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DISCIPLE

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Spirit of Grace Church

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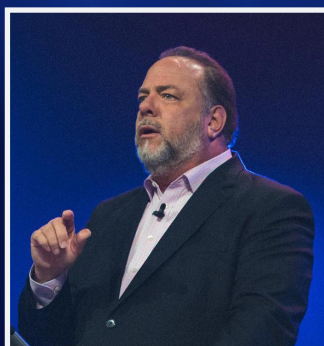
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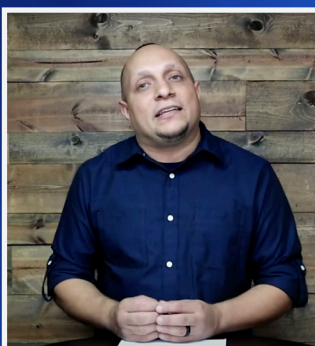
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PASTOR BRETT JONES



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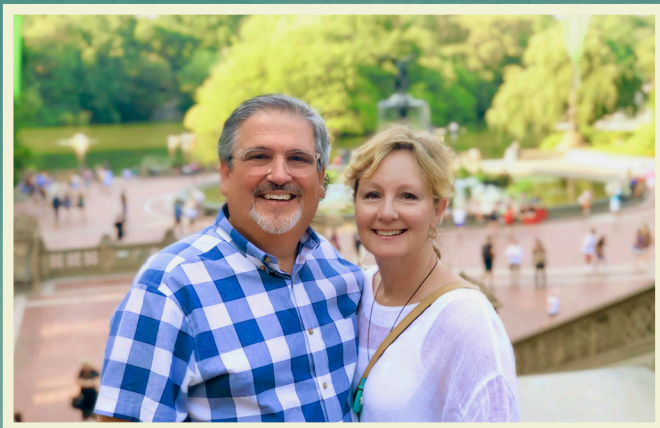
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A WORD FROM PHIL & CATHY

Welcome to this edition of the Destiny Magazine! We are so excited and honored that you have allowed us into your world. We consider this no small thing! Your time and attention are things we never take for granted. Our passion and prayer is to bring an encouraging word of hope and help to every Christian leader we can, especially those in our covenant family. With all the difficulties we are facing as a nation and the unprecedented challenges that have confronted us over the last season, we believe some good news is in order! So, this edition of the Destiny Magazine is filled with it, Good News I mean. It all starts with a special section from our Gospel of John study series. This section will highlight stories from John's interesting perspectives designed to enlighten, encourage and strengthen you.

Also in this edition you will find member spotlights, church up-dates and encouraging stories and articles from around the network. Exciting things are happening, even in these difficult times. This has always been the reality for the people of God! Challenging, even dark seasons are our moments to shine. So, we say SHINE ON! When the world is at its worst, the church can and should be at its best. This is our challenge and we are here to help.

Enjoy this very encouraging edition of the Destiny Magazine!

Finally, I want to offer a special thanks to all the dedicated men and women who contributed to this edition and all who worked so hard to put it together (even during an unprecedented winter storm). You all are so inspiring to us! And to all who read these articles and stories, please drop us a note or an email. We love to hear from you. Give us your input to help make us better.

You can reply to info@destinyleaders.com. Enjoy!

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DESTINY WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBER!



Destiny Ministries is excited to welcome Barbie Estes to the new position as Onboarding Specialist. Barbie and her husband Ethan are both graduates of Destiny Leadership Institute and are ordained ministers with Destiny's Church and Minister's Network. They also serve their local church (Church of the Crossroads in Corinth, Mississippi) and as area directors for Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Barbie will assist those new to Destiny in the onboarding process. She will work with enrolling students at Destiny Leadership Institute and with ministers seeking credentials with Destiny Church and Minister's Network. Barbie brings a wealth of experience in ministry, a dynamic personality, and a great passion for God and people to our process of assimilation.

THE EVERYDAY DISCIPLE



PASTOR STEPHEN MARTIN

If this last year has taught church leaders anything, it is the importance of personal discipleship. In the midst of a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, political instability and the shuttering of in-person church services nationwide, many pastors were shocked by how little their congregation understood the Bible and are going back to the drawing board, to search for more effective ways to disciple their congregation outside of the conventional models driven by services and events. To be sure, the best way to connect and serve is in-person but what if we employed a more “as you go” approach to growth and leadership?

Jesus' first disciples were ordinary, everyday people who were so convinced of who Jesus was that they

were willing to give up everything to follow Him. To them being a Christian wasn't about a program or an event. Life was their program and everyday was their event. Jesus tells us this in Luke 6, verse 40 when He says: 'A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.'

What is Jesus saying here? He's saying that a true disciple is someone who, over time, looks more and more like their teacher. So, in other words, a Christian is a disciple that looks like and reflects Jesus.

As Christians, we aren't called to be religious do-gooders but instead to grow up in every way into Christ who is our head (Ephesians 4:15). In every way means in everything. We are to be disciples every day, not just Sundays. Discipleship doesn't happen in a classroom, it happens along-the-way as you implement what you've learned into your everyday life.

What if the thing that we think is missing, isn't really missing at all? What if instead of adding more activity, we refocus our efforts towards using existing activities as a training ground for more intentional personal growth, as a leadership greenhouse?

As it becomes even more evident that great content, services and events aren't

enough by themselves to build strong Christian disciples, at Vintage Church, we are turning to formal and informal coaching relationships to supplement our in-person environments. As a pastor over the last ten plus years, I have come to the conclusion that no one wants a boss but everyone wants a coach. When you study the Gospels you see the incredible coaching relationship that Jesus had with His disciples. This relationship was built on a new and greater Kingdom that had an entirely different set of priorities and goals than the world.

By observing how Jesus interacted with His disciples, we see several characteristics of a good coach. First, we see that Jesus always taught to the heart. Jesus used every opportunity He had to not just answer a question but to point back to the heart. He did this when confronted with the woman caught in adultery in John, chapter eight. Instead of answering the question asked by the pharisees, “should this woman be put to death?”, He countered with “let the one without sin cast the first stone”. In His response, instead of accusing this one woman of sin, He challenged everyone present to examine their own heart. In doing so, Jesus taught a higher truth than this one woman's sin, the truth that we have all sinned. A good coach always teaches to the heart.

Next, Jesus always connected the temporal with the eternal. He, on many occasions, challenged His disciples to see their life in God's plan. When His disciples began posturing for position and title, He taught them the values of the Kingdom of Heaven and how they were different from this world. In Mark chapter 10, Jesus teaches His disciples that the greatest in His Kingdom is the servant. A good coach always connects this life to eternal life. Sometimes we can get so entrenched in the day to day that we don't make the connection between what we do today and how it affects eternity. I have found it helpful to help Christians develop a personal vision that positions God at the center of every part of life including relationships and priorities.

Jesus also taught a radically different set of values and priorities. In Matthew 25, He teaches the parable of the Talents. In this parable He emphasizes the idea of stewardship and the importance of investing what God has entrusted to us to expand God's Kingdom. This idea is also emphasized by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, when he teaches that our faith is like a race and we are in it to win it. A good coach helps his players develop a strategy to win. In the Christian life, this is living a life ordered by Kingdom priorities. By creating a plan, we use our time and resources to best steward what God has given us. The most valuable resource we have is time. Jesus understood that He had a purpose and used His time and energy to accomplish what God had called Him to while on Earth.

Finally, a good coach pushes their players to win before the game even begins, in practice. It is through discipline and practicing habits that the player is prepared for the Christian life. Ultimately, you never rise to the occasion, you always fall to the level of your preparation. Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane modeled a discipline to prayer that allowed Him to push forward through the pain of the cross through to the power of the resurrection. There is no resurrection without a

death, and it is through discipline that the coach pushes the player to their limits to ultimately win in life and faith. In 1 Corinthians chapter 9, The Apostle Paul admonishes Christians to discipline their body "like an athlete, training it to do what it should."

As we move into a new season of personal discipleship, it is important that we coach like Jesus by teaching to the heart, connecting the temporal with the eternal, modeling an ordered life and practicing discipline. These will, no doubt, take many forms but this Biblical model of personal coaching and discipleship can serve as a guide for you and your church moving into the future.

Stephen Martin has been in ministry, serving the local church for more than twenty years. Born and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Stephen began serving in ministry as a teenager and young adult in his hometown church, Church On The Move.

Stephen is passionate about serving and resourcing the local church—specifically church leaders. In 2009, he started One Church Resource, a global, online, sharing network for pastors, church leaders, and creatives.

In 2013, Stephen and his family moved to Texas and planted Vintage Church just outside of Fort Hood, the largest military base in the United States. Today, Vintage Church is a multi-site church of thousands and continues to make a significant impact in the Central Texas region.

When he's not pastoring people or coaching leaders, Stephen loves spending time with his family, hunting deer, and reading. Stephen's wife, Kyla, is a Family Medicine Physician and veteran, and they have two beautiful daughters, Adilyn and Breelyn, and two sons, Greyson and Colton.

THE EVERYDAY DISCIPLE

is a framework that guides you step by step through four quadrants of discipleship:

Cultivating the Right Heart

Developing a Personal Vision

Creating a Plan

Practicing Habit

Our coaches will use this framework and come alongside you, offering encouragement, accountability and feedback as you progress.

It takes roughly one year to go through the entire coaching framework for the first time. The Everyday Disciple is split into four 12-week Quadrants to make it easy to start and stop as your life and schedule changes.

Each Quadrant includes six online sessions with activities and each session is followed by a coaching call tailored to that session's learning.

A TED Cohort kicks off May 3

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THE EVERYDAY DISCIPLE

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN





ALONG THE WAY

introducing Vibrant Church



PASTOR MICHAEL & CARMEN SCOBEY

Woodlands, Texas. From the beginning it's never been a typical "run the play" church plant. We've seen God work some of His great miracles along the way.

Carmen and I moved to the city intending on being a portable church that would meet in a school, had

"We're real people with a real passion to live Vibrant life in Jesus." This is the banner Vibrant Church has rallied around since day one of our church plant. In September of 2019 we launched Vibrant Church in The

picked a location and had begun purchasing things to outfit the school. But one God driven conversation changed the trajectory of our church. A man on our launch team had been burdened with helping us find a permanent location. After looking at many options, we ended up leasing a 6,500 square foot warehouse for less than we would be paying for the school! It certainly wasn't the original plan.

Then 2020 happened. I can remember the day we found out we were going to have to go online for a while. Our church had never streamed services and our team knew this was going to make us or break us. Right then and there we made the decision to grow through this. Having a permanent location allowed us to have a locker room to meet, film services, and plan for the future.

We were online for only 10 weeks. Vibrant is obviously a very young church with very little tenure in the community, so we knew we needed to get back in-person as quickly (and safely) as possible. Our teams created plans with resources from other generous churches, then fit them to our scale. Since going back to in-person services, we have seen a pace of growth that has challenged us in many ways.

Vibrant's in-person attendance has grown by 24% from the beginning of the pandemic. Feeling the need to encourage and develop people in this season, we ran Facebook ads using life giving ad texts, giving them a next step that could be accomplished online or in-person. This increased our online viewership and in-person attendance. Through it our church's footprint has grown. There are now even small group house churches in Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Louisiana that watch our services and interact with the team on a weekly basis.

The challenges have been immense but our teams deserve all the credit for not letting up. We purchased about \$30,000 in audio/video equipment and they got to work. Production and worship teams created a high quality online service, broadcasting consistently every weekend, as well as weekly re-airs of our services for engagement. This has created an experience we can truly be proud of.

In-person services growing during a pandemic can be especially challenging. We were running one service at capacity previous to COVID - 19 so when we started growing quickly, our teams knew we had to act. A second service was launched and people responded by bringing even more of their friends and family. Our services began to reach a COVID-era capacity very quickly.

After much prayer, we decided to launch a capital campaign to raise funds to build out the suite next to us and expand to 13,000 square feet. We needed to raise \$230,000 and like always, the amazing people of Vibrant stepped up to the plate. As of writing this, our church has raised over \$193,000 towards the project! As we complete negotiations for our lease to expand, we are raising the remaining money to move this building forward.

It's really been the vision statement that has pushed us through in the tough times. "We are real people with real

passion to live Vibrant life in Jesus." It's a constant reminder to be on point with relationships, passion for our call, and sharing the gospel and the great future it gives us.

This season has reminded me so much of Jesus' time in ministry on this earth. There were so many times when He would be on the way to a location, but would get called to pray for the sick or broken. Like in John 4 when He was on His way to Galilee but stopped in Samaria on the way, where He met the Samaritan woman. Her life was changed and because of that thousands of lives were changed because Jesus stayed and ministered to them. But it wasn't on the original itinerary.

This wasn't the plan. It was supposed to be different. But we just decided to trust Jesus to work miracles along the way. They will look different, but what if they are better? We've seen over 100 people give their lives to Jesus, atheists come to Christ, the depressed revived, marriages mended, and lives transformed. All of this since the pandemic began. But it happened differently than I thought it was going to.

To the church meeting online only and feeling beat down, you are making a difference! To the church meeting in-person but it's been tough getting people to come back to church, you are a world changer! You are the only light some people will see in this dark world. Keep pushing. Now is our time to shine for Jesus. You are literally the conduit His glory is working through in this hour. It looks different than we thought it would, but Jesus worked some of His greatest miracles while He was **along the way** to His destination.

MICHAEL AND CARMEN BOTH GREW UP IN LOUISIANA, MET AND MARRIED IN MISSISSIPPI, BUT NOW PASTOR IN THE GREAT STATE OF TEXAS. MICHAEL HAS BEEN IN FULL-TIME MINISTRY SINCE HE WAS 18 YEARS OLD. SINCE THAT TIME, HE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN PASTORAL MINISTRY IN MANY ROLES. CARMEN IS A LOVING MOTHER, WORSHIP LEADER, AND NURSE.

MICHAEL AND CARMEN ENJOY TRAVELING, BEACH TIME, AND ATTENDING SPORTING EVENTS WITH THEIR TWO SONS ETHAN AND MYLES.



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SAYINGS AND SIGNS



**PASTOR LANDON
GALLOWAY**

Many commentators and students of John have noted that the book is organized around miraculous signs and “I

AM” statements. This becomes an important key that unlocks the structure of the book and illuminates how we read it.

Whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke contain a litany of healings, exorcisms and other miracles, John only includes a handful. And, he labels them “signs.” For John, the supernatural works of Jesus are indicators of His divine identity. Each miracle reveals something about the character of Jesus and serves as evidence of His divine status. Traditionally, commentators have identified seven signs. However, it is probably appropriate to also include the notable miracle of the catch of 153 fish by the disciples in John 21. Even though the word “sign” is not used, the miracle is significant enough to warrant consideration alongside the other signs.

1. Changing Water to Wine at the Wedding Feast in Cana (Ch. 2)
2. Healing the Official’s Son on the Way to Capernaum (Ch. 4)
3. Healing the Invalid at the Pool of Bethesda (Ch. 5)
4. Feeding the 5,000 at the Sea of Galilee (Ch. 6)
5. Walking on the Sea of Galilee (Ch. 6)
6. Restoring the Sight of a Man Born Blind (Ch. 9)
7. Raising Lazarus from the Dead at Bethany (Ch. 11)
8. The Miraculous Catch of 153 Fish (Ch. 21)

The signs reveal the character and divine nature of Jesus through actions, while the “I Am” statements reveal the character and divine nature of Jesus through words. When Jesus made these “I Am” statements, He was very clearly identifying Himself as God.

The origins of the saying stems back to God’s self-revelation to Moses in Exodus. When God told Moses that he would rescue 2 million Hebrew slaves from Egypt, Moses wasn’t

sure he was capable: **“But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Ex. 3:11)** God ignored Moses’ questions “Who Am I?” and redirected the conversation. God’s response didn’t affirm who Moses was but revealed who He was: **“And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:14).**

If you feel inadequate or overwhelmed in this strange cultural moment, remember that you can do anything because of He who is, not because of who you are! God made Himself known as YHWH, which means I AM that I AM.

Jesus’ “I AM” statements rocked His Jewish listeners because He was clearly identifying Himself as God in the flesh. In Greek, the ending of the verb lets us know who is doing the action. So the Greek verb, εἰμι, on its own means “I Am.” However, Jesus added the pronoun ἐγώ, which means “I” in front of the verb. The result is emphatic. Jesus does not want to leave any room for misunderstanding. If you want to know who God is then look no further than Jesus.

Similar to the situation with the signs mentioned above, there are 7 traditional “I Am” statements with an 8th often overlooked statement that deserves to be included. Jesus often refers to Himself as “I Am” without any immediate object. For example, in John 8:58, Jesus says “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

1. “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35)
2. “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12; 9:5)
3. “I am the gate for the sheep.” (John 10:7, 9)
4. “I am the good shepherd... [who] sacrifices his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11, 14)
5. “I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25)
6. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6)
7. “I am the true vine.” (John 15:1, 5)
8. “I am (the one known as ‘I AM’).” (John 6:20, 8:28, 8:58)

Now that we have explored the function of the signs and the "I Am" statements, let's see how they work together in John's Gospel.

John explicitly states his purpose for writing his Gospel: "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:21).

John should therefore be read as a persuasive story rather than a theological tract or biographical essay. He structured his story about Jesus to persuade readers that Jesus was both the Jewish Messiah and the Divine Son of God. **John's end goal was not imparting information, but enacting transformation.** He did not want his readers to walk away "understanding" Jesus; his aim was that they would "believe" in Jesus. Stories possess a dramatic structure inherently characterized by flow, change, and conflict. The story line progresses and develops from one event or speech to another. The author of the Fourth Gospel is a master storyteller and the influence of the story-line as a clue to understanding a particular passage can not be overstated. John's Gospel is not a recording of loosely related occurrences but a carefully composed account that moves toward the fulfillment of a broader purpose. Thus, it is possible to detect parallels and echoes within the text itself. Early accounts prepare readers for later events, and later events reflect back on earlier accounts.

This same John wrote the epistles, and instructed his readers to love in both "word and deed (1 John 3:18)." Words and actions work together to present a holistic account of who Jesus is and what Jesus does. If Jesus only spoke words, we would have no way to verify the truthfulness of those words. We all know someone who says the right things but is then unable to produce results that lineup with the words spoken. On the other hand, if Jesus only did signs, we would find it possible to misinterpret the miracles. We would have the "signs," but no verbal confirmation to what the signs were pointing towards. However, Jesus came with both truth and action. The sayings and the signs are inextricably connected.

1. The first sign matches up with the final "I Am" saying. Jesus' turning the water to wine anticipates the statement: "I am the true vine."

2. The sign of Healing of the Official's Son (who is near death) on the way to Cana corresponds to the statement: "I am the way, the truth, the life."

3. The sign of healing the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda (situated directly next to Jerusalem's Sheep Gate), prepares for the statement: "I am the gate for the sheep."

4. The sign of the feeding of the 5,000 men plus women and children in chapter 6 gives occasion to His statement later in the same chapter: "I am the bread of life."

5. The sign of the healing of the man who had been born blind gives meaning to Jesus' statement: "I am the light of the world." Jesus brought light and vision where there had only been darkness and blindness.

6. The penultimate sign of the resuscitation of Lazarus leads to Jesus' declaration: "I am the resurrection and the life."

7. The first time Jesus spoke the powerful statement, "I am" (implicating Himself directly with the most sacred name known to any Jewish person), He was walking across the Sea of Galilee.

8. In Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to the disciples, where He provides the miraculous catch of 153 fish and then calls Peter to tend to His "sheep" – calls to mind the saying: "I am the good shepherd... [who] sacrifices his life for the sheep." The resurrected Jesus who had just sacrificed His life for His sheep is now entrusting them to another shepherd.

The character of Jesus is not revealed only in words, nor only in deeds, but in word and deed. John wanted us to be convinced that Jesus was both Israel's Messiah and God's Son, thus he tells us a story where we can both hear and see true Jesus. All these years later, we still believe and we still have life in His name.



**BRAZEN
SERPENT
MONUMENT AT
MOUNT NEBO**

**THE
TRUE
STORY
OF
JOHN
3:16**

Just as Moses Lifted up the Serpent in The Desert, the Son of Man Must be Lifted up,
So that Everyone Who Believes in Him May Have Eternal Life. (John 3:14-15)

وكَمَا رَفَعَ مُوسَى الْحَيَّةَ فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ هَكَذَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يُرْفَعَ ابْنُ الْإِنْسَانِ ،
لِكَيْ لَا يَهْلِكَ كُلُّ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ بَلْ تَكُونُ لَهُ الْحَيَاةُ الْأَبَدِيَّةُ
يوحنا 3: 14-15

DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

If you study the Gospel of John and contrast it to the synoptic Gospels, you will discover several interesting encounters that John records that are absent in the other Gospels. And if the speculation of early Church Father, Clement of Alexandria, was right, John specifically wanted to add to his gospel narrative things not mentioned by the other authors. For example, both the encounter between Jesus and the woman at the well and the post-resurrection encounter with Mary Magdalene are unique to John. But there is another, it is the nighttime encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus. This encounter and the conversation that transpired would shake the world, and provide some of the most impactful and beautiful Scripture recorded in the Bible. In fact, one of the fragments of the conversation would become the central theme of the Christian movement. It is what Jesus said in John 3:16.

Today, John 3:16 has been called the Gospel in a nutshell and the mission statement of God in redemption. It is displayed on billboards, tee shirts, and bumper stickers. It is even worn in the face paint under the eyes of professional athletes at sporting events. And it always lives up to its billing. It is as simple as it is powerful and it works in whatever form it is presented! For example, during the college football national championship game in 2010 in which Tim Tebow played, he scribed John 3:16 under his eyes in black face paint. During the game, 94 million people googled that Scripture. And the story gets more radical than that as Christianity Today reported. Three years later to the day of the original championship game, Tim Tebow was playing for the Denver Broncos against the Steelers in the playoffs. The Broncos miraculously won the game in overtime on a last second touchdown pass thrown by Tebow on the last play of the game.

After the game, he was informed by their stats people that including

that last touchdown pass, he, during the game, had thrown for 316 yards with an average of 31.6 yards per reception, that their time of possession was 31 minutes and 6 seconds, and his yards per carry was 3.16. Every stat associated with Tebow's performance that night had 316 in the numbers, and during that game over 90 million people googled John 3:16 once again. Incredible! And it all started during the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus that fateful night as the Apostle John relayed it to us.

But what exactly precipitated the passage John 3:16? What was Jesus trying to communicate that night to this professor of Jewish Law? The passages just prior provide the answer. While seldom connected to each other, John 3: 14, 15, 16 and 17 must be read together to be properly interpreted. Here they are:

"AND AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, EVEN SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. FOR GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT THAT THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED." (JOHN 3: 14-17)

The illustration that Jesus used with Nicodemus that led to what is recorded in John 3:16 holds the key to interpreting the passage. It was that of ancient Israel's rebellion against God in the Wilderness during their years of wilderness wondering. In the book of Numbers chapter 21, the story is told of how the people sinned against God by cursing the manna He provided them to eat. They became weary in their journey, discouraged, and cursed God and His purpose, wishing to return to Egypt. God in judgment sent serpents among them whose bite was deadly and was accompanied with a burning sensation and probably high fever.

The text calls them fiery serpents. While many were dying, the people came to Moses and repented of their rebellion and asked him to talk to God on their behalf. God responded by commanding Moses to make a bronze serpent, hang it on a pole and command those bitten and suffering to look upon it. When they did, they were immediately and miraculously healed.

By explaining this to Nicodemus, Jesus unveils in its earliest and perhaps simplest form, the Doctrine of the Cross. Jesus tells Nicodemus that as it was with Moses' serpent being hung on a pole as a remedy for sick and dying people who had been afflicted by their own sin, so must it be with the Son of Man who must be lifted up from the earth as a deliverance for all who would believe in Him. And those who believed in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life.

In that midnight encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus, Grace and the Law met in sharp contrast, and the heart of God was revealed in living color. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world; the venom of sin producing death had done that. And the law was powerless to save them, it could only diagnose why death reigned. Rather, He sent His Son into the world to save humanity from what was killing them, like Moses' serpent on the stick. Why the serpent? The Serpent in the wilderness looked like what was killing the people. Why did God become a man? For the same reason.

What a conversation! What an encounter! What a powerful hope! And it's all recorded for us in the Gospel according to John.

1 Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.24.1-13

2 <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/tim-tebow-shares-amazing-story-about-john-316-and-the-miracle-of-numbers/102853.htm>

3 <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/entertainment/2018/january/tim-tebow-s-nbsp-shocking-story-about-john-3-16-lsquo-coincidence-rsquo-goes-viral>

AN EVENING ENCOUNTER

with Jesus

EDDIE MCFALLS

It is all condensed into seventeen verses. One might even press the argument that two of those verses are ancillary to the focus of the story. The scene was "before the Feast of Passover". It included all of The Twelve. They had gathered to share a meal; a simple occasion that would become indelibly imprinted on each one's memory and conscience. The story appears in the thirteenth chapter of John's gospel.

Considering the best scholarship applied to this matter, it seems some sixty years would have passed between the night of this event and John being led of The Holy Spirit to write the record on paper. Sixty years. John, no doubt, had pondered over that night countless times.

Early in the chapter there are two statements made concerning Jesus that are somewhat defining. They are intriguing to those who pursue the richness of Christology. In verse one and three there are mentions of Jesus possessing knowledge. The original words lean to the idea of becoming or having become more aware. Jesus "knew ... He should depart from this world to the Father." The same general concept is found again in verse three; "Jesus, knowing ... that He had come from God and was going to God." Jesus was certain of His identity and ultimate destiny incorporated into the master plan. That certainty gave rise to an unwavering confidence in His role here on earth.

These several verses make a subtle yet astoundingly strong point. Jesus did not fear losing status among The Twelve, or any other group for that matter, by taking on a task commonly assigned to the lowest esteemed servants. He knew who He was before His Father.

I would humbly suggest that knowing who we are before The Father is genuinely needed in the heart of all

who endeavor to serve The Kingdom. When we know we have been born into The Kingdom, when we perceive clearly our calling in The Kingdom, when we understand our role in The Kingdom, we should be willing to undertake even the most trivial tasks. Yes, yes, I understand the need for delegation to others, etc. – see Acts 6. Nevertheless, this remains significant; the attitude of service. Mere "lip service" towards the notion, or "I paid my dues long ago", or "you newcomers need to learn some valuable lessons so I'm letting you do it" will not suffice.

On the evening that John 13 describes, Jesus was at the outset of horrendous proceedings – crucifixion. Moreover, He knew what lay before Him. John is so precise. Read it slowly, allow his words to draw a picture in your mind. Jesus "laid aside His garments", Jesus "took a towel", Jesus "girded himself", Jesus washed the feet of The Twelve. It is worth noting here that what Jesus began, He finished.

John makes no note of what the various disciples thought. The reader is left to assume the event unfolded in an awkward, near silence. The few sounds are the shuffling of dirty feet, the rustling of robes, the soft splashes of water. Perhaps a few were wide eyed and slack-jawed in amazement, maybe others dropped their head in embarrassment, possibly others tried to assist and were gently denied. Regardless, we are left to assume it apparently all happened without the exchange of words.

But, almost predictably, as Jesus slides the basin near his feet, impetuous Simon Peter has to say something. He begins with a question. His next words are an emphatic statement of just how he thinks and wants this scenario to unfold. Actually, his design is to put a halt to the proceedings. When Simon Peter stops long enough to hear his rabbi's reply, he suddenly blurts out a reversal of his previous insistent statement. It seems these pupils of Jesus had only thought of clean feet. After having heard Jesus speak, Simon wanted to expand the

envelope - feet, hands and head. Well, The Savior was thinking on an entirely different level.

After quiet was restored Jesus began with a question, "Do you know what I have done to you?" It is one of those inquiries that even though you may think you have the answer, it is much better to hold your peace. (By the way, keep an eye on that word "know.")

The rabbi continues. "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am." It's just my opinion, but I feel like this statement put a smile on the faces of The Twelve; it comforted them, reassured them. Things seemed to be coming together, they had used the right titles, what they said was correct and best of all "Jesus said so"!

Jesus now has their rapt attention. He goes on. His statement is worded "your Lord and Teacher". Rushing through the text one might not catch it. It's slight. Yet, it is loaded with immense significance. Jesus reversed the order of the terms. The word translated "Teacher" expresses the idea of one who teaches concerning the things of God. The word rendered "Lord" conveys the ideas of ownership and of being in control.

The Twelve said "Teacher and Lord". The implication is that their attitude was: explain all of this to us first; then we will decide if we want to follow Your instructions. Jesus places the terms in opposite sequence. His desire is that we see Him as our ultimate authority, even before clarity to His instructions come. It's a matter of trust, it's a matter of obedience, it's a matter of aligning ourselves with the divine plan.

Well, the little crowd now has clean feet. I'm pretty sure they are beginning to understand the bigger picture of what Jesus was teaching about cleanliness. But there is more. I can imagine the eyes of Jesus looking into each of The Twelve's faces. Then He says it, "you also ought to wash one another's feet."



I want to say that I have been part of some literal foot washing services. It was impactful. A great number of those I first participated with have gone on to their reward. In some way, that makes the memories of those brief moments kneeling on the floor much more humbling and meaningful.

I also want to say, I don't think that is all Jesus had in mind with this foot washing episode. We all walk by, and sometimes through, some surroundings that get grime on our feet. It has been noted more than once that pastors can go from the joy of welcoming a long awaited, healthy newborn into the world and then turn to minister to a deeply distressed family, grieving the loss of a loved one from a tragic incident.

Our feet get dirty. Dirty with stress, gloom, confrontation - both deserved and undeserved. Dirty with grief, physical weariness, mental weariness, emotional weariness. We are clean, our souls have been "bathed". But our feet are dirty from the daily mission.

I hope you will recall the word "know" that we drew attention to earlier. Jesus knew all this would come about. He knew then. He knew we all would get dirty feet, tired feet. He even knows right now about our dirty, tired feet - your dirty, tired feet; my dirty, tired feet. He knows and He has a plan. He said, "you also ought to wash one another's feet."

You might ask, 'how does this work?' Well, let it begin with us, with me.

Lord, I have dirty feet. But let me lay aside some garments that may hinder, let me find a soft towel of concern, let me wrap myself in the attitude of service. Let me find a basin and fill it with the warm water of mercy. Because Lord, I see my brother, my sister and they have dirty feet. Lord, I want to wash the feet of Your children. I want to encourage them, I want to bless them, I want to refresh them. I need to do this not just from the elaborately decorated stage, but in quietness - shuffling feet, rustling robes, soft splashes of water, few words.

"For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." If we will wash others feet in obedience to Him, the time will come that someone will arrive who will wash our feet. Please don't be like Simon and try to reject the gesture. Sit down, place your dirty feet in the basin and allow help, refreshing, and cleansing to flow. Ok, it may be a phone call, a short visit at home, a quick meeting at the coffee shop, or a text. Who can guess how it will come? Just sit down and permit it to happen. Then be sure to express gratitude to the one with the basin and to the One who set the example.

Let me conclude with this. Jesus said, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." I'm sure you see it again - "know". If I "know these things"; if I have come to realize my own need of being refreshed, if I have come to understand

that others need encouraging, that's an important awareness. But the blessing comes as we "do", as we follow the example of Jesus, as we "wash one another's feet".

Yes, there is something to learn from the encounter The Twelve had with Christ on that night long ago. It may well be that as you wash the feet of a weary fellow pilgrim, you may encounter the presence of our "Lord and Teacher".



Eddie McFalls was given a new birth, by God's Amazing Grace, in January 1980. Since that time, he has enjoyed innumerable blessings. One

of those blessings is being married to Debbie for 40 years. God has granted them two remarkable children; Amos, currently Campus Pastor of Christ Church Ruston, LA and Katy, who serves at Church of The Crossroads in Corinth, MS. Both of their children are married to devoted and talented servants of the Lord Jesus. Other blessings have been to serve The Kingdom in various roles and time frames - pastor in Hastings, NE; assistant pastor in Corinth, MS; principal of a Christian school. In addition, God has opened the door for him to visit various foreign mission fields - Mexico, Trinidad, South Africa & Zambia - speaking to congregations and participating in seminars for resident ministers. His great desire is to honor The Savior.



WHAT IS THE LOGOS?

DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

The Prologue of the Gospel of John, (John 1:1-18), as it's commonly referred to, is one of the most foundational Christological texts in the New Testament. In it, John introduces Jesus Christ as the LOGOS of eternity who made everything, sustains everything, and brought light and life into time and dimension, and into the world. This divine LOGOS became a man and lived with us.

John was writing to a largely Greek audience who would have had a general working knowledge of the LOGOS from a Greek philosophical perspective. But, what is the LOGOS? The Greeks believed that there was an unseen, ordering and uniting principle or divine logic that caused everything to be, and function as it should. They called it the LOGOS (Heraclitus 535-475 CB). They considered it the source and the force of the universe.

Later, they came to believe that there was a LOGOS within each

individual person akin to the LOGOS that pervaded the universe. This personal LOGOS was from the same divine source and allowed for harmony and union with both the universe and the organic beings that lived within in it. The LOGOS was essentially the cause and explanation of everything and permeated everything. Late Stoic thought equated the LOGOS with the *pneuma* or spirit that was filled with divine reason or purpose. But for John to identify this LOGOS exclusively with a specific individual was radical!

John takes this abstract concept that is undefined and nebulous in the mind of the Greeks, and introduces it with personal pronouns, the *He and Him*, in verse two of chapter one. From John's perspective, the LOGOS as Jesus Christ is what makes the invisible God knowable, discernable and tangible. He is God in human form, God with skin, God in the flesh. In Jesus, a reality is established that allows for an interface between the Greek academy and the monotheistic

God of the Old Testament in a way previously unexplored. According to John, in Jesus we see the intersection of God and man in human form. Jesus is then the source of everything created, the defining principle and ordering force of eternity that has now become a man of and from God, who is very God and very man.

This is the basis of the rest of the story John would write. His general theme is that God became a man and *dwelt* (tabernacled) *among us*, and came to save us. Later in his gospel, he produced evidence to support this idea in the form of seven miracles and seven sayings or affirmations by Jesus that he considered to be claims of divinity. This was finally supported by Jesus' resurrection from the dead and victory over death, hell and the grave. John's goal in all of this was recorded in his own words, "... *but these things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*" John 20:31

the Gospel of John's **JOHN THE BAPTIST**

DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

I'm thinking about John the Baptist and some lessons we can learn from this faithful prophet. In these days of success driven ministry, leaders can fall prey to the seduction of power, popularity, and to abusing their access to extravagant resources. But with John, we see a man who stood the test of popularity and opportunity with a humble and faithful heart. We should pay close attention to this man that Jesus called one of the greatest ever born (Matthew 11). Here are some observations:

John was prepared. He prepared for a lifetime for a ministry that was at best 18 months before his arrest and imprisonment. His being prepared was not about duration of service but rather the impact of mission.

John was content with God's limited plan for him. Limitations can be hard for decisive leaders. Though born of the High-Priestly line of Aaron on both his mother and father's sides, and conceived through miraculous circumstances, he understood his role and was content to run in the lane God had planned for him with its predesigned boundaries.

John was secure in his identity in God. He contrasted these facts effectively and humbly: He knew that he was personally selected by God to prepare the way for the coming Messiah and was the first prophetic voice in over 400 years, yet he didn't seize the opportunity to be something he was not, even though it was offered and suggested by those around him. He refused to try to live up to other people's expectations for the sake of popularity or opportunity. When asked, "Are you the Messiah?", he could have said, "Maybe" or "I might be". But he held tightly to his clear and limited calling from God.

John was self-aware. He understood his medium, "I baptize with water", and functioned well within it while understanding something better was coming. Instead of attacking it or

becoming casually adversarial to what was new or different, he saw it as the next step in God's redemptive plan.

John shared his influence. He threw his support behind the leader who would emerge with a ministry superior to his own and who would build on his ministry at what some would have suggested was his expense. John said of Jesus, "He must increase, I must decrease."

John was transparent when he was weak. He was humble enough to ask for clarity in a moment of weakness and discouragement even after the tremendous highs of large crowds and fawning followers. ("Are you the one? Or should we look for another?") Moments of discouragement come to us all. There is safety in seeking wise counsel and a confirming word; it doesn't diminish your stature with God at all.

*Statue of
John the Baptist
Kazan Cathedral
St. Petersburg,
Russia*



DESTINY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Student Spotlight



Hello, my name is Josiah Beougher, and I serve as a campus pastor at Storyside Church (East Knox, Ohio).

I have served in full time ministry for close to 10 years, and one thing that is always a must, is that you should never stop growing, you should never stop learning, and you should never pass on an opportunity to receive excellent education, wisdom, and knowledge. DLI is all that, and more.

One of the most profound things to me at the start of my course at DLI, was their direct intentionality to the student, and the heart that was conveyed by it. It was obvious that this would not be like other theological, and biblical courses I have taken in the past, but that it would be a personal approach to learning that I had not encountered. The teaching

faculty is so accommodating from the onset, and the passion in which they teach and instruct is inspiring, and life giving.

Leaders are learners, and prioritize it. I highly value learning, and especially who I'm learning from. This has never been in question in my time taking courses through DLI. From the faculty, to the guest teachers and pastors brought in, the content has been transformative, and incredibly challenging to my heart as a Pastor, leader, and learner. Every lesson, every talk, every assignment, has continued to equip me to better serve the assignment that God has given me in ministry.

My confidence has increased in numerous areas, as it has sharpened my biblical acumen in a profound way. I find myself greatly looking forward to each new seminar, assignment, and new insight I will receive. What has been amazing, is the adaptability

of doing these courses, while serving on full time staff pastorally, being a husband, a father, and training for an Ironman. They set you up for success with the flexibility of their learning platform. If you feel like you do not have the time, I would ask you to consider again.

I have learned immensely throughout being a student at DLI. It's so critical that we have the right tools and resources to effectively carry out the work of the ministry. Whether you have been in ministry for a bit such as myself, or you are just getting started, DLI is an incredible tool to use, whether it's learning for the first time, or refreshing, and learning more than you already knew. There is so much available for all who take their courses. No matter where you are in your ministry journey, this is not something I would pass up lightly, and you should consider making it part of your journey today!



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THE FOUR CHAIRS

BOOK BY PASTOR NELSON HIGHT
ARTICLE BY BRIAN DAVIS



With so many distractions fighting for our attention and energy, how do we keep our lives in order? When things are out of order, it impacts our entire lives and the lives of those around us.

Is it possible to organize our personal lives in such a way that God can truly lead us, and we can truly have peace?

THE ANSWER IS YES!

Pastor Nelson & Pam Hight lead a thriving church in a small town in North Mississippi. In the late 1990's, as they were in the middle of building a new church building, God challenged Pastor Nelson to make some drastic changes to the way he viewed and organized his priorities.

Through a series of events, starting when one of the church members invited him to attend a band recital their daughter was participating in, God bluntly challenged Pastor Nelson regarding the way he had things arranged in his life. With his words, he claimed that certain things were most important, but his actions told a different story.

Those challenges are hard for us to hear, but God isn't as interested in us being comfortable as He is in us being in-line

with His will for our lives. If your child was headed down the wrong path, wouldn't you step in and challenge them? Wouldn't you lovingly bring it to their attention? God loves you and I more than we could ever love our children. I'm so thankful that God loves me so much, that rather than allowing me to continue endlessly down a pathway of disaster, He will get my attention and challenge me to make some changes.

The challenges God made during that season cut to the heart, but thankfully, Pastor Nelson was open to hearing what God was saying. It took several months for the message to be fully-comprehended, but once it was, this concept opened his eyes to see life in a completely different light.

What about you? Do you ever feel like you're in a never-ending cycle of being "out-of-balance" in life? If you're being honest, are there times when you can clearly see that the things that "should" be first, aren't? The truth is that we all find ourselves there at some point.

This world is so full of distractions that can grab our attention, and derail us for years or decades. And when I say "distractions", I'm not just talking about things that are wrong. Sometimes good things can even distract us. Good things, out of order, aren't good for us.

With Pastor Hight, it was the project of a new church building that consumed his attention, and over a period of months, it distracted him from being present with the most important people and things in his life. It wasn't a bad thing, but even good things can rearrange our priorities if we're not careful.

After that high school band concert, as weeks went by, God revealed a concept that has been taught for many years now at Church of the Crossroads. It's called "The Four Chairs". It isn't just another crafty illustration, but a lens to view our lives through and keep us in the proper balance.

This concept is one of the most "life-shaping" concepts you'll ever hear. Once you hear it, you can't forget it. Once you see it, you'll automatically begin to see how it plays out in your everyday life, and gives you extreme clarity about making sure the most important things STAY the most important things.

Do you want to experience a life of Godly balance? Do you want to live with passion, but also maintain Godly order? Do you want to live a life you won't regret at the end?

THIS BOOK IS YOUR ANSWER.

In his new book "The Four Chairs", Pastor Nelson takes you along the journey of how God helped him see life through a different lens, and get his real priorities back in the order they belonged.

Written by a master story-teller, "The Four Chairs" is an easy-to-read book that will challenge you, but also open you up to a world full of new possibilities. It will carry you along the journey Pastor Nelson went on as God was challenging him to make some radical shifts in his life, and also give you a clear game-plan for your own life. Is it possible to experience a life of balance? Is it possible to live a life full of purpose AND priority? *It is.*

**IT BEGINS WITH GETTING
"THE FOUR CHAIRS" IN ORDER.**

THE FOUR CHAIRS Getting Life in Order.

The New Book by
Pastor Nelson Hight

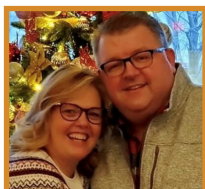
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thefourchairs.com





SPIRIT OF GRACE CHURCH

Baptism Celebration



PASTOR TIM & TRICIA SANDERS

My name is Tim Sanders and along with my wife, Tricia, we have entered our 33rd year of ministry. In all those years, God has been faithful to open every door at just the right moment. We are honored and blessed to serve as Senior Pastors to Spirit of Grace Church in the northwest corner of Minneapolis, Minnesota in a city named Coon Rapids.

Christmas of 2008 would bring our family, our 6 year old, Owen and 2 month old, Declynn, to lead this church in its next season of history. We came to lead about 25 dear people that would grow to around 125 today. We have been blessed by God at every turn, and He always placed the right people in our path at the right time. Such it was when God united us with Dr. Brassfield and Destiny Ministries, through our friendship with Jonathan Suber. Not only did He unite the Sanders, but He united SGC to Destiny and the desire to grow into what God desired us to become.

About twenty years ago, God placed a burden in my spirit for those that are addicted to anything or those that need to overcome abuse and despair. This birthed a ministry that began in August 2019 called "Chainbreakers". Unlike other recovery ministries, I felt the Lord forbid us to use the term recovery. I believe this was because

God does not want someone to recover to the place that sent them into their situation in the first place. He wants to restore them to what God intended for them to become. Thus, we have "Chainbreakers" restoration ministry.

I shared that because beginning in the fall of 2019, God began to stir the waters of baptism like never before for our church in our city. We had baptized around 40 people from August 2019 until COVID closed us down in March of 2020. We were concerned that the "momentum" that God birthed in us in 2019 would struggle to continue because of our separation. How wrong we were!! Throughout 2020, amid the pandemic, God allowed us to baptize another 45 souls in His name!!

Throughout 2020, I felt like God was telling the church that He was preparing us to explode on the scene in 2021. Whether this is an end time event or not, I do believe that it is a harvest that the Lord wants to reap. So already in 2021, God has allowed us to baptize 25 souls on Valentine's Day! These dear people are not just recovering but they are being restored!!! I believe that if we adapt to the opportunities that God is giving us, He will bless, transform, and restore a great number of precious people looking for that which is new. These 25 have now started their walk-in newness of life, and it is exciting and humbling to play a part!! Looking forward to seeing what else God will do!





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The Lifter of My Head

STEPHANIE POWERS

"Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?" I bet if someone had asked you that question in 2016 you would not have answered *"Living through a series of historical events in an 'unprecedented time' that will change the face of our daily life and culture."* But in the blink of an eye, our world completely changed, and we have been searching for the new normal ever since.

Though this pandemic has been a world-wide issue, there are events that occur in each of our lives that we are unprepared for, *and suddenly* things are completely different. A little over eleven years ago I went through a situation that rocked my world. It was my own personal *unprecedented time*. A seemingly normal Saturday morning in September was completely overturned in a matter of moments when I came to the knowledge that my Dad, who by his own choice, had left this world. My world was completely broken. I don't think I will ever be able to accurately describe how I felt at that moment as I sat in my driveway learning what I feared was true. That one moment ushered in a world of hopelessness and grief.

I can remember in the days and weeks following, waking up after a long night's sleep, and for a

few brief moments forgetting the reality that awaited me. Then, the moment I remembered my circumstance, sorrow would wash over me like a wave, knocking the breath out of me. There were times I didn't even want to get out of bed and face the world. The pain I felt, and occasionally still feel at times, was indescribable.

I know that some of you might have also experienced this type of pain and grief, maybe due to the current pandemic, racial injustice, or even loss of relationships. Some of you right now are dealing with a wayward child, an unjust boss, an addiction, a job loss, the death of a loved one, or maybe something else entirely. We all have times in our lives where we are fleeing or fighting, where our lives seem to have fallen apart and all we seem to hear is bad news. We all have times where we feel, or are maybe even told, that our situation is beyond help. We might wonder at times, where God is in this particular trial, or we doubt that He is willing to turn it all around.

As we look into the stories of the Bible, we find that we aren't the only ones that have felt these things. King David, for example, experienced many of these trials in his life. He was anointed King, but had to wait years before it came to pass; King Saul tried to have him killed. He lost

his best friend, committed adultery, murdered Bathsheba's husband, and experienced the loss of more than one child. He saw conflict and strife in his family. If any one could understand grief, sorrow, tragedy, and guilt, it was King David.

At the time Psalm 3 was written, King David was fleeing Jerusalem from his son Absalom. Due to a series of unfortunate events, Absalom had gone to Hebron under the pretense of making a sacrifice to the Lord, and had declared himself King of Israel. Instead of fighting Absalom, King David fled to safety.

Imagine King David at this moment: his son was after his throne and had declared himself King, and no doubt would have killed David if he had gotten in his way. David knew that it was very probable that one of them would die. He grieved for his son's rebellion and safety, while wondering if he, himself, would live or die. His countenance was downcast and discouraged.

"Oh LORD, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God. "But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory and the lifter of my head. I cried aloud unto the LORD and He answered me from His holy hill. Selah" (Psalm 3: 1-4)

King David finishes this Psalm with a victorious decree. He knows his future alone rests in God. God gives us our salvation, not man; we find hope in knowing that He is able to defeat our enemies, and is able to give us joy in the midst of sorrow.

Grief, though trying as it is, can draw us nearer to God and allow us to experience His joy. It can drive us to a place where the only way to look is up at Him. King David is able to be at peace and rest because he knows, despite what people are saying, despite the outcome, that God is in control. Whether we understand it or not, *God is working things out for the good for those that love Him and are called according to his purpose.* (Romans 8:28)

I know for me personally that it was my choice to look to God, and not the situation, that got me out of bed some days. My constant decree that God has a plan for my life and would see me through this tragedy is what kept me functioning. I don't understand it all, I can't make sense of it all, but my firm belief that God could and would use anything and everything for His good, and

to further His kingdom is what strengthened my faith in Him. Instead of turning my back and accepting defeat, I allowed God to lift my head. He gave me joy despite my sorrow. He gave me rest in turmoil. He gave me hope in what seemed like a hopeless situation.

This pandemic, and the *unprecedented time* in which we are all living, and even your personal struggles have not surprised God. It hasn't caught Him off guard. He is not trying to figure out what to do next. He is not looking at our situation and saying, *"You are going to have to figure it out, I've got too much to do, I don't have time for this."* But, we have to stop looking at the world for our answers and listening to the voices that discourage us. We have to stand on what God says and put our hope, trust, and faith in Him. We have to let God be the lifter of our head, and speak peace into our lives.

The enemy roams the earth to and fro seeking whom he can devour. But *the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward Him.* If our hearts are right, and we look to Him, He will strengthen us.

No matter the circumstances you are facing today, know that God is ready and able to give you joy in the midst of sorrow, to give you peace in your trials, and encourage you in your struggles. Lift your head to Him, keep your eyes on Him, and drown out the distractions of the world.



Stephanie has been involved in ministry support and leadership for over 17 years in various roles and areas including administration, production, worship, women's ministry and pastoral care. For the last 8 years she has served as the Director of Communications for Destiny Ministries and as Destiny Leadership Institute administrative support. Stephanie and her husband, Roger, will celebrate 20 years of marriage this coming June. Roger and Stephanie are both Destiny Ordained Ministers and DLI Graduates. They have three daughters: Selah (15), Zoe (13), and Hallie (10). The Powers Family currently resides in Searcy, Arkansas, where they are in the early stages of planting a church.



VINTAGE CHURCH BELTON TEXAS

Launch Update

SENIOR PASTOR: STEPHEN MARTIN

LEAD PASTOR BELTON LOCATION: DREW BRASSFIELD



At the beginning of 2021, we stepped out in faith and have become one church in two locations. On January 17, Vintage Church - Belton opened its doors to a new community with one goal in mind - reaching people and building family.

In just a few short weeks, our spiritual family has grown tremendously. We already see exponential growth from activating our Launch Team to helping new members take their next steps in serving. Since our inaugural service, we have seen 34 people make decisions to follow Jesus.

Experiencing such growth, we were able to begin offering a second service on February 21. It is an amazing opportunity to be a part of what God is doing in the Belton/Temple area. In fact, God has opened an incredible door for expansion, allowing us to move Vintage Church - Belton into its permanent home. Located just off Interstate 35 between Belton and Temple, we believe this facility is positioned perfectly to continue reaching and building in our region. Having entered into a lease-purchase agreement, we can start renovations, with a goal of moving in this summer and closing on the purchase of the property later this fall.

With the faithfulness and provision of God through Destiny and with the continued support of our spiritual family, we genuinely believe the best is ahead!

THE DESTINY LEADERS PODCAST

"REAL TALK INTERVIEWS"

SEASON 3



Phil Brassfield



Landon Galloway



Amos McFalls

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THE BEST OF THINGS IN THE WORST OF TIMES



DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

Over the door of the Staunton Harold Church in Leicestershire, England is this inscription:

"In the year 1653 when all things Sacred were throughout ye nation, Either demolisht or profaned, Sir Robert Shirley, Baronet, Founded this church; Whose singular praise is, to have done the best things in ye worst times, ..."

It is said that Sir Robert Shirley built the only church constructed in England during the Cromwellian Revolution and civil war of England in the 17th century. It was crazy days indeed as Great Britain descended into civil war. There were riots in the streets, religious conflict and controversy, and ultimately the legislative branch revolting against the executive branch of governments. It was traumatic and, I must admit, their times were not so different from these in which we find ourselves today.

Are you like me and you have felt lately like you were living in Crazy Town? And it gets crazier by the minute - a global pandemic, politics gone mad, economy out of control, accusations of sedition, and social and political unrest. Oh my goodness! There are a million, no a billion, reasons to shake your head in awe and wonder considering the absurdity of it all! But, I'm glad we

serve a God who specializes in doing the best of things in the worst of times.

God specializes in forgiveness when we have failed miserably. He is a master at deliverance when we have allowed ourselves to become enslaved in bondage. And healing? Miracles are His stock in trade.

Ancient Israel discovered this, and even called God by special names that testified of His character during challenging situations. Each of the compound names for God from the Old Testament came from a place or moment of crisis! And I've met God in these ways too.

For example, Abraham called Him **Jehovah Jireh** in Genesis 22- Meaning, *my provider*. When faced with losing everything that meant anything to him, God provided a ram in the thicket and spared the life of Isaac. God was called **Jehovah Rapha** - *my healer*, in Exodus chapter 15 when the waters were bitter and Israel had nothing to drink, an absolute catastrophe, by the way, if you were in a remote desert area with herds and families without drinkable water. The Lord healed the waters, and at the same time encouraged the people that He would be their healer as well.

Moses built an altar in the place where God caused a great victory over the Amalekites and called the altar, **Jehovah Nissi** - *The Lord my Victory*. I have known God in this

way too. I remember many moments of conflict when God's proverbial cavalry came riding over the ridge just in the nick of time. And on it goes for Israel and for me. **Jehovah M'Kaddesh** - *The Lord who sanctifies me*. I've learned this in moments of failure only to be forgiven and reconciled to God by His grace. **Jehovah Shalom** - *The Lord my peace*. When chaos and turmoil and panic had taken over, He stepped in and calmed the storm in my life. **Jehovah Rohi** - *The Lord my Shepherd*. When confused, afraid and bewildered, He became my gentle shepherd to protect and guide. **Jehovah Tsidkenu** - *The Lord my righteousness, The door*, in some renderings. For me, He's the way out of the 'fun house' of this world with its distortions and mutations. He's been my way out when the circus of craziness showed up in my world and the 20 clowns all packed into that little VW bug seemed to climb out and scare the daylight out of me.

Jehovah Shammah - *The Lord who is there*. When the pain, even crisis, of loneliness attacks, He's been my hope and my help. A God who says, "I'll never leave you alone", has rescued me.

Come to think about it, I, like Israel of old, have personally known God in all these ways. He deserves every title, every crown. All these names remind us that our God is the God who can do the **best of things in the worst of times**.



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JUNE 22-24TH

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WELCOME BACK!

The Destiny Gathering Conference is happening this summer! We are back with our friends at Christ Church in West Monroe, LA! Conference festivities will kick off Tuesday evening with a Welcome Party/Open House where you can meet the teams that make it happen in each department. Wednesday and Thursday mornings will begin with large group worship followed by breakout sessions to encourage and equip you and your ministry. The evening services will include engaging worship and dynamic speakers. The Destiny Kids' Gathering will be in full swing, and Destiny Youth will have their own breakout track along with special times to fellowship with other teens.

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