

DECEMBER 2019

# DESTINY

M A G A Z I N E

**A RIVER  
CALLED WHY**

**HOSPITABLE LEADERS:**  
*SEE THE ANGEL IN  
EVERY STRANGER*

**GOD'S PRESENCE**

**WHAT MAKES A GREAT  
YOUTH MINISTRY?**

**ATMOSPHERE ADJUSTER**

**SPECIAL HOLIDAY SECTION**



# A WORD FROM PHIL & CATHY



*Welcome to this edition of the Destiny Magazine! We are so glad you're here! We never take your time or attention for granted. It means so much to us and to the hard-working men and women who put this magazine together. Thank you!*

*This is indeed an exciting edition and an amazing season here at Destiny. We are just wrapping up our first iteration of regional connect events and have they ever been great! We have connected with hundreds of ministry leaders and support people as well as DLI students and Alumni. And we also have hosted great speakers and presenters, and engaged with so any members who are new to the Destiny Network.*

*As we look toward 2020, exciting enhancements are on the horizon for the Destiny Covenant Family. Several new programs are being introduced in the New Year. For example, we are introducing a new Students Ministry in 2020 led by Jarred and Evelyn Moss. It will include training and fellowship opportunities for student pastors, students and youth throughout the fellowship. We are introducing our new Missions investment portfolio in 2020 offering churches, ministries and individuals the opportunity to invest in the fulfillment of the Great Commission in virtually every part of the planet. We are introducing our first ever Bishop's Council. Our Bishops will be seasoned men who have an Apostolic anointing who will assist with pastoral care and ministry support for churches and ministers throughout the Destiny network. And something exciting for potential church planters is coming as well.*

*All in all, it has never been a better time to be part of the Destiny Family! For twenty years we have been absolutely committed to equipping, developing and resourcing Kingdom leaders for the glory of God, and the future is looking better all the time. It is filled with more people, more resources, and more opportunities than ever before. Can you tell we are excited? All this makes me want to say, you guessed it, "Let's Do Something Great Together"! Enjoy the magazine!*

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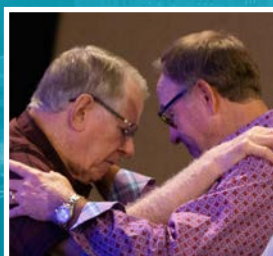
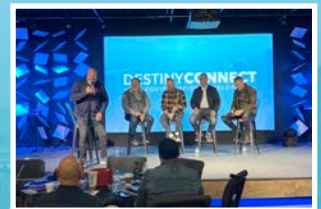
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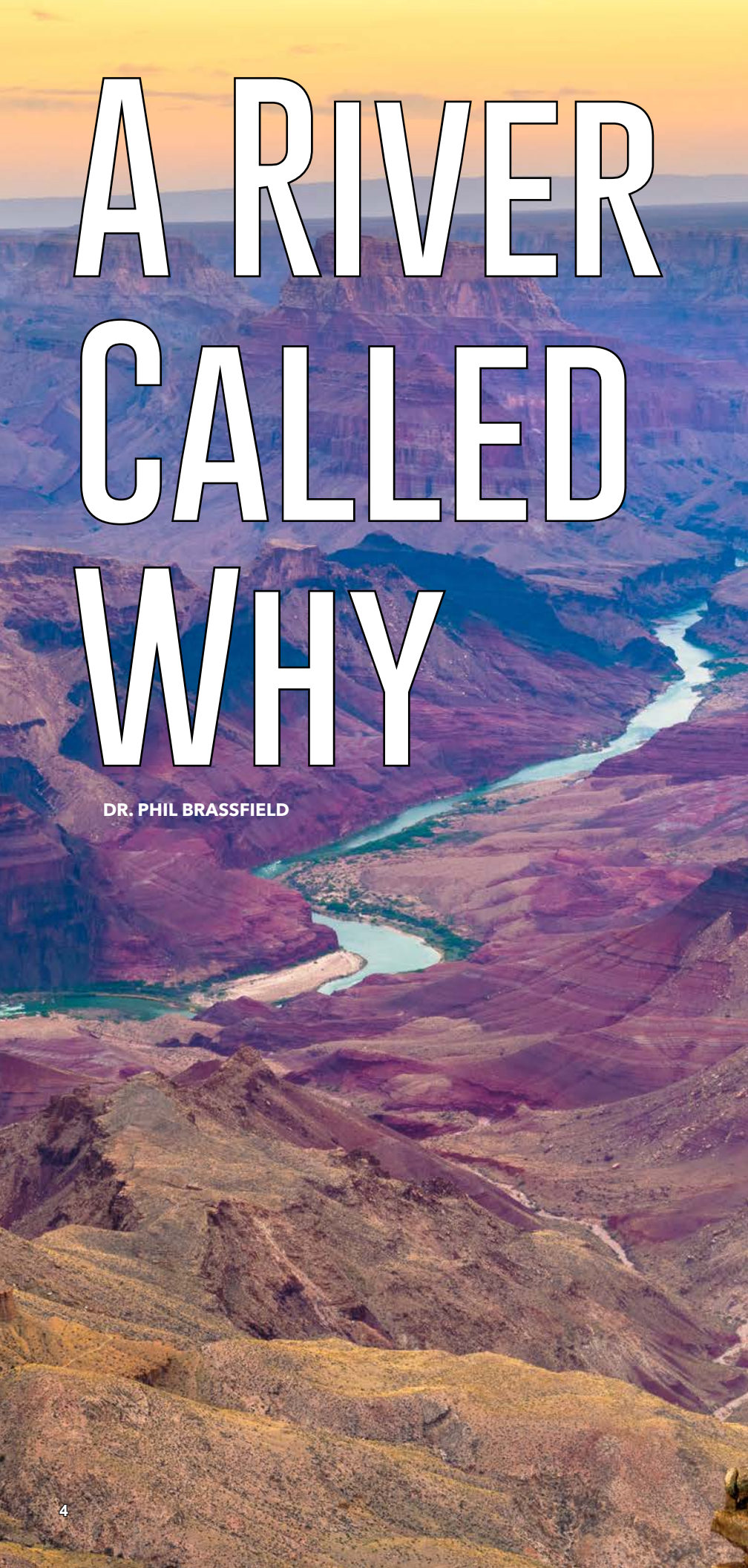
# DESTINYCONNECT

*— EQUIP. INSPIRE. DEVELOP —*



The first round of Destiny Connect events has been a huge success! We love being in your churches and in your cities. 2020 Destiny Connect events are being planned now. Be sure to visit [destinyleaders.com/connect](https://destinyleaders.com/connect) to find out when we are coming to your region!



An aerial photograph of the Grand Canyon, showing a winding river (likely the Colorado River) cutting through the deep, layered rock formations. The canyon walls are a mix of red, orange, and purple hues, with some green desert vegetation visible in the distance. The sky is a soft, hazy blue.

# A RIVER CALLED WHY

DR. PHIL BRASSFIELD

A few years ago, my wife Cathy and I, along with dear pastor friends Tom and Trina Lowe from Louisiana, attended a minister's conference in Flagstaff, Arizona. It was a great time of fellowship, recreation, and spiritual renewal in an environment somewhat unique to us since we are all from the South. It was my first time to visit Flagstaff and I loved it. There is such a blend of outdoor environments. You're in an alpine area in Flagstaff at over seven thousand feet in elevation and there are mountains surrounding the city that range over twelve thousand feet. It's only thirty miles or so away from Sedona with its Painted Desert and red canyons (it has been a favorite location for several western movie sets, including a couple of old John Wayne pictures). And then, of course, the Grand Canyon is about eighty miles to the northwest. There is so much to see and do in the area. We had a blast!

During our visit, on a free day, Tom, Trina, Cathy, and I took a train ride from Williams, Arizona, a little town near Flagstaff, to the Canyon. The train took us on a two-hour ride through the beautiful scenery situated between Williams and the Grand Canyon's Southern Rim. We were entertained on the trip by the novelty of the locomotive and the mock train robbers who held us up on the way. It was amazing. When we arrived, we, like most other tourists who visit the Grand Canyon, were overwhelmed by the grandeur of it all. They don't call it The Grand Canyon for nothing! The beauty, the color, the contours and diversity of the land was amazing: rich reds, purples, and oranges accented by the green desert foliage in the distance along a canyon floor path where a spring seeped out of the rock and flowed down to the river below, all pressed against the cobalt blue sky; it was breathtaking. We walked around the edge for an



hour or so, looked through the quarter telescope at the rock formations and bluffs in the distance, visited the gift shop, and then had lunch.

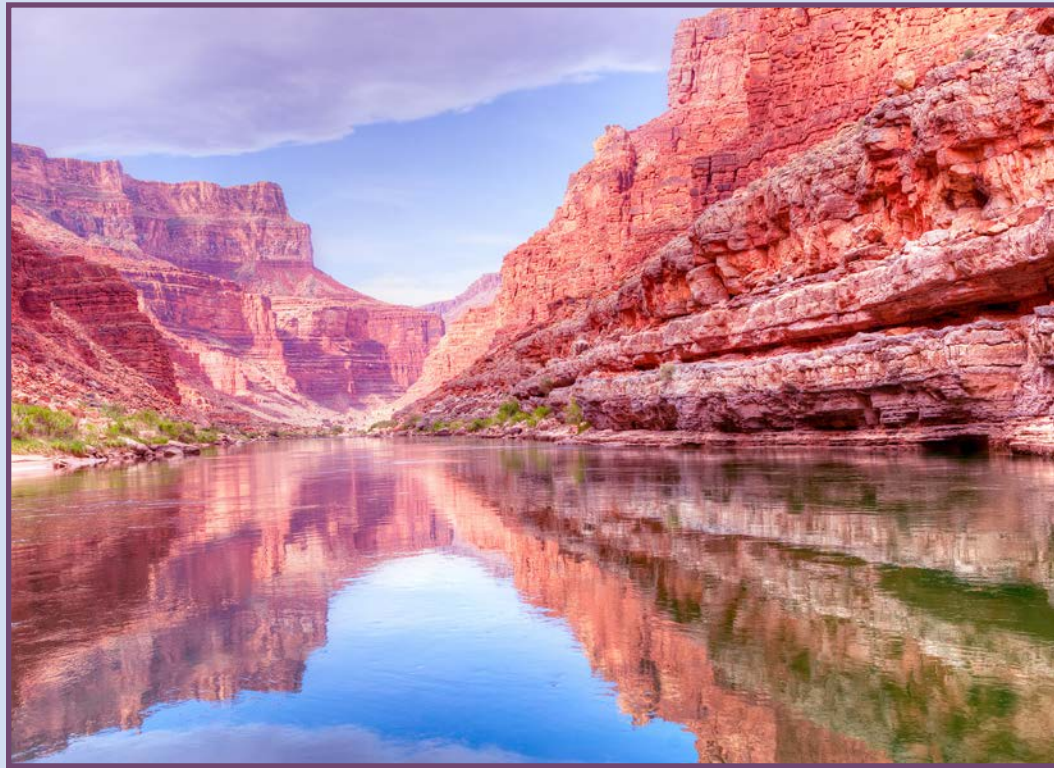
When I returned to our hotel room, I did a little research and discovered that the average tourist visit to the Grand Canyon is about two hours or less. Can you imagine, two hours or less, and most only look into the canyon for a few minutes? Fifteen minutes on the edge of magnificent; ages to create, and only moments to appreciate. Most then spend the rest of their lives telling the stories of the experience they had, their fifteen minutes on the edge of wonderful.

Little did I realize that we did exactly what the majority of other tourists do: we took only minutes to enjoy the wonder of what took millennia to create.

In my reflections about it later, I thought too many of us live our lives in this way: always in the shallow end of the pool, the safe side of everything, casting a wishful eye into greatness. We are too often satisfied to live life from the bleachers instead of on the field, content to watch but not to play. We have an appreciation for the "whats" of life, but seldom look deeper in search of the "why," amazed by the view from the edge of what once was. But for too many of us, that's as far as it goes. It's sad.

But then, there are the tourists, the canyon travelers and explorers, who are a bit more adventurous. They are not satisfied with the views from the rim and the experiences the things associated with that level of life provide. They are compelled to leave the security and comfort of the canyon's rim with its limited perspective, and venture into the heart of the Canyon. And it's not easy.

It's a long hike filled with switchback trails and steep descents, not to mention the heart-stopping cliffs. It is



a trip filled with risk and danger that can take several days to travel there and back depending on their route. But, when they arrive in the bottom of the canyon, they discover the "why" of the Grand Canyon. The Canyon was created by water. In the heart of the Canyon they discover the mighty Colorado River with its beauty, majesty and splendor. It was the river in the heart of the canyon that has the power to cut through solid rock. It teaches us the lesson that for every effect there is a cause - for every "what" there is a "why." Though it's not always obvious and is sometimes beyond our view from the cheap seats, it is there.

The Colorado River winds through the landscape of the Grand Canyon, cutting, carving, and shaping the terrain with relentless and constant pressure and force. And though it has taken thousands, perhaps millions of years to create the canyon, it moves on, and is still a force to be reckoned with. The river, with its power, shapes its domain with absolute authority, proving that when there is an argument between water and rock, the water always wins.

The thing that struck me was, when you look at the Canyon with all of its wonder, you can actually forget that there is still a river flowing in the heart of the canyon with incredible power. It's still cutting its way through the landscape. Though you can't see it from the rim (at least from where we visited the canyon), it's there. This is how it is with our lives. We can become so focused on the view from our protected vantage point in life, that we forget that there is still a "why" to it all, a "why" to be explored and discovered. And like the river, the "why" is where the power is!

God has placed within each of us a stream of life, a force for change and purpose, whose currents will define everything in our lives if we will take the time to discover its beauty and appreciate its power. If we will risk the trinkets of life, and determine to pursue life's true meaning, we will discover a river of refreshing that can satisfy the most desperate longings of our hearts.



# GATHERING

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# GOD'S PRESENCE

LONDON GALLOWAY

The account of the golden calf in Exodus 32 is one of the most tragic in all of Scripture. The giving of the law on Mt. Sinai should have been the pinnacle moment of Israel's history. God has rescued them from their foes and has delivered them towards their destiny. The glory of their deliverance from slavery will soon be surpassed by the glory of their entrance into promise. From glory to glory. That was the plan, at least. However, a moment of impatience cost them greatly. The wrath of God that drowned the Egyptians was now directed towards them. They had formed a false god while Moses was on the mountain speaking with the real God. And now the real God has had enough. In retribution for their idolatry, 3000 die by the sword and countless others die by a plague.

Then God addresses Moses and says: *Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.'* <sup>2</sup> *I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites,*

*Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 3 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 33:1-3a).*

This sounds pretty good so far. The Israelites disobeyed, but God was still going to honor His word. Their unfaithfulness didn't nullify His faithfulness. He made a promise, and He intended to keep it. Despite their colossal failure, they were still to receive a *place* (the land), *protection* (an angel to go before them), and *prosperity* (milk and honey).

There is a catch, however. The Lord then says, *but I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way (Ex. 33:3b).* In other words, you can still have the promise but I'm withholding My presence. The children of Israel mourned when they heard this news. I am struck by this fact. The Israelites were getting everything they had prayed for—a place, protection, and prosperity. Yet, they grieved because they didn't have His presence.



This causes me to examine my own life and my own heart. How would I respond if God gave me the same deal? What if He were to come to me and say: "I'll answer every prayer that you have prayed but withhold my presence? I'll provide financially. I'll prosper your relationship. I'll grow your ministry. But, I'm not going to be there for any of it." Even those of us leading in ministry can be tempted to seek God's hand instead of God's heart. But, like Moses and the children of Israel, we must prefer His presence to His promises.

The prospect of leading the people without God's assistance led Moses to his special place of prayer. Exodus 33:7-9 reads: *Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. 8 And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. 9 As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses.*

Notice that pitching the tent outside the camp to meet with God was a customary action. He used to do it. This wasn't for emergency purposes only. We all need a spot (a customary place) and a slot (a customary time) to meet with God. When Moses was overwhelmed by the circumstances of life and ministry, he went to the only place where he knew he could find help and hope.

Moses opens up to the Lord and expresses his frustration with the situation. Moses said to the Lord, *"You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor. His fundamental request is found in the phrase "teach me your ways."* Moses

is at a loss. He needs God's direction. How does he lead such a stubborn and rebellious people? Moses is asking for guidance, but God grants something better— a Guide. The Lord responds "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Moses wanted to know the way; God offered to go with Him. We often want a roadmap to our destinies, a step-by-step breakdown of what we should do and where we should go. God prefers, however, to go with us and guide us along the way.

The pronouns in the conversation between Moses and the Lord are rather interesting. The Lord tells Moses: *"My presence will go with YOU."* To which Moses responds: *"If your Presence does not go with US, do not send US up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with YOUR PEOPLE unless you go with US? What else will distinguish me and YOUR PEOPLE from all the other people on the face of the earth?"* God acquiesces to Moses' request and adds: *"I will do the very thing YOU have asked, because I am pleased with YOU and I know YOU by name."*

Moses wants God to go with all of the people. God is still angry at them for the golden calf and isn't crazy about the idea of going anywhere with them. But, God is willing to grant his presence to Moses because Moses is His friend. So, the children of Israel are granted access to the presence of God because of their mediator Moses. They didn't deserve God's presence, but they received it because God was pleased with Moses.

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:18, *Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.* As believers, we have **a better mediator than Moses.** Jesus is the one in whom the Father is well-pleased. We have access to the presence of God, despite our shortcomings and our idolatrous hearts. Our access is not based on our faithfulness but on the faithfulness of Jesus. Just like the children of

Israel experienced God's presence because of their mediator Moses, we experience God's presence because of our mediator Jesus.

In Hebrews 13, we are told that just like the priests used to take the sacrificial animals outside the camp, Jesus suffered and died as our sacrifice *outside the city gates.* Moses met with God outside the camp and interceded for his people. About 1400 years later, a prophet like Moses met with God outside the city gates and mediated on our behalf. We were unworthy to access the presence of a holy God, but Jesus acted on our behalf. And because the Father is pleased with Him, He is pleased with us. We live a life that we don't deserve and have experienced a grace that we haven't earned. And this all because we have a friend in high places, seated at the right hand of God and continually mediating and interceding for us.

As Christian leaders and ministers, it is easy to locate our worth in the success of our ministries and to think that our value is determined by our effort. This is a great reminder that we have the same access to God, despite our perceived successes and failures. God's presence and blessing is not dependent on us, but on Jesus. Remain in Him and experience all of God's best for your life and ministry.



**Landon Galloway**  
Director of Education; Destiny Ministries  
Campus Pastor; Grace Church Tomball, TX



# ATMOSPHERE ADJUSTER

## ALEX SUBER

I can vividly remember the first time I attended a small group on my own. I had recently moved away from my family and joined a new church that heavily promoted small groups for community and spiritual growth. I was steered toward the "singles" small group, I'm still not clear if this was meant to be a speed dating small group or not. But I signed up and showed up early for our first meeting. I was excited to meet new friends and get more involved in my new church. As I stepped through the threshold into the house, I was welcomed not by friendly faces and the warmth of community but instead by the smell of cats and their unkept litter-boxes. I then was

directed towards the snacks for the evening which included cold pizza that had cats circling around it. Finally I was seated in a comfortable recliner that felt like it had recently been soiled by aforementioned cats. Have I mentioned I'm not really a cat person? At this point I did my best to pay attention to the lesson and the discussion, but for the life of me I can not remember it today. What I do remember is the smell, the cold pizza, the soiled recliner and the general uneasiness I had the whole night. So often in life we will rarely remember what is said or even what we learned in the moment, but we will remember how we felt.





*"So often in life we will rarely remember what is said or even what we learned in the moment, but we will remember how we felt."*

Atmosphere matters, and if we want people to receive what we are communicating, we must ensure that the atmosphere is set correctly. I believe this is our primary responsibility as leaders. We must take charge and set the atmosphere in every room, every conversation, every meeting and every service. You know the old saying "be a thermostat, not a thermometer". But that old cliché rings true today. As leaders are we elevating every situation that we enter into? Are people leaving better than when they came in? Are our conversations uplifting and setting people up for a win? As a church planter I feel this is something I am forced to do. Unlike other environments that I have served in where the culture or atmosphere is already set, starting a new church means you have to set everything yourself. Which sounds really great until you're in the thick of it. Because if you've ever been involved with a church plant, you know that the atmosphere isn't always the greatest. Many church plants are in rented facilities or, maybe like us, a facility that doesn't really fit your needs. But we're not called to make excuses, we're called to adjust the atmosphere.

All throughout the Bible we find incredible stories of people who, through God's provision, shifted the atmosphere. One of my favorites is found in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Acts. Paul and Silas are on a missionary journey and a young woman that is a fortune teller is following them and disturbing them from their mission. So they cast out an evil spirit from her, which incites a riot and causes them to be beaten and thrown in prison. Just the average ministry day for many of us I'm sure. What I find so fascinating is what happens next. While in the innermost part of the prison, they begin to sing hymns and pray. At the same time an earthquake shakes the prison and frees Paul and Silas and all the other prisoners. The jailer then prepares to kill himself because he has failed at his job. Paul and Silas stop him and show that all the prisoners are still there. In that moment he asked what must he do to be saved.

Paul and Silas were not in the best atmosphere. There were no keys playing behind them, there was no crowd preaching back at them, they just started praying and singing. This must have seemed crazy to everyone around them. Why would you pray and sing right now? Don't you realize you're in prison, you're beaten and bloody, you should be angry! But they knew they couldn't let their atmosphere change their attitude. They knew that through God they had the power to shift the atmosphere. Leaders, no matter how hard things are in your context, you can shift the atmosphere!

I want to give you three handles on how to adjust the atmosphere:

## 1. Challenge The Chatter

What are you saying and what are you allowing to be said that is affecting the atmosphere? Is the tone of your conversations and meetings negative and filled with discouragement? Or is it uplifting and filled with faith? Challenge yourself and others to speak with faith for what you are believing to see.

## 2. Protect The People

If Paul and Silas had not stopped him, the jailer would've killed himself. What was a miracle to Paul and Silas became a death sentence to the jailer. Don't let your miracle or your vision "kill" the people around you. It may not literally kill them, but it could kill their passion, marriage, or self-esteem. Protect your staff, volunteer, and even your own family. Don't let your breakthrough cause someone else to breakdown.

## 3. Own Your Atmosphere

Don't let what everyone around you is doing affect who you are called to be. The other prisoners were most likely cursing the jailers, God, and each other. But they noticed something different in Paul and Silas, and they all listened in. You may not think so but there are people watching and listening to you. When you own your atmosphere, it won't only set you free but it will also set those around you free.





# HOSPITABLE LEADERS

## SEE THE ANGEL IN EVERY STRANGER

### TERRY A. SMITH

The author of the New Testament letter to the Hebrews taught us that we must “Remember to welcome strangers, because some who have done this have welcomed angels without knowing it,” or “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

A stranger, for the purpose of this discussion, is anyone who seems strange to you. Or to whom you may seem strange. This could be someone you do not know or who does not know you, whose background, worldview, or lifestyle may seem strange to you. A stranger could also be someone you do know but who is from a different nation of origin, race, or ethnicity. Or someone from a different socioeconomic or educational status. Or someone who has different political views or a different faith experience than you.

In another way, a stranger could be—and surely is in some ways—your spouse. Even though you

know them intimately, you may sometimes feel like you don’t know them at all. After all, as the Bible says, men are from Mars, women are from Venus. Or maybe that was John Gray.

In some seasons of life, a stranger could even be your child. Or a patient, student, employee, or perhaps even a congregant. Anyone you feel is—even just sometimes—strange to you.

I like the progression of this passage in Hebrews 13: first, we are to “Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters.” This phrase has its etymology in the Greek word *philadelphia*, which is also translated famously as “brotherly love.” Second, we are reminded to “not forget to show hospitality to strangers.” This phrase comes from the Greek *philoxenia*, which literally means “love of strangers.” According to Scripture (and Google Maps, I think), we must go through Philadelphia in order to arrive in *Philoxenia*.

We must—as I discussed in part in the previous chapter—take care of home in order to have anything of value to offer anyone else. By “home” I am referring to any number of actualities, including the condition of our own soul, our family, and the physical space in which we live, our place of business and the care of our teammates and employees, and the community or nation in which we live. Before we can move to *philoxenia* we must take care of *philadelphia*.

**"BEFORE WE CAN LOVE OUR  
NEIGHBOR, WE MUST LOVE AND CARE  
FOR OURSELVES SO WE CAN HAVE  
SOMETHING TO OFFER OUR NEIGHBOR."**

As theologian and ethicist Elizabeth Newman wisely wrote, “Hospitality without a home (a place) is an oxymoron” and, paraphrasing Gordon Cosby, “hospitality flows out of identity and . . . if you do not know who you are, you cannot offer hospitality.” Scripture calls us to offer a radical welcome to strangers, but we are not able to give what we do not have. Before we can love our neighbor, we must love and care for ourselves so we can have something to offer our neighbor. We must be hospitable to brother, sister, wife, husband, children, parents—and brothers and sisters in Christ. “So reach out and welcome one another.” . . . “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” . . . “Love your spiritual family.” Hospitality begins in *philadelphia*.

Then it gets better. I believe with all my heart that our lives are exponentially expanded, that we get bigger and everything we care about gets better when we move to *philoxenia*. We must be hospitable to strangers. This move is not optional for people of the Christian faith, so we must assume there is something beyond wonderful in this straightforward admonition to “entertain strangers” or to “show love unto strangers” or “keep an open house.” Now that we are home, we are commanded to share home with strangers. To be hospitable leaders, we must embrace every part of what it means to move to *philoxenia*.

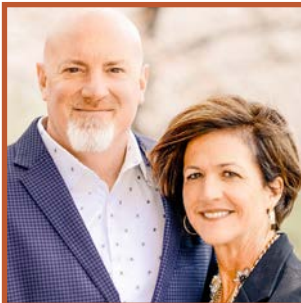
*Philoxenia* is the opposite of xenophobia. Xenophobia is an irrational fear of people who are not like us. It is the antithesis of what the Scriptures teach us in both Old and New Testament. Hospitality—literally loving strangers—was a requirement for leaders in the early Christian church. A church leader must be “hospitable” or “enjoy having guests in his home.” He or she must be a “lover of hospitality” or a “lover of loving strangers.”

The great Henri Nouwen in his seminal work on Christian hospitality wrote about the necessary privilege of creating space for strangers that “it is possible for men and women and obligatory for Christians to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings.” I find such hope and possibility in his words! He goes on, “If there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality. . . . Old and New Testament stories not only show how serious our obligation is to welcome the stranger in our home, but they also tell us that guests are carrying precious gifts with them, which they are eager to reveal to a receptive host.”

And some of us have learned that when we entertain strangers we often entertain angels unaware. Angel means messenger. A good angel is a messenger from God. An angel of light. So important was what one writer called “the law of hospitality” that the Jewish people believed God would send angels to test its practice. It is possible that a stranger might be an angel in disguise. Literally. Stranger things have happened. As a monk called Brother Jeremiah said, “we always treat guests as angels – just in case.”

But, in a more earthy way, what I have experienced is that when I have opened my heart to people who are different from me, strange to me, they often are – or become – messengers from God. God uses them to impact my life and leadership in powerful ways. We must see the angel in every stranger. This is at the core of how a hospitable leader must view life.

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Terry A. Smith is the author of the new book *The Hospitable Leader: Create Environments Where People And Dreams Flourish*. He has served as Lead Pastor of The Life Christian Church for twenty-seven years. TLCC - a non-denominational faith community with campuses in West Orange and Paramus, New Jersey - is known for its vibrant diversity and robust leadership culture with people from more than 132 distinct communities in the New York City Metro area participating in the life of the church.





# *Special Holiday Section*



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# MEET THE STAFF

## holiday edition

One of the strengths of Destiny Ministries is our wonderful team. In this section you'll meet the people who comprise the Destiny Staff, find out something interesting about them, and one of their favorites during the holiday season.

### DR. PHIL & CATHY BRASSFIELD

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



This year Dr. Phil and Cathy Brassfield will celebrate 20 years of marriage, a marriage that is a miracle of God's grace and love. Many don't know their story but following the sudden death of Phil's first wife, Suzi, God spoke to Phil about Cathy being the one who was to walk into the future with he and the children, Jordan and Drew. She had no idea. Before He called Cathy and asked for the first date, he had already talked to his children, parents, and oversight team to get their blessing. Virtually

everyone in Phil's world knew except Cathy. On his first call to her, he proposed marriage. Little did they know what a wonderful plan God had for them and so many others who would be impacted by their obedience. In 1999 they married and Destiny was birthed later that same year. They are passionate people! Passionate about God, each other, their family and those in ministry.

Today, They are more in love than ever! They have a wonderful family including five grandsons and are blessed to serve hundreds of five-fold ministry leaders around the world.

*Christmas time is the favorite holiday season for the Brassfields. We will enjoy our annual traditions of family time, fun and celebration. Favorites include hot cider, Home Alone, visiting the Jitterbug Coffeehouse for a favorite, baking cookies on Christmas Eve, and sharing the Christmas story early Christmas morning.*

### LANDON GALLOWAY

#### DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Landon and Sarada Galloway have been on the Destiny team since 2011. As the director of Destiny Leadership Institute, he is responsible for devising DLI's unique, online platform that allows students to obtain formal educational training while gaining practical experience in their own local church. He oversees the growth of DLI and all its programs, approves all curriculum and course materials, builds and supports the online delivery system, and

personally mentors and assists students. In addition to their role at Destiny, Landon and Sarada joined staff of Grace Church in Houston in September 2017, and they currently serve as campus pastors of Grace Tomball.

Landon has an extensive background in education. He holds a bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University, a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Biblical Literature from Oral Roberts University. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Landon is called to educate, equip, and empower people so they can understand and experience the powerful truths of Scripture.

Sarada is full of energy, joy, and compassion. She serves alongside Landon, and is actively involved in the day-to-day ministry activities. She loves to invest in people and to spend time in prayer. The Galloway's have two little girls, Vanna and Zarra.

*There are many things that we enjoy about the holiday season. For example, coffee tastes even better when it's cool outside! Most of all, we enjoy the extra family time. For the second year in a row, we plan to leave to see Sarada's family in Trinidad on Christmas Day. The airport is a non-conventional, but really neat, way to spend the day together. Santa comes and sees us in the morning; we are on a plane in the afternoon, and in the Caribbean by the evening! We know these will be memories that we look back on and cherish as our girls get older.*



## AMOS MCFALLS

### DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



Amos is the Director of Operations at Destiny Ministries. He serves as a Staff Pastor at Church of the Crossroads in Corinth, MS where he works with serve teams and leadership development. Amos has been married to Lindsey for 11 years and they have two children Caroline (6) and Franklin (4). He

is passionate about helping others find God's redemptive calling for their lives.

*Christmas is such a special time to enjoy family and friends. The last few years, Lindsey and I have decided to be more intentional with our gifts. The gift she and I look forward to giving the most is the gift of experience. Instead of a new toy, we plan a small outing or trip where there are new life experiences. That time together is invaluable.*

## JEANNIE ABBOTT

### DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES & ADMIN ASSISTANT TO THE BRASSFIELDS



Jeannie has served for over 13 years as Administrative Assistant to the Brassfields and Director of Member Services at Destiny. Jeannie came to Destiny after a successful career in Human Resources in the aerospace

industry. She brings rich experience and great skills to her roles. She is blessed with 1 son, 4 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

*During the holidays, I love to hear all the laughter and fellowship that goes on as we eat, open gifts, and play together. I love hearing the Christmas carols during this season; decorating my home and tree with reminders of His great love; baking cookies, making candy and sweet breads to share with family and friends and the sweet aroma that fills my home! God has blessed me greatly with a wonderful family and great and awesome friends! And, most of all, I love the Christmas season because it reminds me of the greatest Gift of all, the gift of Jesus!*

## AMY DEW

### DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING & DLI STUDENT SERVICES

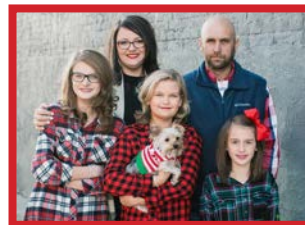


Amy came to Destiny almost 12 years ago from the Arkansas Cattlemans Association with excellent experience in membership organization and special events planning. She assumed the role of Director of Finance and Accounting and DLI Student Services with Destiny Ministries. She has been married to her husband, EG, for 25 years. They have three children: Micah, along with his new wife Kellie, Nate, and Abbi.

*I love ALL things Christmas- the decorating, family time, FOOD, Christmas movies (only the classics- no Hallmark) shopping and gift giving. Over the last couple of years I have become more interested in my ancestry and we have started to incorporate some of the Swedish customs and traditions into our Christmas celebration. So this year I am looking forward to trying my hand at making Kladdkaffa!*

## STEPHANIE POWERS

### DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION & DLI ADMIN



Stephanie has been involved in various forms of ministry communications for over 15 years. She has served at Destiny Ministries for the last 6 years working in graphics, technology, online presence, database

management as well as overseeing all publications and media. She also works with students as the DLI Admin. Stephanie and her husband, Roger of 18 years, are both Destiny Ordained Ministers and DLI Graduates. Roger is currently in the process of completing his Master's of Divinity at Liberty University. They have three daughters: Selah, Zoe, and Hallie.

*The thing we look forward to the most in the holiday season is 'family time.' Whether it be our immediate family, extended family, or friends who feel like family, it's the spending time together that makes the holiday season special. We love to laugh, share holiday food, watch Christmas movies, play games and make music. It really doesn't matter what we do, as long as we get to spend time with those we love.*



## GRANT & KELLIE BOWMAN

### DLI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Grant and Kellie Bowman have been involved in ministry and Christian leadership for over 25 years. They have served as senior pastors, evangelists, student pastors, and are advocates for

continued education and Christian leadership training through the DLI Alumni Association. Grant and Kellie completed their undergraduate studies at Texas Bible College in Houston, Texas, and respectively their Masters of Theological Studies and MBA through Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. Grant and Kellie are both actively involved in leadership at Calvary Church in Fort Worth, TX. They have two children, Kaylie and Kendall, son-n-law Frankie and granddaughter, Eloise Grace.

*During the Holiday season, the Bowman's enjoy visiting family in Texas and Oklahoma, eating Kellie's famous baked goodies, and watching, It's a Wonderful Life.*

## JARRED MOSS

### DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES & DESTINY LEADERS PODCAST



Jarred, along with his wife Evelyn, currently serve their home church, The River, in Searcy, AR as the Student Pastors. Jarred is a DLI graduate as well as an intern graduate of Bethany Church in Baton Rouge, LA. Evelyn is an intern graduate of International House of Prayer University in Kansas

City, MO. Together, they have two beautiful young daughters: Addi-Drew (4) and Ella (1). Jarred served the Destiny staff as a resident intern 7 years ago, and has since helped with various staff roles, currently directing Destiny's Student Ministries and producing the Destiny Leaders Podcast. Jarred and Evelyn have a great desire to see the youth ministries of this generation embrace their local church's vision, celebrate their unique callings, and fulfill God's purpose for THEIR generation.

*Evelyn's favorite things about the holidays include extra family time, drinking coffee, snuggling up on the couch together, all types of Christmas movies, and baking. Jarred's favorite things include all of the aforementioned, and eating the things Evelyn bakes!*

## ALEX SUBER | SOCIAL MEDIA & SUPPORT STAFF



Alex, along with his wife Hannah, serve as the Lead Pastors of Oasis Church in Round Rock, TX. Alex is a DLI graduate and was a Destiny staff member before planting Oasis over 3 years ago. He continues to assist with social

media and general support of Destiny endeavours. Alex and Hannah both have a passion for the local church and for developing people into all that God has for them. They are expecting their first child in May 2020.

*I love the Holidays. Family is the most important thing in my life so I love getting together with the family, making memories and of course eating tons of food! Christmas in Texas isn't quite a white Christmas but we still make the best of it! Hannah and I love to re-watch all of The Office Christmas episodes and also Hallmark's Countdown to Christmas will be on every day.*



# Questions for a King Seeker

## AMOS MCFALLS

The road had been long and treacherous. Traveling was never easy. Around every turn, there seemed to be another obstacle and another opportunity to end the journey prematurely. In the distance, the outskirts of the city were slowly coming into view. Hopefully, when they reached the city's center, the efforts of the trip would pale in comparison to the joy of reaching their destination. This destination was one of true remarkability. This was an occurrence so unique that the stars in the night sky had changed their normal course to deliver the news – a king was born. Not just any king, but one whose story had been on the lips of prophets for generations.

As they neared the city their hearts fluttered. How could they know what to expect in this foreign land? Would the people turn them away as outcasts? How would they know where to find the king? Would their clothing be acceptable in these royal courts? Better yet, they were foreign dignitaries, would they be given permission to approach the king and offer him gifts? Would their gifts be acceptable?



As they entered the city they were shocked. There was no excitement in the air. There was no celebration. None. Things were normal. Things were continuing as they normally would. There was no indication that any royalty had been born, much less a king for which the night sky had moved. "Let's ask someone," one of the wiser ones said. They found a man that looked as if he might know. "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." He didn't know. No one knew.

Perhaps they had missed it. It's possible they had miscalculated their celestial measurements. Even the local king, Herod, was unaware of the royal birth. Life was continuing on as if nothing had happened. They had left their normal lives expecting to find the exceptional, but only found more normal—normal people living normal lives and doing normal things. Where was the new king? How uncomfortable it must have been for those foreigners to step into a foreign city with little knowledge of current events and culture? When they ask to see the "new king", the entire scenario becomes even more awkward by the reply they received – "Huh?"

Let's take it a step further. How different would this Biblical account appear if the wise men had approached a towns person, asked the new king's location, and received a direction? Wouldn't the story flow much more smoothly if the person excitedly said, "I'll take you to him!" But no one did. In fact, instead of being pointed to the new king, they were directed to the old one, the despised King Herod.

When reading this account I immediately jump to the conclusion that I am one of the wise men in the story. I remember the time in which I pursued the

King. I may not have crossed deserts or traveled a road beset with thieves, but I did cross the divide of uncertainty to faith. It's hard to remove ourselves from the thought that we are king-seekers. After all, who doesn't want to be the wise one in the story? There is a certain nobility found in going to great lengths to meet the king.

However, as a follower of Christ, I must understand that my role in the narrative has changed. No longer am I looking for a king, I've found Him! No longer am I on a strenuous journey of exploration, I've reached the home of the Savior and have laid my life at His feet. I now play a different part, a role in which I am an ambassador. It is now my responsibility to guide the king-seekers in the direction of the King.

In order to play this new part there are changes that must be made. While the mentality of a seeker is guarded and lends itself to protection of possessions, the mentality of an ambassador is one of service. A seeker asks, "Can you help me?" An ambassador asks, "How can I help you?" A seeker is unsure of the exact location. An ambassador has knowledge of the location and can give direction with the least hindrances.

It might be worth considering what systems and strategies need to change in order to be better ambassadors in your own life. These steps should usher those king-seekers away from the normalcy of their lives and into something extraordinary. Our atmosphere - our actions, integrity, and resolve for excellence - should reflect one who has been in the presence of the King.

When we are approached by king-seekers, what steps have we put in place so that they find Him? It's not our responsibility

to put a star in the sky, but it is our responsibility to know what it indicates - the saving grace of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20 NLT says, "For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'"

Our church strategy needs to reflect this thought as well. As king-seekers approach our building I'm sure they are faced with some of the same questions that the Magi faced. How can we know what to expect? Will the regulars turn us away as outcasts? Will the directions to the King make sense to us? Will the steps provided to us be marked clearly? Are these clothes acceptable? Will we be allowed to give our gifts?

I wonder what the status quo is for churches across our nation. When king-seekers arrive, are they being greeted with the extraordinary presence of the King, or the ordinary presence of man? Are they being pointed to a King worthy of a new night sky, or the dominion of human tradition? Wouldn't it be wonderful if every person and every church had a clear process for king-seekers? What must we change that these king-seekers would see our excitement for the King? What additions and subtractions are essential that king-seekers are directed to the true King and not a false one? **Wise men still seek Him, but the wisest men and women act as ambassadors to guide others into His presence.**



# The 12 Days of Christmas

*Some believe that the song "The 12 Days of Christmas" was written in code to teach theology to young children in the early 1600s during a time of Catholic persecution in England. Whether or not this is historically accurate or added later, the suggested symbolic meaning behind each of the gifts of the song will cause you to think differently each time you hear it.*

**THE PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE** | Jesus

**TWO TURTLE DOVES** | The Old and New Testaments

**THREE FRENCH HENS** | The three Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Love

**FOUR CALLING BIRDS** | The four Gospels

**FIVE GOLDEN RINGS** | The first five books of the Old Testament

**SIX GEESE A-LAYING** | The six days of creation described in Genesis

**SEVEN SWANS A-SWIMMING** | The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit

**EIGHT MAIDS A-MILKING** | The eight Beatitudes

**NINE LADIES DANCING** | The nine Fruits of the Spirit

**TEN LORDS A-LEAPING** | The Ten Commandments

**ELEVEN PIPERS PIPING** | The eleven faithful Apostles

**TWELVE DRUMMERS DRUMMING** | The twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed

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## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

# Ethan Estes



My name is Ethan Estes. I am married to my wonderful wife of two years, Barbie Hight Estes, and we have the privilege of serving in the church we grew up in, Church of the Crossroads in Corinth, Mississippi. We have such a passion and love

for our church and our community. I personally owe so much of who I am and where I am to my family, my pastors, my team leaders, and church family.

One of our church core values is "Love People". We can better love people when we commit to be a team player. Growing up playing baseball, from little league and even into college, I was always considered a "utility" player. This meant I could fill in wherever my team needed me. I like to think that is what I do at Crossroads as well. While I serve consistently on our worship team and in our student department, I am always happy to jump in wherever needed.

After moving home from college, I had no clue what life was going to look like after living and breathing baseball for so long. However, I did know that I did not want to move away from my home or my church again. I began to seek and ask God for his direction. One day, I received a phone call inviting me to an interest meeting for Destiny Leadership Institute. I was interested but couldn't remember signing up for

a meeting. I later found out my sister had written my name down after Landon Galloway came and shared at our church. Clearly, God was setting me up for a season that would forever change my life. I attended the meeting, and after hearing all about DLI and asking a few questions, I knew God was leading me to be a part.

I graduated from Destiny Leadership Institute three years ago, and I honestly wish I could go through it again (and maybe with better time management!) There were many hours poured into books, papers, discussions and lectures. However, it wasn't as much my investment into DLI that changed my life, but the investment that the pastors, instructors, and leaders made in me. Whether through their patience with a confused young adult, or the love and wisdom they showed from their staff, I knew they believed in a version of me that I couldn't see yet.

Looking back at how scared I was of the future and how uncertain things seemed, DLI helped me draw closer to God. It helped me fall in love with Jesus in a way that I never had, and I can say now that falling in love with Jesus is exactly what I needed. Isn't that what most of us need today? I would recommend Destiny Leadership Institute to anyone who feels uncertain and confused in this world we live in. Maybe you're like me and you just need an opportunity, a clear step, and someone to believe in you. Take this step. You belong here. If you handle the falling in love with Jesus part, DLI will develop the leader in you.

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# WHAT MAKES A GREAT YOUTH MINISTRY?

## JARRED MOSS

One of my favorite stories in the New Testament is when the angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias to foretell the birth of his son, John the Baptist. Gabriel shares several characteristics of John, but the description the angel uses first to describe him is that he would be *"great in the sight of the Lord."* (Luke 1:15)

We all aspire to be great. Great leaders of Great ministries 'doing great things for God.' I remember just several years ago being burnt out, frustrated and feeling like a youth ministry-failure. I didn't even know why, nor could I rightly define what I was feeling but looking back now I see that I was gripped with comparison and always felt behind as a result. I looked through the lens of Instagram at youth ministries with more money, more

hype and, of course, more people, and unrightfully concluded that their ministry was great, and that mine was not.

God has done so much since then, and birthed a youth movement at our church that's been a joy to see. What He's done more than anything, though, is redefine what greatness looks like to me as I've exchanged man's definition for His.

Going along for the ride we've been on the past 7 years and examining both scripture and thriving youth ministries around the world, I've identified 5 attributes of a great youth ministry. It's not an exhaustive list and it's certainly nothing novel or glamorous, but these 5 qualities form a recipe for God-sized, long-term success the way God defines it.

## 5 ATTRIBUTES OF A GREAT YOUTH MINISTRY:

### 1. A great youth ministry **is ministry.**

One of the primary problems in youth ministry culture is the pervasive subconscious understanding that it's different than "regular" ministry, whatever that means. I once heard a youth pastor say that youth ministry is mostly pizza parties and keeping kids from making out in the bathroom. What a terrible thought! The spirit of this age certainly doesn't give young people the kiddy version of the world. Students are sending nudes via snapchat, indoctrinated with rebellion and battling suicidal thoughts like never before. How much more are their souls in need of the same transformative power of the Gospel we offer adults through the biblical, time-tested vehicles we see in scripture: Prayer, Evangelism, and Discipleship.

A mentor of mine once said "The only difference between youth ministry and adult ministry is that youth ministry is fun." I like that idea more. Throw a water balloon, eat a slice of pizza, and record a TikTok video but by all means, don't trade in the radical call of the apostles to just babysit.

### 2. A great youth ministry **builds the church before it builds itself.**

Proverbs 14:1 says "The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands." One of the GREATEST marks of a healthy youth ministry is that it finds its identity within the local church's values and the senior pastor's vision. It complements the calling of the house rather than competing with it. Rather than squeezing every dollar and opportunity they can out of their church's budget and schedule for specialized promotion and programs, great youth ministries deploy their primary resources to engaging students with the mission of their church. Great youth ministries encourage students to serve on Sunday, take notes from the senior pastor's sermons, converse with the elderly and worship all the while, regardless of what style song is being played.

### 3. A great youth ministry **is counter-cultural.**

C.S. Lewis once wrote: "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this."

I believe with all my heart that young people want the REAL thing. The more YouTube they see and the more hype they encounter, the more they long for something different.

I'm all for being relevant. But at the end of the day worldly music, mediums and methods to appear cool and culturally astute simply fall flat and bear no fruit. It's the church's radical message of grace, radical call of discipleship and radical culture of holiness that make it the antidote to life's hopelessness. Radical will beat cool any day! After all, 'If the salt loses its flavor, what good is it?' (Matt. 5:13)

### 4. A great youth ministry **is a leadership machine.**

It's been pointed out by study after study that high percentages of students (like 75% high) leave the church when they leave high school. This is surely due to a number of factors. I happen to believe one of the primary reasons is a lack of responsibility and personal investment in the mission at hand.

As believers we should not only be students of the Word, but disciples of our King, and ultimately leaders in His house. And what better stage of life to raise up leaders than when they're young, zealous, and have time? The best youth ministries pour vast resources into programs, internships, and avenues that raise up leaders in their youth ministry.

### 5. A great youth ministry **is considered great.**

We have our ideas of what a great ministry looks like, but God's ways are certainly higher than our ways and His thoughts are certainly higher than our thoughts. God weighs greatness not in followers, but in faithfulness. It's for this reason that when we're given the great opportunity to lead this generation, we must consider that opportunity great in every stage. Great youth ministries are led by youth pastors that consider their youth ministries great. For if you don't see it as great, you won't treat it like greatness and will consequently never see great results.

So here's to employing these qualities to build the youth ministry you desire in your heart and God dreams about in His. Here's to the greatness that's coming your way, and all the great joys and fruit you'll see on the journey. And always remember, the joy is in the journey!





# DIG AGAIN

*Pastor Alex Rivera of Journey Church in Strasburg, PA shares about their journey in church planting, and the vision for reaching his community.*





Our church planting journey began like many others with an abundance of faith but limited resources. We had a dream from God to bring a life-giving church to a community that was in desperate need. We were confident that God had a plan and provision for us, but we had no idea what the journey would be like.

For the first nine years, we were a portable church. We held our worship services in traditional church buildings, gymnasiums, bars, and a movie theatre. Moving from building to building became a part of our identity, and we often laughed about how many times we moved. We experienced the challenges associated with being a portable church, including overworked volunteers, a ton of broken equipment, and inadequate space. That was a challenging season, but walking through it, we learned that church is not a place; it's a people.

In 2013 after moving our services to a movie theater, we experienced growth as we had never seen before. We doubled in size, and most of that growth were new Christians. Maybe it was the casual atmosphere of the theatre coupled with the timeless message of Jesus, whatever it was, it was working, and real-life change was happening. Our dream of building a life-giving church had become a reality, and we could see the effect it was having on our community.

No journey is without its trials. A year and a half into this amazing season of growth, we were notified by the owners of the movie theatre that they would be renovating the building. The renovation would shrink the seating capacity by half, making the venue too small to hold services. We were given two months to find a new place for worship. The challenge of finding a place to worship that could facilitate several hundred people was a weight we knew we could not bear alone. In our disappointment, we turned to the one who put this whole journey in motion and asked Him for help.

Our help would come from an unlikely place. While watching a show at the Sight & Sound Theatre in Strasburg, PA, a friend made mention of a vacant theatre (Living Waters Theatre) located down the road. The Living Waters Theatre was the original home of Sight & Sound, but the company had moved on to the larger facility up the road and eventually closed all production at the site in 2011. Since that time, several groups had attempted to bring the theatre back to life but were unsuccessful. We like to think that God had this space set aside for us. In 1976 Glenn Eshelman, the founder of Sight & Sound, dedicated The Living Waters Theatre for ministry. Wanting to keep the promise he made to the Lord, he held on to the property for several years after the close of production, waiting for the right people to show up. We were the right people! After hearing our heart and

vision, an agreement was signed just in time for our exit from the movie theatre. What initially felt like a terrible ending was the beginning of a miracle. God turned our disappointment into provision. He made a way where there was no way.

Genesis, 26:18 says, "Then Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham." The wells that Abraham dug provided the water that made it possible for his family, their servants, and their flocks to survive. Those wells were the source of life. Without that water, no one would have survived. Because of Abraham's obedience, Isaac had a well from which he could serve his family. Because of Glenn Eshelman's obedience, Journey Church has a well from which we can serve our community. For the past five years, we have worked diligently to reopen wells releasing living water into our community. As a result, we have witnessed the breakdown of racial and generation barriers that once held this region captive. We have become a house of restoration for those wounded by religion, and a place for the thirsty to drink living water. What was once a vacant, dilapidated building has become a vibrant, life-giving church.

While we celebrate the wells that have been reopened, just like Isaac in Genesis 26:19, we will be digging new wells. We are excited about a future that includes the redevelopment of the six acres of land and a 20,000 square foot addition to our current facility. We are working diligently to strengthen our ministry partnership with Sight & Sound so that people who both visit and live in our community can encounter Jesus. As we look out further into the future, we see new land, we see new wells, and we are confident that each step of the way we will be met with God's provision.



*Alex Rivera is the Lead Pastor of Journey Church in Strasburg, PA. Alex has a humorous and relatable teaching style that gives people from all walks of life, an honest perspective on their relationship with God and ways to grow in their faith. Alex has the honor of serving with his wife, Tammy, and their four boys AJ, Caleb, Jayce, and Jaxon.*



# 3 KEYS TO EFFECTIVE GUEST FOLLOW-UP



Brian serves as a Staff Pastor at Church of the Crossroads in Corinth, MS. He is also co-owner of Faith Teams Software, a church management software company serving hundreds of churches across the country. Brian and his wife Lisa have been married for over 23 years, and they have two sons Avery and Adam.

## BRIAN DAVIS

Guest Follow-up is always a hot topic among church leaders. As local churches, we minister to the members, but we're also eager to reach more people. We want to see new people come in and experience the life-changing power and the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

We want to see the church grow, and there's no doubt God wants to see the church grow.

*For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost. - Luke 19:10*

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. - 2 Peter 3:9*

In fact, God isn't just "interested" in lost people - He's "passionately consumed" by them.

*"Suppose a man has 100 sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the 99 sheep grazing in the pasture and look for the lost sheep until he finds it?" - Luke 15:4*

This parable doesn't mean that God will ever leave His children, but it's showing us how passionate He is about reaching and rescuing the lost. Imagine a parent with multiple children trapped inside a burning building. They'd run in and search the rooms, pulling their children out. But they wouldn't stop and stand outside once they rescued the first child. They would leave that child in safety and go back in to find the others.

When we connect with that passion, church growth isn't about numbers just for numbers sake - It's about people who need to connect with God and experience salvation and life-change.

As church leaders, we have such a great opportunity. The local church has such an important role in this, because typically when a person starts taking steps toward God, they try a church. God wants to use the local church to express His Love to every person who takes that leap of faith.

We definitely want every guest to have a great experience when they visit our church for the first time, but we also need to have a plan in place of how we will follow-up with those guests.

## What's the purpose of Guest Follow-up?

- To let them know you're glad they attended
- To let them know they are welcome there
- To let them know what their Next Steps are when they're ready to take them
- To let them know you're praying for them
- To invite them to come back

Whether you're just getting started, or you already have a robust plan in place, here are some quick tips that will help your guest follow-up plan be effective.

## 1. GUEST FOLLOW-UP SHOULD BE SYSTEMATIC

When I say “systematic” I’m talking about mapping-out the exact steps of your guest follow-up plan. It shouldn’t change from week-to-week. It should be a series of actions that we take on the same day every week.

Here’s a good way to ask it: *“For every first-time guest we have, what steps will we take, and what day will we take them?”*

Maybe you want to send a text message one day after their first visit. Great!

Get your team around a white board and write out the steps until you’re satisfied with the plan.

And don’t feel pressure to create a super-complex 100-step plan. The first 2 weeks after a person visits are the most important.

To get our Free Guest Follow-Up Cheat-Sheet, go to [FaithTeams.com/followup](https://FaithTeams.com/followup)

## 2. GUEST FOLLOW-UP SHOULD BE QUICK

Whatever your plan is, the first step of it should be done quickly. Every day you wait to communicate with a new guest lowers the effectiveness of it.

One study reported an 84% greater chance that a guest will return if you follow-up within 36 hours of their visit.

This is why most churches have some kind of follow-up within the first day after the visit.

For example, at Church of the Crossroads, we send a text message to every first-time guest on Monday at 2:00 pm.

## 3. GUEST FOLLOW-UP SHOULD BE CONSISTENT

This is an important point because it helps us to understand the stewardship side of guest follow-up. God sent somebody to our church, and it’s up to us how we follow-up and care for them.

Let me say it like this, **“Random follow-up isn’t good stewardship.”**

I don’t say that to beat anybody up, but to challenge us to be Diligent and Consistent. Every single guest matters, and we need to do our best to let none of them slip through the cracks.

Matthew 25 tells us that when we are faithful over a few things, God will trust us with more. Want more guests? Be consistent to follow-up with the ones you already have.

### Tip: Automate when possible

Software like “Faith Teams” allows you to setup automated workflows to send texts and emails. And even though it is automated, it doesn’t have to feel like a robot. As your church grows, using software to automate some of the work will be extremely helpful for you and your team.

Guest Follow-up is a major key to retention and closing the back-door of the church. Making some simple tweaks in this area can bring great change. Most of all, when we put a systematic, quick and consistent plan in place, we’re being faithful to God in doing our part. We do our part, and God brings the harvest.



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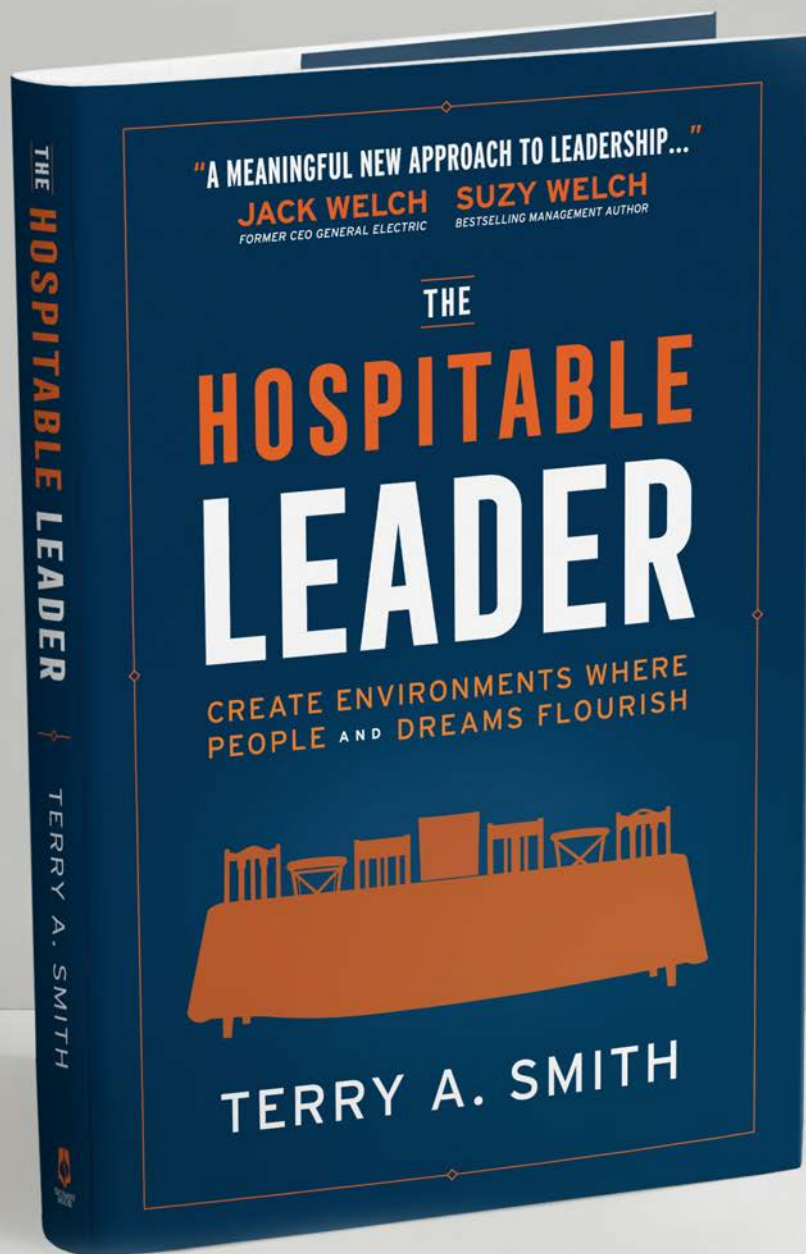
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### DR. PHIL BRASSFIELD

Fake News, that seems to be the phrase of the day. And I guess I'm over it. To me, it's become like the most "annoying noise in the world" and the beeping of the fire alarm that can't be silenced even after you take the batteries out. So, I have added the term Fake News to my,

"please don't make that noise, say that word or use that phrase again" category. Yet, I can't seem to escape it. It's mentioned in almost every newscast, certainly every political conversation or interview. Perhaps it will be the phrase that will define this decade, who knows? And, though it seems to have appeared as a recent phenomenon, it's actually been around since Lucifer's lie, Fake News I mean; it's really nothing new.

The devil has been using fake news since the beginning. He tells us something that's not true and then tries to get us to agree with him. It's his mode of operation. It's propaganda for sure. In the political intelligence arena it is called the process of misinformation. But call it what it is; it is a lie. And Satan is a master of them. In fact, Jesus called him "the father of lies and the truth is not in him". And there's a reason Satan has as his stock and trade, a lie or fake news. Remember, lies always have a purpose. Here are a couple of ideas.

Fake news is a lie or a distortion of the truth with the intent to manipulate your thinking, causing you to act in the way the one who told you the lie wants you to act, usually from your lowest nature.

Fake news is designed to twist your perception of reality and thus to view the world through its twisted perspective. The ultimate purpose of fake news in the spiritual realm is to build barriers in your mind that block the emotional and spiritual healing God wants to bring into your life, healing that can only come through the truth.

I have a book in my library titled [The Lies We Believe](#) written by Dr. Chris Thurman. It's a great book about how our lives are

shaped and destinies determined by the things we believe to be true, that aren't. Like computers, he suggests that our minds are being programmed through the information we put in; some learned through our relationships with significant others who teach us and also through life experiences as we interact with the physical world.

As we go through life (without proper access to all the facts) we develop opinions based on our perceptions and interpretations of what we are told by people or culture or tradition or life experiences and we draw conclusions that seem right to us, but aren't. These conclusions about life and reality become a type of synthetic truth, or as we so commonly hear today, "your truth". Relativism is what it's called. But "my truth" and "The Truth" is not always the same thing.

There is a truth that is transcendent of culture and experience, that isn't flawed or synthesized with the broken opinions of men or the hurtful conclusions of bad experiences. There is a truth, absolute and powerful - compelling, with which "my truth" must reckon. It is a truth that overcame all these things and still stands and shines brightly against the dark backdrop of man's conscious reasoning like a diamond filled with light. It is Jesus Christ. He said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life..." He is not "a truth", nor does He represent a mere philosophy leading to it. He is not simply one of many paths to enlightenment. He is truth personified. He came to reveal truth, bring life and hope to all who have been devastated and deceived by the lies of life. You can trust Him.

If I am to live free from the distorted and twisted blend of truth and untruth (synthetic truth) that life and the devil produce, then I need a revelation. My mind that's been darkened by the synthesis of lies from life experiences and erroneous information must be illuminated by truth! His truth. John, who wrote several books of the New Testament, and eyewitness to Jesus' majesty, said of Jesus, that when He came, "He brought grace and truth". This is the recipe for freedom, Grace and Truth.





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