we all have a message of rescue and redemption. If we don't share it, where will our family and friends hear it?

Witnessing begins with surrender. When we surrender to what the Lord has called us to do, to live for His glory, and to use the talents that God has entrusted to us for the spreading of His Kingdom, our life becomes a witness for Him. People will begin to notice our surrender lifestyle.

Be yourself. When the subject of faith comes up in conversation, and it should if you are living for Christ, be honest. Share your story of how God has changed your life and point them to Heaven. You will be surprised how God will use you to reach others.

Ask questions. Take the lead and initiate conversations by asking a friend how they are doing spiritually. People all around us are struggling, and they are searching for meaning and purpose in their lives. Asking people questions shows that we care. Plus, we have something we can offer them in return: hope in Jesus Christ. That is the best gift of all!

People are more open to talking about spiritual matters than we think. When we point others to God and Heaven, we are fulfilling our mission right now. There's nothing more rewarding than knowing that you are being faithful to Jesus' Great Commission and that you have had a part in telling people how they can go to Heaven someday. That is something to get excited about right here on earth!

Rev. John B. Sorensen, D.D. is the President/CEO of Evangelism Explosion International, headquartered in Arden, N.C. EE has been a leader in equipping Christians to share their faith for more than 50 years. For more free tips and resources, visit evangelismexplosion.org.

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Evergreen Church

The BIBLE
By John McCoury
Roan Mountain Tennessee

Is a beautiful palace built out of sixty-six blocks of solid marble-the sixty-six books of the Bible? In the first chapter of Genesis we enter the vestibule, which is filled with the mighty acts of creation. The vestibule gives access to the law courts-the five books of Moses-passing through which we come to the picture gallery of the historical books. Here we find hung upon the wall's scenes of battlefields, representations of heroic deeds, and portraits of distinguished men belonging to the early days of the world's history. Beyond the picture gallery we find the philosopher's chamber-the book of Job-passing through which we enter the music room-the book of Psalms-where we listen to the grandest strains that ever fell on human ears. Then we come to the business office-the book of Proverbs where right in the center of the room stands facing us the motto, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." From the business office we pass into the chapel Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, with the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley, and all manner of fine perfume and fruit and flowers and singing birds. Finally, we reach the observatory the Prophets, with their telescopes fixed on near and distant stars, and all directed toward "the Bright and Morning Star," that was soon to arise.

Crossing the court, we come to the audience chamber of the King-the Gospels-where we find four vivid life-like portraits of the King himself. Next we enter the work room of the Holy Spirit-the Acts of the Apostles-and beyond that the correspondence room-the Epistles-where we see Paul and Peter and James and John and Jude busy at their desks; and if you would know what they are writing about, their epistles are open for all to study. Before leaving we stand a moment in the outside gallery-the Revelation-where we look upon some striking pictures of the judgments to come, and the glories to be revealed, concluding with an awe-inspiring picture of the New Jerusalem when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ!

As we read the word of God we will find it will AFFECT me-- ALARM me-- ALERT me to the wiles of the enemy. It will BREAK me loose from the world, BUILD me up, and BOLSTER me. CLEANSE me, CALM me, CONVICT me, and CHANGE me. DELIVER me, DELIGHT me, DIRECT me, DWELL in me. ENCOURAGE me, ENLIGHTEN me, and ESTABLISH me. FEED me, FILL me, FASHION me, and FREE me. GOVERN me, GUIDE me, HUMBLE me, HELP me, INSPIRE me, and be IMBEDDED in me. JUDGE me, JUSTIFY me, KEEP me, and KINDLE afire within me. LIGHT my path, LIVE in me, MOVE me, MOLD me, and MAKE me a better Christian. NOURISH me, NURTURE me, OPEN my eyes and my understanding, and OVERWHELM me. PERFECT me, PERSUADE me, PROVE me, POSSESS me, and PROVOKE me to good works. QUICKEN me, QUIET me, REBUKE me, REFRESH me, REIGN in me, RENEW a right spirit within me, REPROVE me, RESTRAIN me, REVIVE me, and REVEAL hidden goodness in me. SANCTIFY me, SATURATE me, SATISFY my longing, SCOURGE me, SEARCH me, SECURE me, SEPARATE me from the world, SETTLE me, SHAPE me, SHAME me, SHARPEN my spiritual senses, SHEPHERD me, SHIELD me, SIFT me, STILL the struggles within me, STABILIZE me, STIR me, SUBDUE me, and SUSTAIN me. TALK to me, TEACH me, TOUCH me, TRAIN me, and TURN me. UNDERGRID me, UPHOLD me, UPRIGHT me, and URGE me on. Make me a VESSEL of honor. WAKE me, WASH me, WORK His will in me, EXAMINE me. YIELD in me fruits of righteousness. Fill me with ZEAL for Him. My hope is all who read this article will get excited about reading the word of God daily.

John McCoury is pastor of Evergreen church in Roan Mountain, Tennessee and also chaplain at Roan Highlands Nursing Center.



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Burke County

Burkemont Baptist Church is currently seeking a minister of music. Burkemont is located in Morganton, NC. The church has two morning worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. that are blended in worship style. The church has an orchestra and is accustomed to praise and worship music as well as traditional hymns. We have a comprehensive music ministry with multiple choirs (preschool, children, youth/young adult and adult). We have a drama ministry that partners with the music ministry and participates in seasonal productions that are often on a large scale. We are looking for a man of God with a Master's Degree from a seminary of like faith and a man with a heart for ministry that goes beyond mere talent. Please send resumes to llane@burkemontbaptist.org.

Catawba River Baptist Association - World Changers will be coming to Morganton, NC. July 15-20, 2019. Hundreds of students from around the country will participate in multiple mission projects around the area for families in need. This year a record number of students have signed up to come to our area. We are going to be needing churches to help feed the mission team's lunch each day. Churches will provide lunch for 8-14 people, four consecutive days at the team's designated construction site. We will also need volunteers to help at the school where the students will be housed. There are many ways to get involved. For more information or to volunteer call the CRBA office at 828-437-0137.

2019 Waldensian Festival - Since 1976, on the second Saturday in August, Valdese hosts an annual festival to celebrate the "Glorious Return" of the Waldenses from exile in Switzerland to their native valleys in the Cottian Alps of Italy in 1689. This celebration is mirrored around the world by other Waldensian communities. The Town of Valdese continues to improve the Waldensian Festival each year and make it one of the best festivals in the state of North Carolina. The 2019 Waldensian Festival will concentrate on unique crafts, great food, and top-quality entertainment. To achieve this goal, the committee continues to search for wonderful artists, food vendors and entertainers from around the country. Choosing participants that will come together to make an unforgettable festival. The 44th Annual Waldensian Festival will be held on August 9 & 10, 2019. 2019 VENDOR APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE NOW!

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County - Jamii Kingdom Bible School will take place June 24th- June 28th., from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, NC. "For more information, Like us on Facebook @MorgantonSeventhdayAdventistChurch"

Town of Valdese Concert Schedule

2019 Season Lineup:
June 7: Dirty Grass Soul
June 14: Emily Minor
June 21: The Night Move Band
June 28: INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION & FIREWORKS DISPLAY
Little Johnny Trailer Trash & Ultimate Eagles Tribute- On the Border - Eagles Tribute Band
July 5: Southwind
July 12: Shake Down Band
July 19: The True Grass Band
July 26: Tony Bailey Band
August 2: Skaterink Jukebox
August 9 & 10: 44th Annual Historic Valdese Waldensian Festival
Friday Night Entertainment - Cassette Rewind & Gump Fiction
Saturday Entertainment - Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot
August 16: Carson Hill
August 23: To Be Announced
August 30: Concert Series Finale Celebration - Tim Clark Band

McDowell County

New Community Outreach Benefits McDowell Families with Children
Teens for Christ B.E.A.R. Closet
(Baby Equipment and Resource Closet)

Beginning Wednesday, August 1st, 2018 the youth group at Cross United Methodist Church located at 85 West Cross Street in Marion will launch a new outreach ministry benefiting families with children. The outreach will be open the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer opportunities call (828) 803-8790 or email TeensforChristBEARcloset@yahoo.com.

Clinchfield Baptist Church - Clinchfield Baptist Church will be celebrating it's 104th homecoming on Sunday, September 15th. We will be having a concert by "The Taylor's", during our morning worship service beginning at 11:00 a.m. We hope you can join us at 1150 East Court Street in Marion, N.C.

First Baptist of Marion - The Children's Committee is creating a library for the children and families with the church and daycare. We are accepting donations of new and gently used books for children of all ages and reading levels, as well as resources for parents. The donations will supplement the selection of books currently on hand. Please leave donations in the main office. Thank you!!!
A 75th Commemoration Service will be held on June 6, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. at the Historic Carson House. Veterans of McDowell County will be honored at a

patriotic program sponsored by the American Legion, McDowell High School, Greenlee DAR and the Historic Carson House. For more information contact the Carson House at 828-724-4948.

Vacation Bible School June 24-28, 2019 More information to come SOON! Vacation Bible School will be here soon. We need volunteers to help with crafts. Kids will work on age appropriate craft projects all week long. Special art skills are not required for this position. See Christi or sign up on the bulletin board if interested.

McDowell will Host 4-H District Activity Day - On Saturday, June 15, NCCE-McDowell County Center will host 4-H District Activity Day. 4-H District Activity Day is a long-lived Extension tradition where 4-Hers from across the West District will come together to compete in 4-H Presentations.

We need your help! This activity is a large undertaking that requires volunteers. Let's show our western 21 counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee McDowell County hospitality.

Cross Mill United Methodist Church - Cross Mill United Methodist Church will have an all-you-eat country breakfast for a \$5.00 donation on Saturday, June 15th from 7-10 a.m. The church is located at 85 W. Cross St., just past Blue Ridge Terrace Apartments in Marion.

Cross Mill United Methodist Church in Marion is now accepting donations of NEW items for an upcoming fundraising auction. Proceeds from the auction will go toward much needed church building repairs and our 24/7 Sharing Food Pantry Ministries. Any business and/or individual donations would be greatly appreciated. Call 28-460-9257, 828-442-8098 or 828-803-790.

36th Annual Mountain Glory Festival Now Accepting Craft Vendor Applications

Saturday, October 12, 2019, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Marion - Where Main Street Meets the Mountains

Vendor applications for Marion's largest craft festival are now being accepted. For 36 years, beautiful downtown Marion has hosted this popular celebration on the 2nd Saturday in October. This year make plans to be part of the Festival, Saturday October 12th, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

Visitors will be looking for original handicrafts on Main Street three main blocks. Featured will be 150 craft, food, non-profit and sponsor booths of locally made arts and crafts; festival foods and local wines and beers. Plus, two stages presenting Marion's finest musicians.

Don't miss the annual Mountain Glory Quilt Show inside the McDowell Arts Council. The quilt show is the gallery's featured, October exhibit. The kids will have fun in the "Children's Arena" with hands-on activities and local entertainment.

You might even see Bigfoot, Marion's Official Animal!

The festival is sponsored by the City of Marion. For festival information visit www.mtngloryfestival.com or call 828-652-2215.

Liver Mush Festival, Main Street Marion, Saturday, June 1, 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM. Liver Mush Eating & Hog Calling Contests.

Inflatables for the kids. Free Liver Mush sandwiches.

Great country music and rock classics by Roadrunnerz.

For more information, call 652-2215.

Mitchell County

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - Grassy Creek Baptist Church will be having Vacation Bible School June 24-28 in the Family Life Center. The theme is "Roar, Life is Wild, God is Good!" Kids are invited to join us each evening from 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Celebrate Recovery - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving help and help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise@ 385-0061

There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families. There is also a Children's program.

Hospice and Home Care of Blue Ridge, Inc.

15th Annual Golf Tournament

Saturday, June 8 - Tee Time 8:30 a.m.

Grassy Creek Golf Course

Mitchell County Historic Society - We'll hear about the Overmountain Victory Historic Trail from Starli McDowell on June 17th at the Historic Courthouse.

Mitchell County Chamber - For the last 60 years, Spruce Pine has welcomed rock hounds and gem and mineral enthusiasts to the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains!

This event has been a major part of the history of Mitchell County for the past 60 years! Hundreds of thousands of people have traveled to our community to take part in this event.

The NC Mineral and Gem Festival has an over \$1 million impact on our local businesses each year which is one of the main reasons we work so hard to make this event a success each year.

But events like this don't happen without the support of our local businesses and volunteers. As we make plans for the 60th year celebration we need our sponsors even more! We hope you will consider joining us this year as a community partner to help us make this year's event something special. No matter the level of

sponsorship, your support is very important!

Mitchell County 4-H – Phone: 828-688-4811
4-H Summer Fun
Moving Milk From Farm to Fridge – Date: June 17th-20th; Time: 9-12 pm Ages 5-8 Cost \$ 30 Drop-off location: Bakersville Fire Dept.
Citizenship Focus...From the County to Raleigh – Date: June 18th-19; Time: Tuesday, 9:00 am – 3 pm & Wednesday, 6:00 am – 6pm Cost \$ 40 Drop-off location: Mitchell Cooperative Extension
Money Fun for Cloverbuds – Date: June 24th; Time: 9am-12pm; Ages 5-8; Cost: \$10 each Drop-off location: Bakersville Fire Dept.
Sumo Boats – Date: June 25th; Time: 9am-3pm; Ages 8-13; Cost \$ 10 each Drop-off location: Bakersville Fire Dept.
Cloverbud Puppetmasters – Date: June 26th; Time: 9am-12pm; Ages 5-8; Cost \$ 10, Drop-off location: Bakersville Fire Dept.
Totally Electric Thursday – Date: June 27th; Time: 9am-3pm; Ages: 9-14; Cost: \$ 15 each; Drop-off location: Bakersville Fire Dept.

YaYa Village We are announcing the Opening of YaYa Village Commercial Share Kitchen!
We've realized there's a gap that needs to be filled between the production of local food and their consumption. That's why we started YaYa Village Commercial Shared Use Kitchen so that we could provide a certified area at a reasonable cost for locals trying to sell their products. This way we strive to help community entrepreneurs with their part-time business.
So, if you have a product you want to market and sell (like jams, jellies, baked goods etc.) or if you need a commercial kitchen for catering, having a private Pop Up dinner, hosting a class or whatever you're imagining; we hope our Shared Use Kitchen can provide you with a solution.
Come visit our space, get an application and let us talk to see what is that you have in mind!
We are also serving Lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Sign up for 2019 After Hours! Business After Hours are held to provide an opportunity for Chamber members to network while allowing the Member to sponsor a chance to address and/or showcase their facilities. Business After Hours are held monthly to bi-monthly, and generally on a Tuesday or Thursday (unless other arrangements are made). The Member sponsor and the Chamber representative will coordinate the event. After Hours begins at 4:30 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. (unless other arrangements are made). Send your questions and reserve your month by emailing Kelly at kjones@mitchellcountychamber.org.
May: Loafer's Glory Rafting and Tubing, Bakersville, NC
June: The Brian Center
July: KB's
August: Mitchell County Animal Rescue
September: The Switzerland Inn
October-November: OPEN
We do not have After Hours in December.

Summer 2019 Workshops at Penland!
Summer 2019 workshop descriptions are here!
A few fun facts:
* We're offering 103 workshops this summer.
* Scholarships are available for all 103 workshops!
* Registration opens January 15.
* Scholarship applications open January 1 and are due by February 18.

2019 Calendar of Events for Downtown Spruce Pine

Troutacular	June 1st, Riverside Park
Downtown Day	June 8th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Reading is Alive Play	June 8th, Central Park
SPACE Festival	June 14-15th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Movies in the Park	June 14th, Central Park
4th of July Celebration	July 4th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Movies in the Park	July 12th, Central Park
Movies in the Park	July 19th, Central Park
BBQ & Bluegrass	July 19th & 20th, Riverside Park
Movies in the Park	July 26th, Central Park (rain date)
Mineral & Gem Festival	Aug 1-4th, Cross Street Building
Summer Concert	August 2nd, Central Park
Summer Concert	September 7th Central Park
Walk A Mile Fundraiser	October (TBD), Central Park
Fall Clean Up	October-TBD, Downtown Spruce Pine
Potter's Market	October 13 & 14th, Cross Street Building
Merchant Trick or Treat	October 31st, Downtown Spruce Pine
Small Business Saturday	November 30th Downtown Spruce Pine
Kiwanis Christmas Parade	November 30th, Downtown Spruce Pine
TRAC Studio Tour	December 6-8th, Mitchell & Yancey County

*Farmers Market every Wednesday at Bank of America beginning in April
For more information about any of these events, contact SPMS 765-3008

Toe River Arts
June Studio Tour Applications
The Toe River Arts Studio Tour is perhaps the largest and the longest running studio tour in the country; you will find craftspeople and artists in nearly every medium, many tops in their field and several new-to-the-tour participants. FREE, and self-guided, this adventure will lead you to some unique places situated between Mt. Mitchell and Roan Mountain. Visitors travel through valleys, past streams, across rivers, over hilltops, and experience breathtaking mountain vistas as they make their journey through the Toe River Arts region. Meet the artists, see where they create and where they live.
Toe River Arts will sponsor a Meet-The-Artist reception at their Spruce Pine location on Friday evening after the tour closes for the day. A sampling of participants will be on display geographically so one can plan a route for the rest of their journey.
For more information, please call 828.682.7215 or email.
Evensong at Trinity Church

Tipton Hill Community Foundation (Tipton Hill) – Country Breakfast, the first Saturday each month, 7:30 – 10:30 am, at the old Methodist Church, across from Jerry's Store. Come join us for homemade sausage, scrambled eggs, gravy, jellies, juice and coffee. Eat in or take-out, all funds support the Tipton Hill Community Foundation.

Yancey County

Higgins United Methodist Church - Celebrate Recovery will be launching on June 5th – It will begin at 5:15 with food and fellowship, large group worship at 6:15 and open share small group at 7:30. This will be held at Higgins UMC.
Feed-A-Child Yancey County
Higgins fills bags the second Tuesday of each month. We have been fortunate to have enough volunteers to fill the bags so far. They are going to continue the program this summer through the churches in the county that have Wednesday night meals. If you have any questions about Feed-A-Child they can be directed to Bill & Nancy Watkins at 828-675-5367.

Baptists on Mission Mission teams are needed to do Vacation Bible School, Evangelistic Outreach, and Construction projects in our partner states of Alaska, Vermont, Maine, and Pennsylvania. Mission teams can make a great impact in reaching these communities for Christ. Visit our website for full lists of projects at: <https://baptistsonmission.org/Mission-Projects/United-States/New-England> or contact NC Baptists on Mission at 919-467-5607 or mabernathy@ncbaptist.org.
Deep Impact Kids Are you looking for a mission opportunity for the children in your church? Deep Impact Kids will be serving in many communities across the state with hands-on mission projects designed for 1st-6th grade children. Sign up your church now for a weekend, mini-week, or full week at one of these locations: Camp Cale, Red Springs, Shelby, Mundo Vista, Caswell, or Truett Baptist Camp. For more information contact Dollie Noa at dnoa@ncbaptist.org. Website <http://baptistsonmission.org/camps/di-kids>

ASAP's 2019 Local Food Guide Is Here!
The growing season has arrived in Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians! That means it's time to discover farms to visit, weekly farmers tailgate markets, new restaurants, and more opportunities to savor the season and celebrate the farms that surround us. The latest edition of ASAP's Local Food Guide, the essential resource for finding Appalachian Grown™ food and farms, hits newsstands this week.



Geography or Arithmetic

By Steve Beitz
Burke County



The complete list of the twelve disciples is only recorded for us four times. Once by Matthew, once by Mark, and twice by Luke. Luke does it once in his gospel, and once in his Acts of the Apostles. Four times we have the complete list of the twelve, the disciples of Christ.

Scholars have always been fascinated by the order of the list. Whose name is listed first, and whose name is mentioned last, and what criteria did the gospel writers use in their decision. The lists are not alphabetical, no matter what language we might use. The lists don't start with the oldest and go to the youngest, nor do they go from the youngest to the oldest. Well, what can we see in these four lists? One thing we see is that Peter is mentioned first in all four lists. Likewise, Judas the Betrayer is listed last all four times. Neither of these name positions should come as a big surprise. Certainly, Peter is the mouthpiece of the group. And Judas, knowing what he did, the list makers certainly would have put him at the bottom of their lists. There is another consistency in the order of the lists, that is equally interesting, maybe even more so than the placement of Peter and Judas. It is the name in position number five. Every single time, the fifth disciple listed is Philip. First is always Peter, then the same three are always listed two, three, and four, but not always in the same sequence. But number five in all four lists is always Philip. The gospel writers, whatever their criteria for their order of their lists, always see Philip as number five. Peter, James, John, and Andrew are the obvious headliners. But evidently, everyone considered Philip the leader of the rest of the pack.

Something else about number five. Even though all twelve disciples are Jewish, scholars have always wondered why in the world do we only know disciple number five by his Greek name. Philip is the second most popular name Greek parents gave to their children. The most popular name for Greek boys is Alexander. After the Greeks conquest of the world in the fourth century, Greek civilization had left a big mark. The majority of the Middle East countries had adopted Greek culture, Greek customs, as well as the Greek language. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, and Jude all wrote their contributions to the New Testament in Greek. So, we suspect, but do not know for sure, but we believe that Philip was a Hellenist, which is to say a Greek Jew. Why was Philip known by his Greek name instead of his Jewish name? Somethings we just don't know. We do know that Philip had been raised in Bethsaida, the same town that Peter and Andrew were originally from. Since the three were all God-fearing Jews, Philip, Peter, and Andrew, probably knew each other long before they were part of the twelve, maybe since the three were kids.

What else do we know about the man Philip. Well, if we had to depend on the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke for our information about Philip, all we would know is that he is number five. But John, when he writes his gospel some 60 years

or so after the crucifixion, tells us what we do know about disciple number five... Philip.

John shares with us a few incidents that Philip is directly involved in, and shows us that in one of these events, he moves to the top of the list. I want to zero in on that incident. We find it in John 6:1-5. *"After these things Jesus went over the Sea Of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw the signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Pass-over, a feast of the Jews, was near. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?'"*

Now we could quickly glance down to verse 10 and see that there were 5000 men in the crowd. But to suggest that number made up the entire count would not do justice to the size of the crowd. There must have been several thousand more women and children, so it would not be a stretch that there could have been 10,000 people.

Matthew adds a tidbit to the story. We can find this same incident recorded in Matthew 14. In Matthew 14:15, we read: *"When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, this is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."*

Matthew reports that it is getting late. This suggests that they did not take a break for lunch. If we were going to have a morning meeting and an afternoon meeting, we would put a lunch break in between. But in this particular case, nobody stopped for food. And now it is late and Christ says let's feed them. And it is here that Jesus singles out disciple number five, Philip. Why would Jesus ask Philip? After all, he is only number five. I am positive Peter would have been happy to give an answer. Some suggest that because this sermon by the sea was near Bethsaida where Philip grew up, that this is why Jesus picked on him. True enough I suppose, but Peter and Andrew grew up there too, although it appears that all three men were no longer living there. John actually writes that it was not about where Philip lived. We see the reason in John 6:6. *"But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do."*

A test. Christ tests Philip. Pop quiz Philip. You have been in my class for some 18 months. Why don't we see what you have learned? Jesus asks a geography question. Where? Where do we find food to feed 10,000 people? However, though Jesus asks Philip a geography question, Philip answers the geography question with an arithmetic answer. Evidently, Philip is a bit of a bean counter. Philip replies forget the where Jesus, for even if we could solve the where issue, it doesn't matter.

John 6:7. Philip answered Him, Two Hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little. Different Bible versions give a different interpretation for the amount. However, they all come from the same Greek word that Philip uses, denarii. We run across this piece of money several times in the New Testament. And we find out about the wage aspect of it in a parable told by Jesus that is recorded in Matthew 20. You will find there that a denarii is the basic average days' pay in Palestine in that particular day. Philip asks *"Where do we go to get food for these people?"* Philip says, forget the geography and pulls out his trusty pocket calculator. Philip starts his calculations. One denarius would buy 12 wheat biscuits, but wait, barley is cheaper so with one denarius we could purchase 20 barley biscuits. And if we get the small biscuits instead of the larger biscuits, we could get 40 barley biscuits for one denarius. Then, if we cut the biscuits in half, that would be 80 biscuits for one denarius. And it is about at this moment that Philip's calculator explodes! And Philip, exasperated by the numbers, cries out, 200 denarii would only get us 800 miniature barley biscuits and if we cut them in half that would get us 16,000 tiny bites of barley. But so, what, we don't have 200 denarii!!

Philip was absolutely right. His arithmetic is correct. 200 denarii would not feed that crowd. If Christ had asked an arithmetic question, Philip would have gotten an A+. And you know what bothers me most about disciple number five? I see Philip's problem is also my problem, too much arithmetic. The reality of the raw numbers clouded Philip's faith. And I find the reality of the raw numbers can cloud my faith too. Now indeed, the calculations are to be considered. We are to take a commonsense assessment of the situation. However, arithmetic should not leave out the power of God.

The numbers say this, and the numbers say that. And I come to the same conclusion that Philip did and I say, it can't be done. I've done the math and it isn't doable. Jesus asked Philip to test him. Christ wanted to see a different answer from Philip. I did not ask you an arithmetic question. I did not need a price tag. I asked you where! Where should you go Philip, not how much. It was a geography question. Philip could have answered, *"I would go to you Lord, for I don't know what to do."* Oh, how Jesus would have smiled if Philip had given that kind of an answer. For that is the geography answer Jesus was looking to hear.

Arithmetic has its place. You and I have a checkbook. We must manage with arithmetic in mind. But we must put arithmetic in its proper position. Our help comes from the Lord not the calculator. If it were always about the arithmetic, David would have said before he went out to fight Goliath, *"Are you nuts!"* He is 9 feet tall, I'm 5 foot 10. Do the math! I'm not going out there without a couple of pit bulls, three or four tigers and a couple of grizzly bears to even up the arithmetic. If it were only about the arithmetic, Gideon and his 300 men would have said, *"Are you insane!"* We only have 300 and the enemy has 135,000. Do the math!! This is a suicide mission!

Yes, arithmetic has its place, but at the top of our list should be the power of a loving God. Even after we run the numbers, we must consider the power of God. May we never have so much arithmetic that we discount the powerful hand of our God. May our need, always consider the geography and reply, our help comes from the Lord.

Steve Beitz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.



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Enjoying Everyday Life

Avoiding the Danger Zone

By Joyce Meyer

Have you ever heard the expression, "count your blessings"? I like to purposely take time to count my blessings and think about the goodness of God in my life. In fact, I keep a book of remembrance of special little things God has done for me over the years to remind me of His goodness.

It's easy sometimes to forget about all of the good things God has done for us, and this becomes a problem when we focus too much on what we don't have and not enough on what we do have. Living with this wrong mindset is dangerous because it leads us down the road of grumbling, complaining and fault-finding.

A good example of this is the story of the Israelites and their 40 years journeying through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land God had for them. Now, it could have been an 11-day journey, but it took much longer because of their unhealthy mindsets.

God had done so many good things for them, such as delivering them from slavery in Egypt and miraculously parting the Red Sea so they could escape Pharaoh's army. But they didn't focus on what they should be thankful for, and when things were not going the way they wanted, they quickly became impatient and murmured and complained. (See Exodus chapters 14-16.)

Overcoming the Temptation to Complain

It's so easy to complain when our circumstances aren't exactly what we want them to be. But we need to diligently resist the temptation to be negative and complain because it can damage our relationship with God, our relationships with other people, and even our relationship with ourselves.

Philippians 2:14 (AMPC) clearly tells us, *"Do all things without grumbling and faultfinding and complaining [against God] and questioning and doubting [among yourselves]."*

Whenever you're tempted to complain, just think how much better it would be to remain thankful and say, "God, I remember the good things You've done for me and I'm thankful for the breakthrough that I know is on the way." It's that mindset and attitude that will keep you moving forward, toward the good things God has in store.

Set Your Mind and Keep It Set

We can have right mindsets that will benefit us, and God's Word gives us direction on how to cultivate them.

Colossians 3:1-2 (AMP) says, *"If you have been raised with Christ [to a new life, sharing in His resurrection from the dead], keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind and keep focused habitually on the things above [the heavenly things], not on things that are on the earth [which have only temporal value]."*

These verses direct us to get our mind on what is really important, rather than wasting our time thinking about things we can't control or that don't really matter. I firmly believe in setting my mind and keeping it set on God and His plan for my life every day.

Interrupt Wrong Thinking

It takes time and practice to develop a habit of right thinking. One of the ways I've found to interrupt wrong thinking and set my mind in the right direction is by saying something that the Bible says.

Many years ago, I was extremely negative. I always say that if I thought two positive thoughts in a row, my mind would get in a cramp. But as I spent time in God's Word, my mindset began to change, and instead of focusing on the negative, I found myself focusing on more positive things, like the promises God had for me.

When you spend time studying the Word, renewing your mind with the Truth, it helps you set your mind in the right direction so you can have a more peaceful, joyful and positive life. As this new way of thinking gradually renews your mind, it dilutes the old thinking and transforms your mindset and attitudes.

I want to encourage you to begin developing this habit of right thinking. Begin your day by asking for God's help. Even if it's only for five or ten minutes at first, take some time each day to renew your mind with truth in His Word.

It's easy to complain—it's what comes naturally if we don't pay attention. There are things that happen every day that we can murmur about, but they really aren't worth the effort it takes to get upset and gripe about them.

Psalm 100:4 (ESV) says, *"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"*

Make it your goal to have a constant attitude of gratitude. Resist the temptation to complain and instead praise and thank God for who He is and all He's done for you. By God's grace and through His strength, you can overcome complaining and live each day with a thankful heart.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-CD series Right and Wrong Mindsets. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *Overload: How to Unplug, Unwind and Unleash Yourself from the Pressure of Stress* (Hachette). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.



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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 46



Sen. Warren Daniel
Warren.Daniel@ncleg.net
919-715-7823

I was happy to vote in support Thursday of the Tax Reduction Act of 2019 which continues the string of significant tax reforms enacted by legislative Republicans in North Carolina since 2011 that have resulted in 99 percent of North Carolina taxpayers either paying less or no state personal income taxes.

The bill, sponsored by Jerry Tillman (R-Randolph), Ralph Hise (R-Mitchell) and Paul Newton (R-Cabarrus), will increase the standard deduction for those married filing jointly from \$20,000 to \$20,750 starting in 2021, allowing North Carolinians to keep more of their hard-earned money. This would mark a \$14,750 increase in the standard deduction since Republicans took over the General Assembly.

The act will also stimulate additional business investments in North Carolina by making changes to the franchise tax. Over the past eight years, efforts by legislative Republicans to reduce the tax burden and reform the tax code have led to a strong business climate, and more people are working in North Carolina today than ever before in the history of the state. Forbes has ranked North Carolina as the best state for business for the past two years and the state has moved up in the Tax Foundation's business climate rankings from 44th to 12th. Despite all these successes, North Carolina remains one of only 16 states that still burdens employers with a franchise tax, and experts agree that it is a hindrance to new investment in the state.

The franchise tax is essentially a tax on investing in North Carolina that employers pay in addition to local property taxes and state income taxes. The tax is based on the value of an employer's assets, not how much it earns, which discourages in-state investment and the accumulation of assets such as new plants or equipment. This bill will reduce the franchise tax rate from \$1.50 per \$1,000 of net worth to \$1.00 per \$1,000 of net worth over the next two years, eliminate the 55 percent of appraised value base and introduce a cap of \$150,000 to prevent excessive tax liability.

We have worked hard to eliminate and reduce taxes to ensure that more of our citizens' hard-earned money goes where it belongs—in their pockets. This bill simply continues those efforts.

The Tax Reduction Act of 2019 is expected to reduce taxes by a total of almost \$800 million over the next five years alone.

NC House District 118



Rep. Michele D. Presnell
Michele.Presnell@ncleg.net
919-733-5732

Rep. Presnell was invited to stand in for Speaker Moore in the House Chamber on Monday. To the left is House Principal Clerk James White.

These three brothers were spectacular as they sang the National Anthem in the House Chamber. They were guests of Representative Jarvis from Davidson County. They perform all over North Carolina and they are known as the "3 Heath Brothers". They are definitely worth hearing! Nicholas, the one in the middle, is currently serving as a House page for the General Assembly.

HB 966 2019 Appropriations Act—The state House of Representatives approved a \$23.9 billion budget proposal on May 3. The budget provides pay raises for educators and state employees, appropriates over \$60 million for school safety initiatives, and invests heavily in the State Capital Infrastructure Fund. Public schools remain the top priority of the state House's spending proposal that provides large raises for veteran teachers up to \$8,500. Under the House budget, Republicans have committed more than \$1.1 billion to teacher pay raises since 2014.

HB 724 – Truth in Caller ID Act was passed unanimously in the House. This bill sponsored by Speaker Moore will prohibit the use of misleading telephone identification methods for telephone solicitations by voice or text. You can follow the progress of this bill here.

HB 387 – Electric Co-Op Rural Broadband Services passed the House and would allow internet providers to use existing utility infrastructure to connect broadband access to rural regions of North Carolina at a lower cost. This legislation and state funding would remove barriers to rural broadband.

HB 647 – Adopt Haywood Co. Elk Capital of NC sponsored by Rep. Presnell and Rep. Joe Sam Queen passed the House 115-0 today and has been sent to the Senate for a vote.



Clayton, Nicholas, and Christian

NC House Passes Firefighters Fighting Cancer Act

Legislation Expands
Care for NC Firefighters
Diagnosed with
Work-Related Cancers



The Firefighters Fighting Cancer Act HB520 passed the NC House with unanimous support.

US House of Representatives NC District 11

"You Are Not Forgotten Act"



Congressman
Mark Meadows
202-225-6401
www.meadows.house.gov

Washington, D.C. – This week, in advance of Memorial Day weekend, Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC) and Rep. Susan Lee (D-NV) released the "You Are Not Forgotten Act"—a bipartisan bill to honor missing military heroes.

The bill would direct the Architect of the Capitol to display POW/MIA flags outside the entrance of the office of each Member of Congress, in recognition of the number of Americans missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War. The flags, designed by the National League of Families, represent America's missing soldiers.

Rep. Meadows released the following comment on the bill:

"Every year on Memorial Day, Americans take time to honor and remember the sacrifices of our men and women in the military—especially those who paid the ultimate price to preserve our freedom. An integral part of that remembrance involves renewing our commitment to account for our POW/MIAs as fully as possible. My hope is that the bill we're introducing today will remind families of those unaccounted for that our country remains indebted to them for their service. We will continue sustaining our efforts to account for them."

Rep. Lee (D-NV), the lead cosponsor, also released the following:

"On Memorial Day weekend, we take time to remember the men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Sadly, many brave men and women in uniform have gone missing in action and were never able to return home to their loved ones. The You Are Not Forgotten Act is a reminder of the debt of gratitude we owe those fallen soldiers for laying their lives on the line for our country, and a signal to the loved ones of those soldiers that we remember them every day."

YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47



Sen. Ralph Hise
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919-733-3460

The administration of Gov. Roy Cooper, in 2017, stated that the budget passed by legislative Republicans would “not adequately meet growth in population and inflation,” cause a “self-inflicted fiscal crisis,” and place our state in financial jeopardy by bringing about a \$600 million budget shortfall. Unfortunately for the Governor, this assessment, among many others he has made, has created a huge credibility problem for him.

Revenue figures released in May show that individual income tax payments totaled \$395 million higher than projected and corporate income tax payments totaled \$75 million higher than projected. So rather than the “\$600 million hole” predicted by Gov. Cooper’s budget director, our budget has a \$643 million surplus – the highest since 2005.

Since Republicans were voted into the majority in the NC General Assembly in 2011, here are some facts to consider:

- Population growth in North Carolina is higher than the national and regional averages. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)
- Employment growth in North Carolina is higher than the national rate and regional averages. In fact, employment growth in North Carolina is 72% higher than the Southeast average. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- Under Republican tax cuts, the biggest tax rate reduction went to those earning less than \$50,000 per year (from 2.8% to 2.4%). (Source: NCGA Fiscal Research Division)
- Under Republican tax cuts, the share of taxes paid by those earning more than \$200,000 per year increased (from 37.5% to 38.4%), while the share of taxes paid by those earning less than \$50,000 decreased (from 11.2% to 10.4%). (Source: NCGA Fiscal Research Division)

One Democratic senator claimed that North Carolina’s employment growth since 2014 is “lowest in the region.” But from 2014 to 2019, the number of people employed in North Carolina grew by 10.36%, which is higher than both the Southeast region and the South Atlantic region.

Democrats have a credibility crisis of their own making. They’ve invested an enormous amount of time, effort, and money toward creating a negative perception of Republicans, but the facts are clear. Republicans have taken a disciplined approach, and the results speak for themselves: record education budgets, sweeping tax relief, major employment growth, and historic surpluses.

As always, please share your thoughts with me on these or other issues related to state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.



Medicare for ‘None’

Democrats’ plan offers less freedom, fewer choices, and more government control.

This week, Democrats in Congress continued to push for their extreme ‘Medicare for All’ proposal. Make no mistake: “Medicare for All” really means Medicare for none. This socialist-style plan would not only destroy our growing economy, but would also threaten seniors’ access to health care, placing more Washington bureaucrats in the driver’s seat when it comes to Americans’ health care decisions. Here are some of the most dangerous parts of their plan:

• **Eliminates Choice:** By removing private, employer-sponsored health insurance, more than 180 million American workers could be kicked off their affordable health insurance plans and face higher medical bills and longer wait times.

• **Creates an Unfair System:** Younger, working-aged adults – individuals who haven’t paid their fair share into the system – would be allowed to access Medicare benefits early, further jeopardizing the long-term sustainability of the program.

• **Skyrockets Spending:** The \$32 trillion price tag – more than our current national deficit – would place an extreme and unprecedented burden on the federal budget and American taxpayer.

• **Increases Taxes:** Taxes on middle-class and lower-income families would be raised significantly in order to pay for the impractical program.

Just last week, our federal health care agencies reported that Medicare hospital funds will be exhausted by 2026. The Democrats’ plan would make matters worse, placing more Americans in a program that they did not pay for, and that is already in danger of going bankrupt. America’s seniors shouldn’t have to worry about whether their health care access will be jeopardized by a massive overhaul of the system they rely on. Americans deserve better than a “one-size-fits-all” approach, especially when it comes to something so important.



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Transfer of the Billy Graham Archives from Wheaton College to Billy Graham Library in Charlotte begins June 3

The papers of the late Billy Graham and the historic records of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) will be transferred from the Billy Graham Center on the campus of Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois—where they have been housed for nearly 40 years—to the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, North Carolina, beginning Monday, June 3. The move will consolidate the Billy Graham Library's holdings of paper historical records, audio and video recordings, and digital materials of the late Billy Graham's life and ministry.

"This is part of our continuing consolidation in Billy Graham's hometown," said Franklin Graham, president and CEO of the BGEA. "Some 214,000 people visited the Billy Graham Library here in Charlotte last year alone, and it makes sense for my father's archives and memorabilia to be housed and maintained here for visiting scholars to conduct research, and for our guests to see when they come visit our ministry headquarters, the Library, and my parents' gravesites."

"We are grateful for the role Wheaton College played in my father's early life and for their ongoing commitment to the cause of Christ—as well as for their partnership as these archives transition into a new era," Franklin Graham said.

An announcement about the re-opening of these archives at the Billy Graham Library will be made once details are finalized.



- Among the Billy Graham-related records that will be moving to Charlotte are:
- Oral histories of the organization
 - Crusade procedure books
 - Billy Graham news conferences
 - Conferences for itinerant evangelists in 1983, 1986 and 2000
 - Sermon transcripts and notes
 - Personal correspondence and papers
 - Radio and TV recordings
 - Press clippings

More information about the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and the Billy Graham Library is available at billygraham.org and billygrahamlibrary.org.



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Cherokee Indian Dancing and Demonstrations
by Kate Groff
Mitchell County



Orchard to host Cherokee Indian dancing and demonstrations.

On two days in June—Thursday, the 6th from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. and Friday, the 7th from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m., the Orchard at Altapass will host Cherokee artisans who will demonstrate their craft and share their rich cultural heritage with the public. Both events, sponsored with the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, Blue Ridge Traveler, Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and the National Forest Service, will offer visitors an opportunity to experience the culture of the Cherokee, native to Western North Carolina, through song, dance, storytelling, and crafts.

Mike Crowe and the Cherokee Dancers, known as the Warriors of AniKihwa, will perform on Thursday, June 6, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. These multi-talented members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, an autonomous sovereign nation, have performed at Colonial Williamsburg, the National Museum of the American Indian, the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, throughout the Southeast, and even at the London New Year's Day Parade. They will bring traditional song, dance, and stories of their living history, culture, and language.

Crowe sees his work as a cultural specialist for the Cherokee crucial to preserving their heritage. He can trace his own lineage back to the 17th century, when their written records began. In addition to learning Cherokee culture and history from his family, he spent 12 years working at the Oconaluftee Indian Village—a replica of an 18th century Cherokee Indian village and historical museum. Since honing his knowledge and understanding of the Cherokee, both past and present, he has devoted most of his time to perpetuating and preserving its history and culture.

On Friday, June 7, from 12:30 to 1:30, both Crowe and Cherokee artisan Ramona Lossie will share Cherokee stories while demonstrating flint knapping (process of chipping away silica stones—flint—to produce sharp projectile points or tools) and basket-weaving, respectively. Lossie grew up in the Painttown community in Cherokee, learning the art of basket-weaving from her mother and grandmother. Several years ago, her knowledge of the river cane (a type of bamboo) basket-weaving tradition became crucial as the number of remaining practitioners of the craft among the Eastern Band dwindled to two—she and her sister Lucille. By sharing her skill with others in classes and workshops, the tradition has, once again, become firmly rooted in the community.

Her work has won blue ribbons at festivals in Chicago and in New Mexico, Wisconsin, and North Carolina. She has been featured in an Atlanta newspaper. Her baskets are on display at the Smithsonian Institution and in museums in Albuquerque, Chicago, Atlanta, and in Florida.

Both the Thursday evening performance and "The History of the Cherokee in the Toe River Valley," will celebrate the preservation of Cherokee cultural heritage. Tickets for the Thursday performance from 6 to 7:30 p.m. are \$10 and available at the door. The Friday mid-day demonstrations are free. The public, encouraged to attend both events, will walk away with a new perspective of the vibrant Cherokee traditions and the people who dedicate their lives to see that they continue for future generations.

For more information, please visit www.altapassorchard.org and visit the Facebook page for current updates and happenings. The Orchard at Altapass, located at 1025 Orchard Road, Spruce Pine (mile marker 328.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway), is a non-profit working orchard, educational and entertainment venue dedicated to the preservation of the Orchard lands and the culture of the region.



Crowe

Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.

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Family Living

Best Tips to Kick Off Summer and Celebrate Dad

By State Point Media

Father's Day is a chance to kick off summer and celebrate Dad. Where better to gather your celebration than the grill, where family memories, traditions and delicious meals are created?

Here are some ways to make your father's grilling wishes come true.

Thanking Dad

If your father is like many others, grilling is kind of his thing, and there's no better way to honor the man of the house than with the equipment he needs and deserves. At the top of your gift list should be a brand-new grill that will allow the king of the backyard barbecue to create world class ribs, wings, smoked meats and more at home. Whether his preference is traditional wood pellet, charcoal, gas or even a vertical smoker, consider those from Pit Boss, which offer exceptional value. Their pellet grills are particularly well-suited to give Dad true bragging rights. Imparting a simple, all-natural wood flavor to cooking and featuring 8-in-1 versatility — letting him bake, braise, sear, chargrill, grill, smoke, BBQ and roast — he'll be well on his way to making fall-off-the-bone ribs and other competition-quality barbecue favorites in his own backyard.



Next up, gift tools and accessories to boost Dad's grilling dexterity. For example, the non-stick porcelain-coated Pit Boss Grill Basket & Topper, fits most grill surfaces, making it possible to grill mouth-watering foods of any size without the need for tin foil or skewers. Or, beef up marinades and rubs, while infusing heat, tang and zest into barbecue creations with the gift of a gourmet spice pack.

For more gift ideas to make cooking outdoors easier and more versatile, such as covers to protect the grill when it's not in use or a defrosting tray to thaw foods in a hurry, visit pitboss-grills.com.

Feeding Dad

To celebrate Dad in the big way he deserves, try smoking meats in your own backyard with this recipe from Pit Boss. These fall-off-the-bone St. Louis-style ribs are easy to make and can serve a group of four, or double the recipe to serve a big party!

- Ingredients:
- 1 rack spare ribs
 - 1/4 cup of mustard
 - Pit Boss Sweet Rib Rub
 - 2 tbsp of butter
 - 2 tbsp of brown sugar
 - 2 tbsp of honey
 - 1/4 cup of apple juice
 - 1/2 cup of your favorite BBQ sauce

Directions:

- Prep your ribs by patting them dry, removing the membrane, and trimming them, if your butcher hasn't already.
- Generously coat every inch of the ribs with mustard and Pit Boss Sweet Rib Rub. Lay them on the grill bone side down and smoke at 225 F for 3 hours.
- After 3 hours, wrap them tightly in foil, leaving one side open to add in your butter, brown sugar, honey, and apple juice. Then, seal them up and place them back on the grill flesh side down for 2 more hours.
- To finish them off, remove the foil and lay the ribs bone side down for an hour or until they reach an internal temperature of 185 – 190 F, making sure to add your favorite BBQ sauce and crank up the grill temperature to 275 F, 15 – 20 minutes before the ribs are done.



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"Tried by Fire" (1 Peter 1: 6-7)

By Shawn Thomas



Theodore Roosevelt was a man of very unique character: he gloried in facing obstacles and overcoming them. He would take his guests out on a 20-mile hike – and much to their dismay, the tougher the course, the better he liked it. They would come in exhausted, but he would just smile and say: “It was bully!” The higher the mountain he had to climb, the better. The stronger the wind against him when he was rowing, the better. He just loved facing and overcoming difficulties. Well, not too many of us have that kind of composition, where we just delight in difficulties. But as God’s children, if we knew more of what the Bible says about our trials, and the difficulties we face — and what is waiting for us on the other side of them — then we would be a lot more able to rejoice in the trials that face us in life, than most of us do now.

“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:6-7.

I. THE NATURE OF OUR TRIALS: What are the trials like, that we face in this life?

A. Brief “a little while”

It says your trials are for “a little while.” They don’t last forever. Cheryl & I went through a time, right after I graduated from seminary, and we had just had our first child (Paul); but I only had a part-time job, and we had not yet been called to our first full-time pastorate. It was a tough time, financially, and in several other ways. It was difficult to make ends meet. One month we were only able to pay our rent because a friend sent us an unexpected gift. It was an often discouraging, and difficult time. It lasted right about a year. Paul was born in June, we went through that year, and the following summer we were finally called to our first church. Looking back, we called that “The dark year.” And we had a number of really good years after that. It seemed like a long time while we were in it; but in reality, it was just like the Bible says here, “a little while.”

For the longest time, we called that experience our “dark year” — until 2012, when I got sick, and wasn’t able to work at all, and we had to sell our home, and I applied for disability — many of you have heard that story, so I won’t repeat it in full today. That time I was sick, and out of ministry, was about two years. But by 2015 I was healthy again, and we were back in full-time service. So again, that trial was just “a little while.”

In truth, all the difficulties we go through are just “a little while” — even if they last our whole time here on earth. What is our life here on earth, compared to eternity? If we were to chart out all the time here on earth, vs. all of eternity, the longest any of us are here on earth wouldn’t even be a “dot” on the graph! Our time here is so short; it is brief. James says, “you are just a vapor, that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”

Whatever trial you are facing right now, you won’t be in it forever. You won’t be in those difficulties forever. You won’t be in that pain forever. There is an end to it. And thank God, for the Christian, there is a GLORIOUS end to it! (We’ll talk about that in a minute.) But our trials are “brief.” They will not last long.

B. Different “various”

This Bible word (poikilois) means “diverse, various, many-colored.” It is saying that trials come in all kinds of different ways.

Peter was writing to a group of people who were experiencing persecution for their faith — we’ll see this repeatedly as we make our way through the book. Their faith was being tested by the persecution they were receiving:

2:12 says they were being slandered as evildoers;

3:14 says they suffered for righteousness

4:14 says they were reviled for the name of Christ

So they were going through a trial because of their faith, because they were Christians. That is one kind of trial. But as this verse says, there are “various” trials:

- There are trials of your faith: do you really believe what you say you believe?
- There are financial trials: will you have enough money to make it?
- There are physical trials: where you endure great pain or lose your abilities/inability.
- There are emotional trials, in which you feel a loss very deeply, or you have great worry.
- There are spiritual trials, when you are tempted not to believe what God’s word says is true.
- There are moral temptations, in which you are tempted to discard what you know is right, for temporary pleasure or popularity or gain.

As the word literally means, trials are “many colored;” they come in all different shapes and sizes and in all kinds of ways.

Do you know that even success can be a trial? We don’t often think of it that way, but it is. In fact, someone has said that success often tests us as much or more than failure does! How do we respond when we succeed: do we respond with pride, or with humility; do we treat people poorly — or graciously? Even our success really does test us.

But the point is: trials come in all kinds of different forms. Many of us have experienced several of those kinds of trials — maybe you would say that you have been through all of them! But you know the truth of this: trials are different; they come in various shapes and types.

C. Painful

The New American Standard version that I use says you have been “distressed” by various trials. The word “distressed” there is “lupeo” in the Greek Bible, it

means to “grieve; to distress; to give pain.” It is used in Matthew 26:37 of the deep emotional pain that Jesus felt when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, about to go to the cross. The pain that Jesus felt that night was so great that He sweat drops of blood. It was real, it was powerful; it was agonizing.

And so are the trials that you and I go through. These are not “little, painless, exercises”. They are real; they are powerful; and they are agonizing events in our lives. Don’t let anyone minimize what you are going through, saying, “Oh it’s not that bad” — or like some philosophies, like Christian Science or Buddhism, which teach that sickness or suffering is just an illusion.

NO! The Bible says your suffering is NOT an “illusion.” Whether it is physical pain, or emotional distress, or financial difficulty, or whatever it is; the trials you face are REAL TRIALS; they are truly painful and difficult for you. John Calvin wrote that believers are not just unfeeling “blocks of wood” that nothing can hurt. The Bible uses the word “distressed” here for our trials, because they are so real, and so painful, and truly hurtful.

D. Necessary “if necessary”

Verse 6 says “even though now for a little, IF NECESSARY, you have been distressed by various trials.” He says these trials that we go through are “necessary.” It is essential for us spiritually that we go through them.

It was necessary for Peter to be tested. He was so self-confident, so headstrong. But his weaknesses were exposed in the trial that confronted him at the arrest of Jesus. He got to see how weak he truly was. He saw how much grace he needed from the Lord. And he saw how much grace Jesus would indeed give him, if he would repent and come back to Him. And how He could use him if he did. Peter HAD to go through that testing. It was hard, it was difficult, but it HAD to be done. It was “necessary” if he was going to go on with the Lord, for him to go through that painful trial.

And the same thing is true for us. Our Heavenly Father knows that there are things we HAVE to go through, even though they are difficult for us.

None of us like to see our kids to have to go through difficult things. Our son Michael has been through some difficult things the past few weeks: his car messed up, and he had to try to fix it himself, and then get help, and then go to a “pull your own part” place, and do all this stuff. Then he was involved in a wreck Friday — and he’s driving 1000 miles to get here later today (pray for him!). And of course, it’s all so hard for us, because here we are, 1000 miles away, and very limited in our ability to help him! But I told Cheryl, “You know, I hate for him to have to go through this, but it’s really probably good for him, to go through some of these things.” Going through difficulties is part of maturing. Our kids HAVE to learn and grow through trials, if they are ever going to mature. Wise parents know that. If we try to “shield” them from everything, they’ll never grow up.

And God knows that for HIS children as well. He knows there are certain things we HAVE to go through, if we are going to see our weaknesses, like Peter, and learn to go to God for His grace, and to be used by Him the way He wants to use us. We’ve got to go through it; but like Peter, we won’t go through it by ourselves; Jesus will be interceding for us to grow and mature through our trials. Sometimes we can look back and see what God was doing through our trials. Other times we never do know, as long as we’re here on earth. But the Bible says it is “necessary” for us to go through them. They are “necessary.” So WHY are our trials necessary? What comes out of them?

II. THE RESULT OF OUR TRIALS

A. First, Verse 7 says “the proof of your faith” comes out of these trials. One of the main specific reasons why “it is necessary” for us to go through trials, is so that they will test our faith to prove that it is real.

SO many people make what we call “professions of faith” that Jesus is their Lord & Savior. And that is a necessary part of being saved. We have all sinned, and separated ourselves from God, so Jesus came to die on the cross and pay for our sins. And if we ask Him to save us, and confess Him as our Lord, He will save us. But we also have to realize that it’s not just a matter of “saying some words.” You have to really mean it in your heart. In fact, Jesus said, “NOT everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” He says a lot of people will CLAIM to follow Him but have never truly surrendered their heart and life to Him. How do we know the difference?

TRIALS expose the difference. The Bible says here that your trials are like a “fire” that tests your faith, just like gold is tested by fire.

This week I read about how they test gold by fire. They put the gold in a special pot that is built to withstand the heat and melt it in a laboratory oven at 1100 degrees Centigrade — that is 2012 degrees Fahrenheit! And the impurities will all be melted away, and the gold will be shown to be real, and pure — or it will be revealed that it was not gold at all!

In the same way, the Bible says that the trials we go through are like “fire”, which tests our faith — and reveals whether it is real or not. You SAY you believe in Jesus; you SAY that He is your Lord & Savior. Is He really? The “fires” of your life — the trials that you face — will show whether He really is, or not. Do you hold on to your faith during your trials? Or do you give it up? Your faith gets “tested by fire” through the difficulties you face, and they show how real your faith really is.

Before I got sick a few years ago, the temptation had gone through my mind: do you really believe all this, or is this “just a job” to you? Well, when I got sick, it was like a “fire” that tested me. I’d lost my health; I couldn’t stand up; I lost my job, my ministry; we lost our home and most of our possessions. But as I shared a few weeks ago, when I was at my lowest point, I still raised my hand to heaven and worshiped God. I’m glad I had that opportunity for my faith to be tested; it was like a “fire” that showed my faith was real. That’s what the fires of our trials do; they reveal whether our faith is real.

Sometimes you hear people talk about how Christianity is on the decline in America. I personally wonder if that is really true. I think rather what may have

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happened is that for a few generations, it was "socially acceptable" in America to act like you were a Christian, whether you really were one or not. It was a kind of "cultural Christianity" that a lot of people just "went along" with. But now the tide in our society has turned, and it is no longer as popular as it once was to be a Christian. The media will turn on you, if you hold to Biblical beliefs; you could lose your job; you could get sued; or at least get a lot of opposition and criticism. So as a result of that, all the "cultural Christians" — people who are not really true believers — have fallen away. Only those who are truly committed to Jesus are going to claim to be Christians now — and it will likely be even more so in the years ahead. See, "the fire" of peer pressure and social acceptance is testing our faith, and it is revealing those who are truly committed to the Lord. I think the number of true Christians may not be any less than it used to be; the number of true believers is probably about the same. But the "fire" of opposition is revealing those who truly believe, vs. those who were just "going along" for convenience. Trials demonstrate those who truly have faith, and it also reveals those who really do not.

So one of the benefits of trials is that they show us what we are made of — for better or for worse!

If you are really a Christian, your trials will demonstrate it.
If you are really NOT a Christian, your trials are going to demonstrate THAT!
They "PROVE YOUR FAITH"!

What are the trials that YOU are currently in, revealing about whether your faith is real?
B. Not only do trials prove that our faith is genuine — which really is treasure enough — but the Bible also tells us that they will "result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The Bible says there is a definite reward for our trials.

We talked last week about the "imperishable" reward that Christians have waiting for us. The winner of the Greek games got a wreath, the "stephanos," the wreath-crown as their reward — although in a few days it would wither. But Christians have a reward, a crown, a "stephanos" waiting in heaven for those of us who persevere through our trials, which will never perish.

I know several of our church family members have done fun runs, and road races, etc. in recent days (I know Christi was on like a million-mile bike ride last week; Kim did a 3-mile "Chuck Norris" run yesterday!) Often when you do those things, you get a tee shirt commemorating it. Back in the 1990's I did the short 3.1-mile Tulsa Fun Run with my kids several times — but one year I decided I was going to do the longer 9.3-mile run. It was difficult, but after I finished it, they gave me nice, long sleeve, official "Tulsa Run" tee shirt. I was proud of it and wore it for years. But like we talked about last week, these earthly "treasures" perish, don't they? My old Tulsa Run tee shirt is about on its last leg — I really shouldn't have even brought it with us on the move — it's about as thin as paper! And I will hate to see my "treasure" go. It was the reward for my perseverance.

But as Christians, we have a greater prize waiting for us, that we will never lose. For every one of us who perseveres through the trials that test our faith in this life: the LORD HIMSELF will give us HIS reward, the victor's crown, the imperishable laurel wreath, when you "finish your race" here and meet Him.

III. THE JOY IN OUR TRIALS

And SO, the Bible says, "In THIS you great rejoice" — "this" is the eternal blessings we looked at last week: the eternal inheritance that is "imperishable, undefiled, will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God for salvation." The imperishable crown we just saw, that is waiting for us. It is in ALL THIS that we can rejoice, even when we are going through various, temporary, necessary trials — because we know what is waiting for us on the other side of those trials!

Now, that doesn't mean that our sufferings are not real here on earth, as we said, they are. They are real, and they are painful. We are not those "blocks of wood" John Calvin talked about, that don't feel pain. BUT — even IN that real suffering and hurt, Christians can still have a real joy, because we know what is waiting for us on the other side!

Someone was telling me the other day about how they had been to Hawaii. I would love to go to Hawaii; that is on my "bucket list" for sure. I love the beach; I love history — and I really want to see Pearl Harbor. When I was a boy, I dug out a replica of Pearl Harbor in the field behind our house and set my model ships in it. I would love to see the real thing! But there's only one bad thing about going to Hawaii: and that would be the flight over. That's a long flight, right? A non-stop flight from Houston to Honolulu is about 9 hours in the air. NINE hours — crammed into a little seat, perhaps with a person on either side of you; no real room to get up and walk around; can't get comfortable; can't sleep (I can never sleep on a plane). For NINE solid hours! But you know what, I bet I could be pretty happy on a plane to Honolulu — NOT because

continued on page 6

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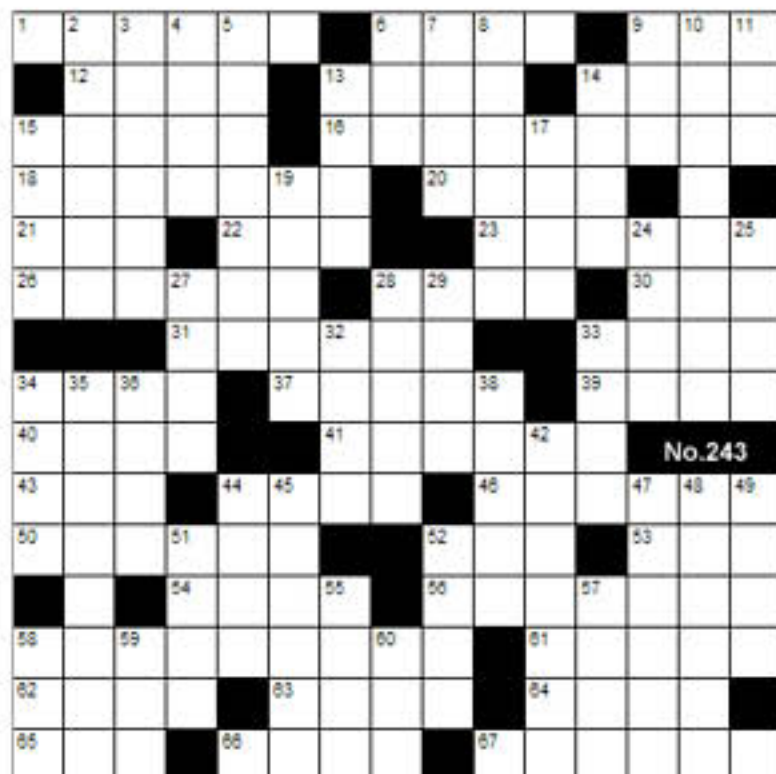
ACROSS

1 make sweet ____, sing many songs (Isaiah 23:16)
 6 sheep, and cheese from milk for David (2 Sam 17:29)
 9 to explore and ____ out the country and overthrow it (1 Chr 19:3)
 12 he burned the bones of the king of Edom into ____ (Amos 2:1) KJV
 13 followed by ____ of Gilead, who led Israel twenty-two years (Judg 10:3)
 14 fish, and all manner of ____, and sold on the Sabbath (Neh 13:16) KJV
 15 called ten of his servants and gave them ten ____ (Luke 19:13)
 16 he nullifies the vow that ____ her or the rash promise (Num 30:8)
 18 The wings of the ____ flap joyfully (Job 39:13)
 20 lo, the ____, which they saw in the east (Matt 2:9)
 21 "Stop wailing," Jesus said. ____ is not dead but asleep (Luke 8:52)
 22 Peter, however, got up and ____ to the tomb (Luke 24:12)
 23 As a door turns on its ____ (Prov 26:14)
 26 Is this ____ to be vindicated? (Job 11:2)
 28 I will destroy the king who is in the Valley of ____ (Amos 1:5)
 30 and now ____ greater than Jonah is here (Matt 12:41)
 31 he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole ____ (Gal 4:1)
 33 a follower of the Way, which they call a ____ (Acts 24:14)
 34 and some of them they shall ____ and persecute (Luke 11:49) KJV
 37 Nor ____ for your journey, neither two coats (Matt 10:10) KJV
 39 also learn to maintain good works for necessary ____ (Titus 3:14)
 40 Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine ____ (Ezek 27:6) KJV
 41 What he trusts in is fragile; what he ____ on is a spider's web (Job 8:14)
 43 give God a tenth of your mint, ____ and all other (Luke 11:42)
 44 Thou art my beloved Son; in ____ I am well pleased (Luke 3:22) KJV
 46 I will repair its broken ____, restore its ruins (Amos 9:11)
 50 His name shall ____ for ever (Ps 72:17)
 52 opposite to windward side (naut.) (Acts 27:16)
 53 now also the ____ is laid unto the root of the trees (Matt 3:10) KJV
 54 to ____ their own desires, they

will gather around them (2 Tim 4:3)
 56 With your help I can ____ against a troop (Ps 18:29)
 58 a ____ cord is not quickly broken (Eccl 4:12) KJV
 61 snake (Isa 30:6)
 62 they will ____ out of his kingdom everything that causes sin (Matt 13:41)
 63 son of Seth (Gen 4:26) KJV
 64 we spend our years as a ____ that is told (Ps 90:9)
 65 wherewith the ____ number of them (Num 3:48) KJV
 66 left of it until the morning, and it ____ worms, and stank (Exodus 16:20)
 67 because it is defiled, it is ruined, beyond all ____ (Mic 2:10)

DOWN

2 Elijah's successor (2 Kings 2:9)
 3 Smite the ____ of the door, that the posts may shake (Amos 9:1) KJV
 4 the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, ____, Zepho (Gen 36:11)
 5 He fulfills the ____ of those who fear him (Ps 145:19)
 6 and a quarter of a ____ of seed pods for five shekels (2 Kings 6:25)
 7 fine ____ have been poured upon me (Ps 92:10)
 8 they will ____ like a woman in labor (Isa 13:8)
 9 Jesus found a young donkey and ____ upon it (John 12:14)
 10 in return for all the joy we have in the ____ of our God (1 Thess 3:9)
 11 He who testifies to these things says, "____, I am coming soon." (Rev 22:20)
 13 James son of Zebedee and his brother ____ (Matt 4:21)
 14 ____ them before God against quarreling (2 Tim 2:14)
 15 Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the ____ high God (Heb 7:1)
 17 what is a man profited, if he shall ____ the whole (Matt 6:26)
 19 Moses took the ____ and oxen and gave them to the Levites (Num 7:6)
 24 Righteousness ____ before him and prepares the way (Ps 85:13)
 25 silver in two bags, with two ____ of clothing (2 Kings 5:23)
 27 I will give you the ____ of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 16:19)



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28 and ____ to be desired to make one wise (1,4) (Gen 3:6)
 29 whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the ____ is taken away (2 Cor 3:16)
 32 killed some twenty men in an area of about half an ____ (1 Sam 14:14)
 33 Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of ____ (Est 1:2)
 34 no remedy for your ____, no healing for you (Jer 30:13)
 35 we ____, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia (Acts 27:2) KJV
 36 Tell the Israelites to bring you ____ heifer (1,3) (Num 19:2)
 38 We have ____ unto you, and ye have not danced (Matt 11:17) KJV
 42 raise, lift (Heb 11:19)
 44 But as God is ____, our word toward you (2 Cor 1:18)
 45 The Israelites are stubborn, like a stubborn ____ (Hos 4:16)
 47 Neither do men light a ____,

and put it under a bushel (Matt 5:15) KJV
 48 and have set limits he cannot ____ (Job 14:5)
 49 "I am the ____," Samuel replied (1 Sam 9:19)
 51 Show me the coin ____ for paying the tax (Matt 22:19)
 52 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the ____ (Gen 48:16) KJV
 55 I wish I could be with you now and change my ____ (Gal 4:20)
 57 And ____ gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air (Gen 2:20)
 58 "We have here only five loaves of bread and ____ fish," (Matt 14:17)
 59 Their breastplates were fiery ____, dark blue, and yellow (Rev 9:17)
 60 Shemed who built Ono and ____ with its surrounding villages (1 Chron 8:12)

Solution on page 14



Behold The Fowls of The Air

By Preacher Chris Rathborne
Mitchell County

Often my nights are what many would call restless. Over the years one learns that when you can't sleep, for whatever reason, use the time wisely. Years ago, when I couldn't sleep, frustration would often set in and it made sleepless nights even worse. The Lord has taught me that when those sleepless nights come, take advantage of the quiet hours to spend with Him. Thus, was the case this morning.

Since spring has sprung, it seems that things have been extremely busy. So many tasks have been demanding time that sometimes I wonder if I'll ever get everything done. Around 3:20 a.m. I rolled over and looked at the clock and lay there thinking of all there was to do before this week was over. In my mind I kept trying to figure out how or if I would get it all finished. Realizing sleep wasn't going to happen, I decided to go ahead and get up and read some.

The cool morning air blew through the window in the den as the smell of my coffee brewing filled the house. As I sat there reading the Scriptures, at around 4 a.m., a bird began to sing from one of the trees in the yard. He or she was singing loudly as if it were already daylight. The sound of its beautiful song kept flowing through the open window as I continue to read. Other birds began to join in. In the back of my mind, even while reading, I wondered, "What in the world are those birds singing about two hours before daylight?"

Then right on time, just as if Jesus had planned it, I read, "*Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than? Which of you by taking thought (worrying) can add one cubit unto his stature?*" Matthew 6:26-27

Now to keep in context of where these Scriptures are found, Jesus is teaching about not worrying about food, clothing, or the basic needs of everyday life. I must confess that what was mostly waking me up this morning was worrying about how I was going to get everything done this week. Between work, family, ministry, and projects at church, I was feeling somewhat overwhelmed. Pressured if you will, to feel as if all these things had to be done right now! You ever get that way?

The birds kept singing and Jesus kept speaking to my heart. "Stop worrying and trust me!", Jesus spoke to my heart. Now I realized the things that were worrying me had nothing to do with my basic everyday needs such as food and clothing. Thankfully, and by God's grace, He has provided those blessings above and beyond. That wasn't necessarily the point of what He was saying. The worrying part was what He was speaking to me about. You see, I believe that Jesus wants us to trust Him with everything!

Birds begin each day singing. I've always believed that they are singing to their Creator. The song of the dove, the chirp of the robin, the constant songs of all the different birds every morning seem to be a beautiful sacred hymn to God. Birds face each day trusting God to provide their needs. Each day before the day begins, they sing to their Heavenly Father. They're not worrying about what lies ahead, they just simply sing and trust. One day at a time, their Creator provides for them. No doubt, no worrying, no panic in their hearts of what might or might not happen. No worry of tomorrow, just singing and trusting God today.

Slowly this morning, I realized that all the worrying that was causing me to lose sleep was silly. The birds were trusting Jesus more than I was trusting Jesus! Then He said, "*Are ye not much better than they?*"

So, this day, I will do what I can. This day I will trust Jesus to help me accomplish what He sees fit for me to accomplish. This day will be faced with Him, and He will meet my needs and more. Lord willing, tomorrow will be another day and He will provide again.

Lord, I begin this day with a song in my heart to You. Thank you for reminding me once again that it's all about you. Help me to face one day at a time and trust you with each one. Help me to accomplish today what I can and trust you with the things I can't. Thank you, Lord, for allowing me to behold the fowls of the air. In Jesus name, Amen.

Preacher Chris Rathborne serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.



Questions

By Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,

I'll be retiring in the next couple of years. When I leave my job, we will have a yearly income of \$65,000 through my pension. I don't think we need an emergency fund with such a dependable, steady income stream like that, but my wife disagrees. She says she would feel safer if we had money set aside just for the unexpected. What do you think we should do?

Gary

Dear Gary,

A good pension can feel pretty solid, but nothing's perfect. Nothing lasts forever. There's always the possibility of lost income or large, unexpected expenses. What if one of you has a major medical event? Life can bite you at any time, and sometimes it will take a big financial chunk out of you. You need an emergency fund!

I recommend an emergency fund of three to six months of expenses. Put it in a good money market account with check writing privileges and a decent interest rate. That way, your money will work for you a little bit. With a solid pension like you're talking about, you could probably lean toward the three-month side, if you wanted. Honestly though, I'd save up six months of expenses—just in case. Trust me, a fully funded emergency fund will make you both feel better. Plus, it can turn a disaster into nothing more than an inconvenience!

—Dave

Dear Dave,

The school system I work for puts 12 percent of my pay into a public teacher retirement fund, and they match this amount. I've seen where you tell people to put 15 percent of their income toward retirement. If that's the case, should I put three percent into another retirement fund? I have no debt and very little in terms of expenses. Or, what would you think about the idea of opening another retirement account at a full 15 percent of what I make?

Patti

Dear Patti,

I wouldn't go as far as to pour an additional 15 percent into a different retirement plan, but I would consider putting maybe eight to 10 percent into a Roth IRA. I want you to have some money that's separate from the school system account, just in case things go south with their retirement fund.

It sounds like you've got a pretty good pension plan, but you never know what might happen. I'm not predicting bad things, but at the same time there's no way I'd lean on the school system fund as my one and only source of retirement income. You should never put all your financial eggs in one basket!

—Dave

Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including *The Total Money Makeover*. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at [@DaveRamsey](https://twitter.com/DaveRamsey).

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6



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The Orchard at Altapass

June Is Busting Out At The Orchard

By Kate Groff

Beginning June 1, the Orchard at Altapass will be open from Wednesday through Sunday offering a host of new events for the entire family. Traditional music will start on Thursdays at 1:45 p.m.

At 1:45 on Wednesdays, the Orchard will provide a free open mic/music jam venue for all musicians to bring their voices, instruments, and talent up on the stage at the red barn.

"Heyrides" begin on the 8th, at 1, 2:30, and 4 p.m. and run Saturday and Sunday. The cost is \$5 per person with children under 3 free; six and under must be accompanied by an adult.

And on June 1, the Orchard will begin its summer of Super Saturdays offering heritage experiences for children ages 6-12. June's lineup is a spectacular mélange of activities. All Super Saturdays are from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. through August. Workshops are free except a \$15 fee for the harmonica class. Art materials are provided by the Orchard.

And the Apple Core Grill opens from 11 to 3 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. For more information, please visit www.altapassorchard.org and Facebook for current updates and happenings. The Orchard, 1025 Orchard Road, Spruce Pine (mm 328.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway), is a non-profit working orchard, educational and entertainment venue dedicated to the preservation of the Orchard lands and the culture of the region.

Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.



Pause...and Consider

Grateful Peas in a Pod

By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County



Recently, a friend and I visited over lunch. After a time, she leaned back in her chair with a contemplative ~ yet joyful ~ look on her face. She began saying what an extraordinary man her husband was. She was so thankful to have him to share her life and the everyday little things that come along.

As she sang his praises, she spoke in a soft and very appreciative manner. I listened with my ears and my heart.

Before I knew it, I couldn't keep silent. And we shared how very fortunate we are to have such husbands who care for us, who are calm and reassuring; who have strong faith and make us want to be more like them.

Like two grateful peas in a pod!

When our wedding anniversary comes along, we love to celebrate in a special way. It doesn't mean anything particularly expensive; but, time together ~ perhaps a walk or hike. Maybe we will choose a quiet dinner at a restaurant. Perhaps an evening reminiscing at home.

But as the years go by and I reflect on the years God has given to Ken and me, celebrating must include thanksgiving.

The years have flown by; but the memories are as real as if it was yesterday... two single parents struggling alone to raise our sons and praying that God would bring a spouse to us and another parent to our children.

Both of us prayed that somehow God would let us know when that right person came along – because neither of us trusted ourselves to make the right choice. How he would let us know, we weren't certain. But we trusted He would.

When we met, there was a knowing we couldn't describe except to be certain it had come from God and the he was our matchmaker. A new family was born as we married. Three boys became brothers and we embarked on quite an adventure.

THANKSGIVING!! Yes, that is my response to the many years we have had and the looking forward to many more. Our sons are grown and have wives and children of their own. And, so, we have even more to be thankful for.

Our life verse still describes God's marvelous gift to us where it says in 1 Corinthians 2: 9, NKJV, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." Selah



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Revelation 19: 7-8



Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan's new blog @ pauseandconsider.net, Journeying with Jan; and Ken's photos at kenmeropphotography.com. kenmeropphotography.com is currently off-line. But Ken's photos can still be seen at ken-merop.pixels.com.

Check out our Website-www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

By David Burleson

I want to personally thank everyone in Burke County who supported the food ministries in our county during the recent Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. A huge thank you is extended to all our letter carriers, all postal employees, the BUCM employees that went beyond the call of duty, Mr. Dale Barrier, Mr. Glen Reep, the FHS Anchor Club, the PHS Anchor and Interact Clubs, and all the other community volunteers. Without all the volunteers giving 122 hours of time it would have been impossible to collect over 12,600 pounds of food. This additional food will assist the Burke United Christian Ministries in meeting the ever increasing needs of those we serve.

Just a look back at a comparison of the last four months this year to the same period last year reveals a large increase in services needed:

Type of Assist	January 2018	January 2019
Meals Served in the Soup Kitchen	5,042	6,516
Families Served in the Pantry	775	873
Individuals Served in the Pantry	1,780	1,963
Food Distributed in the Pantry	58,649 lbs.	103,245 lbs.
Total Individuals Served	4,509	6,805
Type of Assist	February 2018	February 2019
Meals Served in the Soup Kitchen	4,886	6,238
Families Served in the Pantry	688	890
Individuals Served in the Pantry	1,502	1,965
Food Distributed in the Pantry	51,063 lbs.	95,348 lbs.
Total Families Served	3,620	6,905
Type of Assist	March 2018	March 2019
Meals Served in the Soup Kitchen	5,415	6,211
Families Served in the Pantry	691	806
Individuals Served in the Pantry	1,493	1,700
Food Distributed in the Pantry	52,930 lbs.	114,796 lbs.
Total Families Served	3,594	6,102
Type of Assist	April 2018	April 2019
Meals Served in the Soup Kitchen	5,543	6,759
Families Served in the Pantry	763	977
Individuals Served in the Pantry	1,679	2,160
Food Distributed in the Pantry	60,187 lbs.	140,726 lbs.
Total Families Served	4,089	7,488

As these numbers reveal, the need is great and continues to increase. The assistance through the Postal Carriers Food Drive, other food drives, and donations are essential to our ministry in meeting the needs of others.

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of BUCM. Each and every volunteer is vital to our ministry. A huge thank you to the many volunteers who give freely of their time to help and assist others. We are always in need of volunteers and would love to talk with anyone interested about the variety of volunteer opportunities at BUCM. Just give Elizabeth Norris or me a call at (828) 433-8075, email me at bucmdirector@gmail.com or come by for a visit.

I also want to commend our staff for their hard work, their dedication, and their willingness to understand the seriousness of the work they do every day. The individuals who walk into BUCM are very blessed to have caring staff and volunteers working to meet their needs. Thanks to each of you for caring enough to make a difference in the lives of others.

Be sure to mark your calendars for our golf tournament on Saturday, June 29 at Silver Creek Plantation with lunch at noon and tee off time at 1:30 p.m. It will be a captain's choice, 4-person team format with the opportunity to purchase muligans. Just call (828-433-8075) or email (bucmdirector@gmail.com) for details and to register.

Please remember that BUCM, Burke United Way, the Outreach Center, and Burke County Public Schools are collaborating to provide back to school supplies and clothing for our Burke County students during the annual Build a Backpack event on Saturday, August 17. Donations and sponsorships for this event are greatly appreciated. Back to school needs for families are a huge expense and every little bit helps.

As we approach summer, I ask that you please continue to lift up our ministry in your prayers and come by for a visit any time. As a community, we have a wonderful opportunity to recognize the impact we make in the lives of others and the contribution we make to their well-being. Thanks again for making the Burke United Christian Ministries a special place for those who need a hand up.

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries



NCBAM Encourages Seniors to "Be Bold!"

By Carol Layton



North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) held its fifth annual statewide event in Charlotte on May 6-7. This year's Senior Adult Celebration, themed Be Bold, focused on Joshua 1:9 – the command to live boldly and courageously for the Lord at any age.

The event was hosted by Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte and was planned by "Aging Adults Innovating Ministry." AAIM is an NCBAM leadership network comprised of senior adult leaders across the state. These leaders work with NCBAM to support and strengthen senior adult ministries throughout North Carolina. AAIM Chair, Rev. Stan Heiser of Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte, served as master of ceremonies.

The two-day event began Monday evening with a dinner provided by the host church and was followed by the world-class entertainment and spiritual encouragement of Mark Cabaniss and Dr. Diane Earle.

In "Confessions of a Shameless Name-Dropper," Cabaniss wove together songs, anecdotes, and video clips from his years in the music industry where he connected with entertainers like Bob Barker, Andy Griffith, Shirley Jones, Steven Allen, and more. With credits in Nashville, Hollywood and Broadway, Cabaniss' rich tenor enthralled the audience with classics such as Edelweiss, Trouble in River City, and Try to Remember.

Cabaniss was accompanied by international touring pianist, Dr. Diane Earle, who has performed in nine European concert tours, 31 states, and extensively throughout China. Earle also provided background dinner music prior to the concert.

Cabaniss gave a strong testimony to God's hand in his life—blessing his music career and providing opportunities beyond his imagination. His closing song, an original work, followed the Be Bold theme—"Don't be afraid to open new doors, and to find what each one shows."

Mark Cabaniss grew up in Shelby, North Carolina, where his youth pastor was Glenn Davenport, an AAIM leader for the west region. Davenport remembers the young Cabaniss as a talented teenager who never met a stranger. "It's a joy to have watched Mark grow into adulthood and see him continue to share his faith. I'm so thankful that God continues to use him and his talents."

NCBAM regional directors Samantha Allred (north central region) and Yvette Smith (east region) delighted audiences both days with skits as "Mild Millie" and "Bold Betty." Over the course of the event, Bold Betty taught Mild Millie, by word and example, that living boldly for Christ gave purpose, meaning, and value to her life. Attendees cheered in the closing skit as Mild Millie's character boldly renamed herself "Mighty Millie."

Tuesday morning's session included songs from Pritchard's Sunago Singers Choir and a presentation from NCBAM's director, Dr. Sandy Gregory. Providing an overview of NCBAM's first ten years, Gregory recounted how the Lord's hand had been on the ministry to bring staff, partners and volunteers to provide "help for the journey" to North Carolina's aging.

Dr. David Hailey, pastor at Hayes Barton Baptist Church in Raleigh, provided the keynote address which capstoned the theme of event. In "We Have This Treasure," based on 2 Corinthians 4:7, Hailey examined the perspective of "past, present, and future" years, and challenged attendees to make the most of all of them. Dr. Hailey's encouraging address is archived at ncbam.org/resources.

Rev. Jerry Anderson, Minister to Senior Adults, at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Conover enjoyed the event with others from his church. "The Be Bold celebration was exciting and encouraging. Mark Cabaniss was both inspirational and entertaining, not to mention a great singer! It was definitely worth the time!"

Carol Layton is Office and Support Manager for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM)



NCBAM's director, Dr. Sandy Gregory, recaps NCBAM's first ten years of providing "help for the journey" to North Carolina's aging.



NCBAM regional directors (l-r) Samantha Allred and Yvette Smith delight audience with portrayals of Mild Millie and Bold Betty.

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A Loving Father
By Christy Lowman
Burke County



I bet you have seen this fish at the pet store, or know someone who owns one, you may even have one as a pet. They are very popular and colorful, coming in a variety of colors and types. We have one as a pet, his name is Marling, with a d, my youngest says. He named him. Growing up, this was always one of my favorite fish to have as a pet. I've kept them in bowls, aquariums, and under a peace lily plant in a flower vase. Have you guessed what fish I am referring to?

The Siamese Fighting Fish, also known as a Betta. These fish are known as a fighting fish because if you keep 2 males together, they will fight, usually until one of them dies. The females however do not fight with one another. You can keep several females together in an aquarium with only one male fish. Most of the time people buy the males and keep them by themselves in a bowl. The males are more popular because they are usually more colorful, have long fins, and more personality.

Our Marling will almost jump out of the bowl at you when he wants to be fed, he will also flare out his gills at you if you put your finger up to the glass or a mirror. He thinks that you and his reflection are another male fish that he needs to protect his territory from.

In the wild, Bettas are found in shallow bodies of water or streams in Thailand, some parts of China, Vietnam, and Malaysia. They are a tropical fish and prefer their water temperature between 77-80 degrees. A minimum of 2 gallons of water is recommended. However, these fish are hearty and can survive in much smaller amounts of water and cooler temperatures. Marling lives in a glass fish shaped bowl, in approximately a gallon of water. There is no heater attached so his water is room temperature and he does fine.

The Siamese fighting fish is also a labyrinth fish. Meaning that they possess a labyrinth organ. This organ allows them to be able to breathe in oxygen directly from the air instead of taking the oxygen out of the water through their gills like most fish do. In fact, the betta has to breathe from the surface to keep from suffocating.

This fish can live up to 3 years and grows up to 3 inches long. The male fish, creates a bubble nest on the top of the water. After a female lays eggs, the male will carefully gather them in his mouth and gently place them, one at a time, in their own little bubble. If the egg falls out, he will pick it up and place it back in its nest. The male will continue to take care of the eggs and nest until after the babies hatch. The babies generally hatch in 2-3 days. After the babies hatch, they will continue to eat off their yolk sac for another 36 hours. During this time if they fall out of the nest their dad will pick them back up and put them back on their nest where it is safe. Baby fish, called fry, will start free swimming on their own when the 36 hours are up. This dad takes his role of taking care of his babies so seriously, that it is best to remove the mother, so he doesn't hurt her while trying to protect his babies.



If you are considering having a pet fish, I highly recommend trying the Betta. They are very easy to take care of, are beautiful, and have loads of personality! Attached is a picture of our Marling.

Did you know that you have a dad that loves and takes care of you in much the same way? God, your heavenly Father loves you so much that He sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross so that you can join Him in heaven one day. He wants and desires a relationship with you. He wants to listen to your problems. He wants to be there to catch you when you fall and gently pick you back up again just like the Siamese fighting fish does with his babies. God is a loving God, that forgives us of our sins when we repent. He also sends guardian angels to protect us. Did you know that He even knows how many hairs are on your head? Is that not amazing that out of the 7.7 billion people in the world, He keeps up with how many hairs each one of us have on our heads?

What He desires the most is for you to spend time with Him. Talk to Him, pray to Him, and read His Bible. This is what He desires the most. Just remember that you never get too old to spend time with your heavenly Father. Don't forget to praise Him and thank Him during the bad times just as much as you do during the good times.

Dear Lord, I praise you and thank you so much for letting me have a chance to get to write stories to tell children about you. I pray dear Lord, that each child will start spending more time with You each day. I pray that they will see how much you love them and are there for them in whatever they may be going through. Thank you for taking care of us and for giving up Your only Son so that we can go to heaven to live one day. Thank you for loving us so much that You know how many hairs we have on our head! I also thank You for blessing us with all of the creatures you have placed on the earth for us to take care of. They are so fascinating to learn about! In Jesus's name I pray, Amen.

Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Luke 12:7 ANIV.

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<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guideposts and HCI. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portion of every book sold from the Small Bible Character Series will be donated to battle human trafficking. If you enjoy her books, 'like' her author page on Facebook and let her know! You can buy her books at https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank You can reach her at <https://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman/> or christysoaps@yahoo.com.

Doors

By Caron Cline
Burke County

The word 'door' or 'doors' is used 259 times in the Bible. Doors are wonderful inventions. What would we do without them? The most important 'door' mentioned in the Bible is in John 10. Read John 10:1-9. In the Eastern world, several different shepherds would put their sheep together in a pen at night for safety reasons. There would be a gatekeeper and he would only allow the shepherds to go into the sheep pen. Each shepherd had a unique method of calling their sheep and when it was time to separate them, the sheep knew their own shepherd's voice and would not follow anyone else. Sometimes when there was not a gatekeeper, the shepherd would actually lay down at the opening of the pen and become the door. Jesus said that He was actually the door of the sheep. He is the only way to the Father; John 14 says that He is the way, the truth and the life. Once we have come to the Father through the Son, the Door, we are free indeed. We can come and go out so that we might enjoy all the benefits of being one of His sheep. We will look at of those benefits tonight. Jesus is our door of protection:

Genesis 7:11-16. God told Noah to build a boat because judgment was coming on all the Earth. The people were so wicked that God was sorry that He had even made man. However, Noah was a righteous man who found favor with the Lord. God protected him and his family by shutting them inside the ark. Noah had a choice whether to believe the Lord; his faith resulted in salvation from the flood. Joshua 2:1-19. Rahab knew that destruction was coming to Jericho and she asked the spies for mercy; for herself and her whole family. They gave her instructions to hang a scarlet cord in the window and promised her protection when they conquered the city. The stipulation was that she and her family must be shut inside to avoid death. Her faith resulted in salvation from the conquest.

The key was to be behind the door of protection. We must be hidden with Christ in God to experience His protection from eternal death, but also from the attacks of the enemy every day. In both instances, these faithful people stayed behind the door until the time or season of danger passed. When it seems as if the storms of life are especially fierce, stay behind the door; stay behind Jesus.

Jesus is our door of preparation:

Exodus 33:7-11. The people stood outside their tents as Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the Lord face to face, so to speak. Moses had to go behind the door of the tent to experience the presence and power of God, as well as commune with Him.

2 Kings 4:1-7. This widow was financially destitute and needed a miracle. Elisha told her to gather as many empty vessels as she could, go into her house, shut the door and watch what the Lord would do. She filled a tremendous number of vessels with a seemingly endless flow of oil.

When we need a fresh word from the Lord or a special anointing, we must get behind the door and position ourselves to receive it. Jesus wants to prepare us to meet the needs of others. Moses needed wisdom to lead the children of Israel. This widow needed money to pay her debts so that her children could be rescued. If we ever needed wisdom to lead our families and friends, it is today. If we ever needed a full vessel to rescue those who are held captive by the devil, it is today. It is imperative that we get behind the door and allow Jesus to prepare us by filling our vessels so that we can fulfill our calling in our generation.

Jesus is our door of promotion:

Revelation 3:7-8a. Jesus is our door of protection during trials so that He can prepare us for our individual callings. When we are filled with His Spirit, He promotes us in the kingdom of light. Doors will open that no one can shut, and doors will shut that no one can open. Our Father is sovereign, and He will open doors of opportunity for which He has saved and prepared us. There is a season for everything; a time to get behind the door and then a time to walk through the door into the fields that are ripe for harvest.

We must first be saved by walking through the door of protection. We must then be filled and prepared for service by getting behind the door of preparation.

Lastly, we must go forth through the door of promotion to reach the lost and then disciple them.

Which phase are you in today?

Caron is a follower of Jesus Christ who loves to teach the word of God. Her desire is to see every believer growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.



Authentic Doers

By Mark Smith

Michael Jordan was the greatest professional basketball player during the late 1980s and 1990s. However, he was never the highest paid player.

When asked why he never held out on his contract to his team to pay him more money Jordan replied, "I have always honored my word. I went for security. I had six-year contracts, and I always honored them. People said I was underpaid, but when I signed on the dotted line, I gave my word." Later a reporter asked Jordan would he stand on his previous decision. Michael quickly stated, "What if my kids saw their dad breaking a promise? How could I continue training them to keep their word?" He went on to say, "You stand by your word, even when that might go against you."

Whenever I hear stories like this, I cannot help but connect them to people of the Bible. In Philippians 1:9-10 Paul challenges the church with the importance of personal and relational integrity. He prayed, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ" (NIV).

When pure (inward) and blameless (outward) are combined, the Lord is instructing all believers to live with inward integrity before the Lord and external integrity before man.

Without a doubt, the church can be the one place that teaches about living a pure and blameless life. Church leaders have the opportunity to hold their members accountable to these standards so they can grow in spiritual maturity.

Paul addresses this subject in Ephesians 4:11-13 when he writes, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (NIV). The Bible is clear that the church is only part of the maturing process.

Moses, on the other hand, says in Deuteronomy 6:7, "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (NIV). There is no greater place to model how to live a pure and blameless life than with your family. This is a critical truth for parents.

But based on the current cultural landscape, there is cause to believe many moms and dads do not understand the importance of "impressing" God's commands on the lives of their children. One of the main causes for our cultural demise is the lack of integrity in the home. Discipleship with every child begins at home. In the end, parents are ultimately responsible for preparing them for eternity.

Needless to say, this is a serious matter. Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research, observed, "Students are experts at noticing inconsistencies between what parents say and do." It is easy for parents to talk the talk, but the real issue comes down to whether they can walk the walk.

Nothing undermines parents' efforts in training their children more than when their actions and God's Word do not match up. Our homes need moms and dads living authentic lives now more than ever. We will never be perfect, but it should be our heart's desire to live with godly integrity.

Mark Smith serves as the senior consultant for Family Evangelism and Discipleship at the BSCNC. His passion is helping families create a disciple-making culture in their homes through God's Word and the local church.



Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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The Determined Mother

By Patricia Jackson
McDowell County



Our Ladies Sunday School Class has been studying the life of Solomon. In I Kings Chapter 3, Verse 5, God spoke to Solomon in a dream saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." V. 9 is Solomon's request "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" The Lord was pleased with his unselfish request and promised to also add riches and honor.

Solomon's need for Divine Wisdom was soon put to the test. In Verses 16 – 27 we have the well-known story of two women who had a need and came to the King. We learn the women lived together in the home, no one else lived with them. They were both harlots who had recently delivered babies. On the third day after birth, one child died in the night. The mother of the dead child replaced it with the other woman's baby. When she awoke and found a dead baby, she knew immediately knew the dead child was not hers. Both women claimed the surviving child. Let's look closer at these two women.

We know one mother loved the child and wanted it. During the months of anticipation, she probably thought about seeing her baby for the first time, holding it in her arms, nursing and nurturing it. She needed to give love to the child and be loved by the child. Becoming a mother is not always about the goodness of a mother, but rather her actions. Both women lived as a harlot, basically having no friends, money or secured future. Surely life was hard enough for them without having the responsibility of a small baby, but she was determined to get her child back. We will refer to her as "The Determined Mother". No doubt these two mothers began to argue, both claiming the child who was alive. The other mother refused to admit the child was not hers or return it, a very cruel selfish act. This is a picture of the devil taking away what is rightfully ours. John 10:10 tells us that "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." At times, we may have felt there is no one we can turn to when we need help. The child's mother knew her only hope of reclaiming her child was to ask King Solomon to intercede. That's our only hope too in the time of trouble, to ask our Jesus to intercede.

We do not know how many days elapsed before these two women, with the child, made their way to the Palace of King Solomon. We imagine it was a long, dusty dirt road, filled with hardship and perils. Sometimes our road may seem difficult for us to keep going, but just like The Determined Mother, we must hold on to hope and persevere. If we could know the thoughts of the two women when they came in sight of the King's Palace, we could imagine the mother who is the thief might be considering giving back the baby and returning home. But she did not turn back. She had taken a child that was not hers and would rather see the child dead than give it up. The Determined Mother probably saw the Palace walls as hope that she would soon have her child back.

An audience with the King would surely be difficult for two women, wearing ragged clothes, dirty and demanding to be heard. King Solomon granted them access to his throne. When we came to the throne of Jesus, we were dirty, unclean, and in need of hope. The Determined Mother now had hope!! She brought her need to the King, just as we have hope when we bring our need of salvation or forgiveness to Jesus. Both women told the identical story of having a baby, the other woman's baby dead, and the surviving baby belonging to her. Just as these two women pleaded their case to the King, we too can plead our case to our intercessor, Jesus.

Solomon listened to both women. I like to imagine he silently called on God. I do that often for I know no one else can right the wrong in my life. Only God can. Solomon requested a sword and told his staff to "Divide the living child in two and give half to one woman, and half to the other." Imagine the shocked look on the face of "The Determined Mother". His words were almost unbelievable!! Words certainly not expected. He was going to cut her child in half. She repeated the words in her mind. The determined Mother could not comprehend that her pleading for her child's return would result in death. She wanted so desperately to save the child, even if it meant giving it to the other woman. She requested that Solomon give the child to the other woman and not slay it. She was willing to sacrifice her motherhood in exchange for the life of her child. But the woman who was not the child's mother told Solomon to "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it". The devil would rather see something, or someone destroyed before he gives up. The scripture states that Solomon's intention was to discover the truth by watching the responses of the two women and relying on the maternal instincts of the true mother.

Verse 27 "Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; she is the mother thereof." The Determined Mother had prevailed and was given her child back. Solomon's words and actions were authoritarian, and final, just as God's words are.

Chapter 3's final verse notes the effect that Solomon's unorthodox decision had not only on the women, the baby, but on the kingdom: "When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice" (1 Kings 3:28). The account of Solomon's handling of the case of the two harlots proved that he had indeed been granted wisdom from God. A large part of Solomon's future success was because of his sincere prayer to God for wisdom. He prayed the right prayer; he asked for the right thing, and God honored his request. He will honor our request to, when we pray for wisdom and serve him.

Patricia Jackson is the Assistant Teacher for the Ladies Class at Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church, Glenwood, NC. She is a grant writer for non-profits, a published author and retired Nursing Home Administrator. She lives in Rutherford County with her husband.

*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
James 5:16*

Celebrating Recovery

"This is How I Fight My Battles"

By Christy Young
Mitchell county



How often do we question our circumstances? Do you find yourself in prayer asking God to change the adversity that you're facing? I like to be comfortable and detest change. Sometimes our lives become a pattern and we tend to overlook the calling that God has on our lives. We all face challenges. How we respond to those challenges define us as Christians. Sometimes those challenges are short term, other times they are long term and follow us throughout our life. It is easy to walk in the glory of God when life is running smoothly. But, how do we shine through the hard times? Prayer, lots of Faith, and Trust! Trusting that God has a reason and purpose for all things. I have witnessed personally that sometimes we must step outside our comfort zone to be faithful to God's calling. Through my own circumstances, my prayer has become ... Lord change me, help me to face my problems, struggles, hardships knowing that I am not alone and that You have a divine purpose for all things I face. Romans 12:12 says, "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." As children of God, we have hope. Our hope is heaven, a day of no more sadness, pain, or death. God made each of us unique and has a perfect plan for our lives. We all walk through the valley and have a multitude of problems. Thankfully, we have been granted the opportunity to let God lead and strengthen our spiritual walk along the way. Focus on God and seek His purpose and His will throughout turmoil. Fight with your faith and the strength that God freely gives. He will give you endurance and sufficiently see you through. Stand firm and believe that all things are good when you serve God. Our God is sovereign and just! He loves each of His children and wants to see us prosper. Luke 21:19 says, "Stand firm, and you will win life." How do you fight your battles? Do you put on the armor of God, trust Him to lead, and have faith that perseveres? Or do you struggle to change the circumstances before you, causing yourself to become bitter and weary. James 1:12, "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him." What a perfect promise! Challenge yourself to walk in the "goodness of God"! Fight your battles acknowledging that God is always faithful, your friend, and your Redeemer!

Christy Young is the blessed wife of Chris Young and proud mother of Hunter and Holden. She is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, bookkeeper at Young, Miller & Gillespie, PA, and a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Luke 6:37

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Patton Senior Attends Legislative Event

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County

Mikayla Holden chose to hone her debate skills and get a glimpse at how state government works by attending the North Carolina Youth Legislative Assembly (YLA). The event happened to fall on prom weekend in April for the Patton High School senior. But the future political science major hopeful who plans to attend UNC-Chapel Hill in the fall thought the mock legislative session would be more beneficial to her future. She and other high school students spent the week-end voicing their opinions and voting on issues concerning local, state and national government. The YLA is patterned after the NC General Assembly and the students actually draft a final report of their debates and votes and present them to the governor and legislators.

Mikayla said she has always been interested in political science and law, but more so recently with what has been happening nationally with the border debate. While a part of the YLA, Mikayla was assigned to the judiciary committee and debated school safety, metal detectors in schools and agriculture. "It opened my perspective to different things," she said. She added she learned valuable lessons and skills, including Roberts Rules of Order. She also got a small taste of what it will be like to be away from home and at college. She was assigned a roommate and made new friends. She also plans to apply as a legislative page this summer.

Burke County Public School Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "Mikayla is a bright young lady, and I am proud of her for taking on this challenge and attending the state's Youth Legislative Assembly. I have no doubt she represented Burke County Public Schools well. I am excited about Mikayla's future and can't wait to see her grow even more in college and all of the good she will do in the world."

Mikayla is on her school's cheer squad, dances, is a member of Model UN, is in the Anchor Club, Spanish Club, and a member of the National Honor Society, is involved in her youth group at church and is an usher at church. She volunteers at Mountain View Elementary School and is an office intern at Meridian. Mikayla is the daughter of Mike Holden, a retired Burke County Public Schools principal, and Alicia Holden, an exceptional children teacher at Patton.



Mikayla Holden

Cheryl Shuffler is the Public Relations Officer for the Burke County Public School System.



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Is Starting a Small Business Right for You?

By Christy Wright



My mom started her business when I was only six months old. She was a single mother with only \$64 to her name, but with a determination to survive. To make ends meet, she went back to the one thing she knew she was really good at: baking and decorating cakes.

We're celebrating National Small Business Week this month, which always takes me back to my roots. It reminds me of my childhood that is filled with sweet memories from the cake shop my mom started more than 35 years ago. I grew up watching her struggle and work hard as she built a business and a life doing what she loved. But the best part is that it lit a fire in me to help equip other women to do the same.

Because of my mom, I started some side businesses of my own. And later, I became a certified business coach and created the Business Boutique. I wanted to build a place for women to overcome fear and learn everything they needed to know about starting and growing a business.

For many of us, the journey begins (and sometimes ends) with one question: Do I have what it takes to start a small business?

As much as I love small-business owners, the answer isn't always yes. It takes a certain kind of person with the willingness to put themselves out there and the determination to persevere. You've got to be okay with unknown risks, a lot of responsibility and really hard work at times. SoSo, to help women figure out if this might be worth their while, I usually ask them three questions:

1. Do you want to help people?
If you don't really like people or helping them, then starting a business is probably not right for you. But if you get excited about serving others in some way—improving their lives, meeting their needs, solving their problems or listening to their complaints (because, let's be honest, there will be some!)—then this might be right for you. And if you already have in mind how you want to help people, that's even better!
2. Do you want to make money?
There's a difference between a hobby and a business: A business makes you money, while a hobby costs you money. MSo many people pursue their hobby as a business and then end up broke, because they just don't care about making money or they "feel bad" for charging someone for what they do.
Now, if you do want to make profit but you have some weird, squirmy feelings about money, that's actually normalnormal. I coach women every day to help them face their fears around pricing their product, charging customers and paying themselves. Just because you have a love-hate relationship with money doesn't mean you can't make it! You just need a little help. But you need to have a drive to make money if you're ever going to make any (translation: stay in business!).
3. Do you want to work hard?
I'm not going to sugarcoat this: Business is hard work at times. It just is. But if you want it bad enough and are willing to put in the blood, sweat and tears, then you can make it. You don't need a business degree, a pile of money or all the bells and whistles to build a successful business. But you do need a whole lot of grit.

The most successful business owners aren't people who had a smooth path to the top. They were just willing to get knocked down over and over again, and get back up, dust themselves off, and keep going.

I hope you take time to reflect over these three questions. They're great indicators of whether starting a business might be a good fit for you. I sure hope it is, because I love small businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. They create jobs, pour back into their communities and lead the charge in new tech and product innovation. (1)

And as we celebrate National Small Business Week, I can't help but dream about seeing even more women pursue their passion and build a life making money doing what they love. So, let me ask you, will you be one of them? If you need help getting started, I have tons of free resources to help you at christywright.com.

Christy Wright is the #1 national best-selling author of *Business Boutique*, host of the *Business Boutique Podcast*, a *Certified Business Coach* and a *Ramsey Personality* with a passion for equipping women with the knowledge and steps they need to successfully run and grow a business.





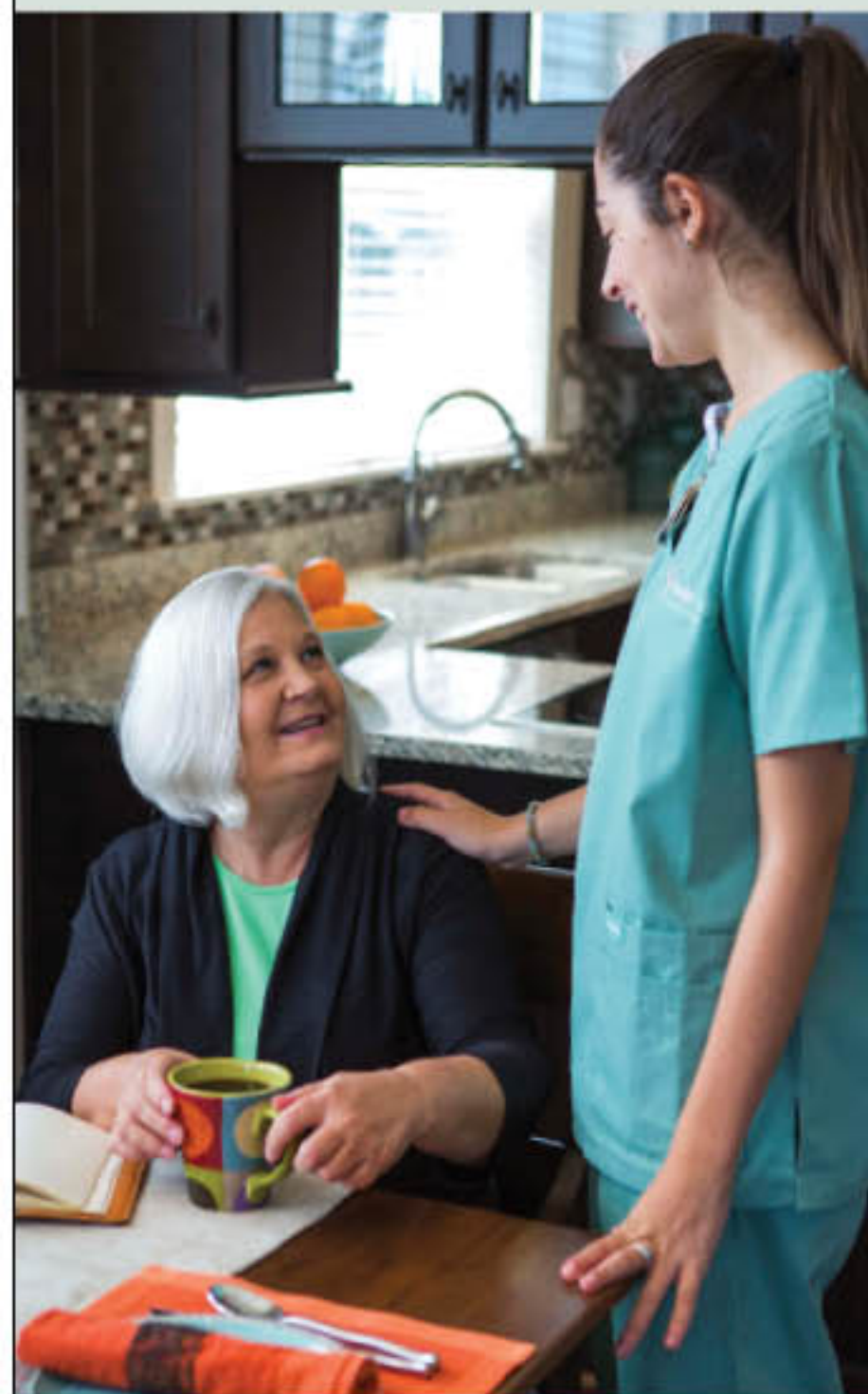
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