

SPRING 2022

# DESTINY

M A G A Z I N E

**THE REVELATION  
OF A MISSION**

**DESTINY TEAMS  
UP WITH FCA**

**THE GARDENER**

**TO BE KNOWN**

**A LIGHT IN  
BABYLON**

**2022  
DESTINY  
GATHERING  
REGISTRATION  
NOW OPEN!**





# DESTINY LEADERS

## WELCOME TO YOUR FUTURE!

Welcome to Destiny's Covenant Family of Friends and a World of opportunities for you to GROW, SERVE, and SOW in the Kingdom of God. At Destiny you can build lifelong relationships, be challenged to achieve your greatest potential, see the world, serve someone in need and become all that God has called you to become. Experience all of these exciting opportunities among a family where you are loved, accepted and celebrated!

### **A PLACE TO GROW...**

As a Christian Leader you need a safe place to be challenged, equipped and encouraged to reach your greatest potential. At Destiny we are absolutely committed to meeting those needs. Through Destiny Membership you will find growth opportunities such as: one-on-one coaching, exciting events & conferences, roundtables, internet webinars, strategic relationships, educational travel and mission outreaches. Each designed to grow you into the leader God wants you to be.

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The Kingdom of God is about service to God and to others. At Destiny you will find many opportunities to serve by assisting other Christian Leaders to achieve their goals and dreams. We do this together as we plant new churches, develop interns, train leaders, participate in special projects and various short term missions efforts.

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Destiny's Covenant Family is filled with generous people. We are a giving/sowing culture. We believe strongly in the principle of tithing and that it should be practiced at every level in the Kingdom. We believe that both individuals and organizations are included in God's concept of sowing and reaping, and that as we submit to God's plan, both are abundantly blessed. As individuals we sow in obedience, and as organizations we teach giving and lead by example.

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# A Word from Phil & Cathy



Welcome to the Spring edition of Destiny Magazine. There are so many exciting things going on at Destiny Ministries, and we pray 2022 is the best year yet for you, your ministry, and your church!

We are so blessed to serve the greatest group of people! Each one in our Destiny Covenant Family of Friends has an amazing purpose from God and a story to go with it. We have been blessed and inspired by these articles and pray you will be as well. In this magazine you will find information about the 2022 Destiny Gathering Conference, Destiny Connect Events, and articles that will encourage your walk with the Lord. We are excited to see what 2022 brings! Let's Do Something Great Together!

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SCAN QR CODE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT DESTINY AND INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS.

# A LIGHT IN BABYLON

## DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

Isaiah 42:6 *"I am the Lord. I have called you for a righteous purpose, and I will hold you by your hand. I will watch over you, and I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people and a light to the nations."*

Daniel 5:11 *"There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him;..."*

Like many in the church, I feel like I have more questions than answers right now. Maybe you're in that same boat. We are all contending with questions like: What is the future going to look like for the church around the world and, for that matter, around the corner? What do we do now, where do we go from here? And I completely understand the need for a specific strategy for the church moving forward into a post-pandemic world that seems to grow increasingly hostile to Christians and Christianity by the day. But, I also believe we must be careful, because in seasons of uncertainty, the good old days seem sweeter than ever, and where we used to be and what we used to do can command too much of our attention. But historically, going back to 'what was,' has never been an effective strategy for moving forward into 'what will be.'

During uncertain times, I always look for foundational commands containing core truths that have been used to steady and stabilize the forward movement of the church through history, realizing that this is not the first *sea change* the church has endured. The church has survived, even thrived, through all sorts of challenges before. And if we look for them, we will find there are specific time-tested, crisis-proven strategies that have anchored the people of God to the bedrock of His purpose in times of change.

One such anchor is the directional command Jesus gave to believers during the Sermon on the Mount. This command is as true today as it was the day Jesus shared it. When in doubt as to what to do, we can go back to it and use it as a compass to find our way moving forward.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:13-16, **"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt (the church and believer) loses its flavor, how shall it (the world) be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."**

Jesus' clear illustration was about the seasoning value of salt. Here, we see a bedrock idea that is relevant to every generation and social setting. We, as individual believers and collectively as the church, are to season the world with the flavor of Heaven. This is our mission! This is our objective! Jesus' use of this metaphor is not about the preservative or

medicinal qualities of salt; it's about taste. In every situation and circumstance, every encounter with people, with every church strategy, we are to taste like Heaven to a world without redemptive flavor. Finding creative ways to season every situation with the flavor of Heaven has always been and remains the mission of the church. And with His command, Jesus made this clear.

He went on to say, Matt 5:14-16 NKJV - **"You are the light of the world.** A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all [who are] in the house. Let your light **so (like a city on a hill and a lamp in a house)** shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

This second statement is a restatement of the first using a different metaphor. Both statements drive home one core truth that is transcendent of time and circumstance. Our assignment as a believer and as a church is to always be present and *influential*. We cannot and must not surrender our *presence* and *influence* during changing times, regardless of the political or social climate, regardless of the latest trends, fads or what is in or out of vogue. Being politically correct has never been a consideration when evaluating our mission. We are to be like salt and season every environment with the flavor of Christ and His Kingdom. And like light, illuminate the darkness with Christ's truth and glory. And yes, depending on the cultural circumstance, sometimes this role will put us at odds with popular culture and at other times, find its approval. But we must not be swayed by either.

While church styles may change, and times, location and methods may vary from age to age, our mission remains the same, to be salt and light. Dr. Martin Luther King once said it this way, "The role of the church is to be the conscience of the nation." We cannot do this while absent, isolated or irrelevant. We cannot do this if our message is watered down or compromised for the sake of worldly approval. We bring contrast through being different, add color by being principled, and flavor by being consecrated to God and His purpose, first and foremost.

Equally, argumentative or bitter attitudes will never represent the savory flavor of the Kingdom well. Political vitriol and extremes filter the pure light of God's Kingdom and cause distraction, creating shadows distorted by self-will and personal agendas.

We must belong exclusively to God and be exclusively committed for His purpose.

If we want to see what this looks like in high-definition, we can look at the book of Daniel and examine Daniel's life and ministry in Babylon.

Daniel was among the members of the royal family taken from Judah by order of the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar. The King then ordered them to be examined, and the ones who were perfect in appearance and seemed particularly bright were to be deported to the Imperial City and then trained in a three-year university program designed to indoctrinate them with Babylonian culture and values. After graduation, they were destined to serve in the King's court as liaisons for the empire.

Yet, Daniel demonstrated two amazingly salty, light-filled qualities that made all the difference and caused him to be sustained and incredibly influential through two successive world kingdoms and four powerful kings while remaining true to his identity and God's purpose. These qualities were game changers for him, and will be for us as well, as we find ourselves in a world not that different from the Babylon of antiquity.

First, Daniel's **perspective was Godward**. My driving proves that I always tend to move in the direction I'm looking. I bet you do, as well. Your perspective is always directional. It will define how you navigate difficult circumstances. Daniel's perspective was always fixed on the sovereignty of God. His eyes were always on God first. This filled his perspective with light and produced a compelling flavor of God's wisdom that tasted so different compared to the flavors of the popular culture around him. While he did not try to draw attention to himself, he stood out - head and shoulders above the crowd. It caused him to be better, ten times better, than all his Babylonian contemporaries.

Daniel's perspective was one of great trust. He never believed that God was out of control, even though he was suffering as a prisoner. He demonstrated a great confidence that God had a plan and was working all things according to the counsel of His own will. Daniel believed that God had something bigger at work in his circumstances. This is still true today with what we are going through. God is working whether we see the evidence of it or not. Our job is to simply be who God has called us to be, regardless of our location, circumstance, or culture. Daniel knew that if God could rule over the rise and fall of nations and empires, He could handle Daniel's future and his role in history.

Therefore, Daniel never honored an earthly king over the heavenly King. This commitment and focus on the King of eternity is what flavored Daniel and made him attractal and luminous to the King of Babylon. Being just like everyone else would have never opened the doors for Daniel that his Godly perspective did.

Secondly, Daniel lived a life of **principle**. He, along with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, **purposed** in their minds that they would not defile themselves with the King's food or wine. They would not violate their spiritual principles, even if it cost them their lives. They purposed in their minds that only God's opinion would define their reality. Yes, they would live and work within the Babylonian culture and serve the Pagan King, but there were lines they would not cross even if it cost them their lives.

As for Daniel, he decided that he would serve faithfully for the general betterment of the nation he served, but he would never sell out to Babylonian culture, believe their lies, worship their gods, or share their values. He was God's man, filled with God's purpose. This was the fuel of his life. It allowed him to speak with great respect, yet very directly, to the most powerful man on the planet. His principles compelled his dedication, and his words and actions came as a result.

Because of Daniel's godly perspective and principled life, God granted him favor, wisdom, and incredible spiritual insight. This empowerment from God would open doors of opportunity, release the miraculous, shut the mouths of lions, and create amazing prosperity and favor that built a reputation for Daniel. As a result, he seasoned the world around him with the flavor of the Kingdom of Heaven. Further, this created a powerful and compelling Light in Babylon for over 80 years.

Today, we need men and women like Daniel. We, too, can become that influential. The challenges we face today, like those of Daniel's day, are really opportunities for us to shine- for the Church to radiate love and truth. When the world takes a bite out of us, we should taste like Christ to a world hungry for something different. As the world around us gets darker, as in the days of Daniel, it will be our godly perspective and Christian principles that will empower us to light up the dark places around us.



# 2021 DESTINY DASHBOARD

## YEAR IN REVIEW

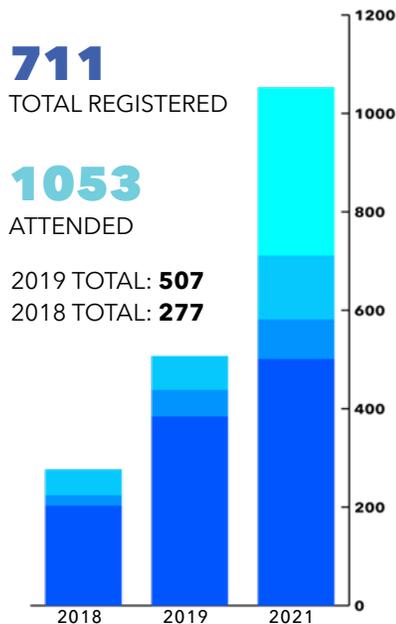
### 2021 MEMBERSHIP

**278** ORDAINED  
**156** LICENSED  
**33** CHURCH AFFILIATED  
**17** CHURCHES COVERED BY 501C3



### 2021 GATHERING

**501** REGISTERED ADULTS  
**80** REGISTERED TEENAGERS  
**130** REGISTERED KIDS  
**342** UNREGISTERED INDIVIDUALS



### NUMBERS

**9**  
 CONNECT  
 EVENTS

**572**  
 CONNECT  
 ATTENDEES

**4**  
 MAGAZINES

**1664**  
 MAGAZINE  
 SUBSCRIPTIONS

**9**  
 DLI WEBINARS

**300**  
 DESTINYNOW  
 YOUTH ATTENDEES

**12**  
 PODCASTS

### TOTAL REVENUE

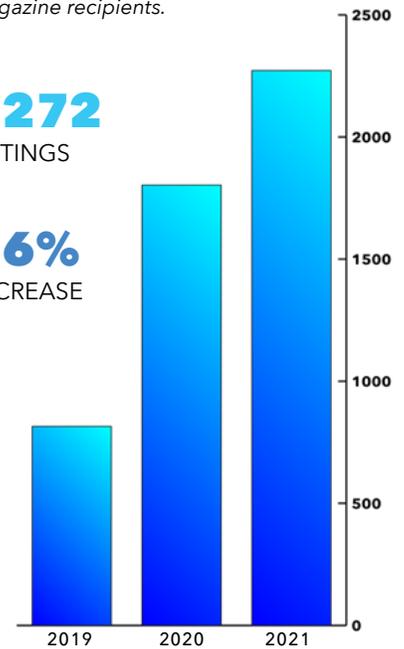
**\$688,339**  
 TOTAL REVENUE IN 2021

### 2021 DATABASE

*This number reflects listings that are, but not limited to, the following: Destiny members, DLI students/alumni, event attendees, contributors, individuals requesting information on membership/education, and magazine recipients.*

**2272**  
 LISTINGS

**26%**  
 INCREASE



### DESTINY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

**188**  
 ENROLLED STUDENTS

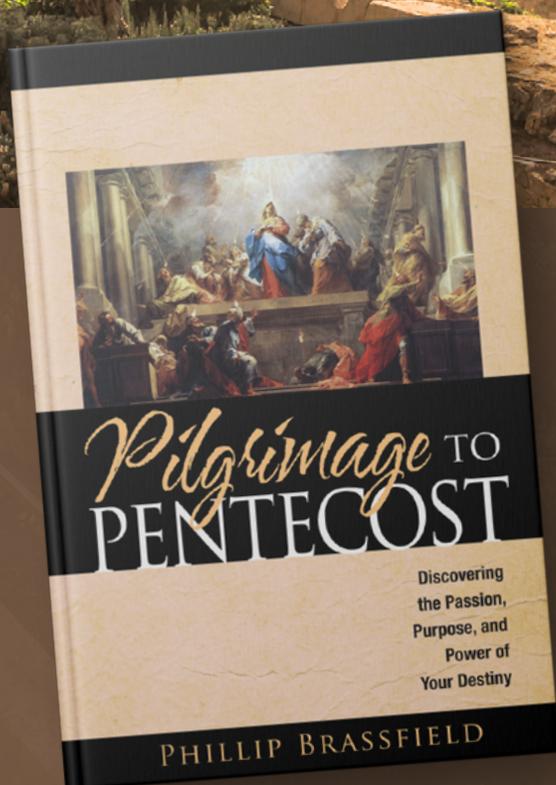
**119**  
 AVERAGE PER SEMESTER

**40**  
 GRADUATED

*All numbers are as reported.*

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# THE GARDENER



## PASTOR LANDON GALLOWAY

### **In the beginning, God created a garden.**

We call it the Garden of Eden, and interestingly enough, this era of history will end with a garden according to Revelation 22. And the prime directive that God gave man was to tend and till the garden. This makes us all gardeners. In fact, "Adam" literally means "of the ground." Think of what you do in life as your plot of land - your garden. What are you growing? What are you producing? Is it a place where you can walk with and talk with God? The garden was a place of God's presence, a place where man could meet with God. That's the simplest definition of prayer. Prayer is walking in the garden with God.

The Garden was the unmediated presence of God. No priests, no rituals, no rites were required. Just man and God, God and man. But then, sin entered the picture. What God designed to be a place of flourishing and beauty became a place of desolation and isolation. Words were introduced that had never been used before: words like *thorns*, *sweat*, *separation*, *pain*, *judgment*, and *DEATH*.

God created a garden. We turned it into a grave. The garden plot became a cemetery plot. Death replaced life. Isolation replaced community. Hard toil replaced loving, sweatless labor. Long walks with God were replaced by shameful hiding from God.

But God wasn't done yet. He knew that life is still possible even when things appear dead. A wise man who had lost literally everything - his possessions, his family, and his health, except for his hope once wrote:

**There is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant. (Job 14:7-9)**

God missed His daily walk with man, so He arranged other meeting places where He might meet with us. He tried all kinds of different things. He tried a flood to wipe the Earth clean and get a fresh start. He tried various covenants through Abraham, Moses, and David. But, nothing seemed to get us back to the Garden. So God goes for broke, and sends His one and only Son to the world.

#### **John 1:1**

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....**

#### **John 1:14**

**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Jesus is the unmediated presence of God in the Earth. When you walk with Jesus, you walk with God. When you talk with Jesus, you talk with God. God made the first man and named him "man." That's what *Adam* means. And this time, He does it again. He creates another "man."

#### **1 Corinthians 15:47**

**The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.**

Jesus is the second Adam. He came, representing His father, to fix what the first Adam broke. If you want to know what God looks like, sounds like, loves like, look no further than the person of Jesus.

Jesus approached many individuals and said "Follow Me." In other words, let's go for a walk. The disciples walked with Jesus, which means they walked with God. There are many stories of lives changed and hope restored. Ordinary, broken people, not unlike Adam and Eve, walking in the unmediated presence of God as they traversed the dusty roads of Israel with the Messiah.

But, then, to the shock and dismay of those walking with Him, the authorities decided that Jesus posed a threat. The powers-that-be hung Him on a tree. Creation started with trees in the garden. This world, at least as we currently know it, all ends with trees in a garden city. And, there is THE tree in the middle.

On that dark, dark Friday, the Savior breathed His last on that tree. And, it appeared that the God-man experiment had failed. And where did they bury Jesus? In a garden.

One of Jesus' disciples, Mary Magdalene, journeyed to His tomb the following Sunday morning to visit His grave. She was weeping because she would much rather be walking *with* Him than walking to anoint His lifeless corpse. She had quite a story. **Every writer of the four gospels mentions Mary Magdalene.** Mary was from Magdala - a Roman town with a bad reputation. Magdala was a town so steeped in sin and wild living that rabbis later attributed its fall to its promiscuity and immoral

lifestyle. Mary fit there so well she was called Mary Magdalene. **Mary had more than a checkered past. She had serious issues with troubling spirits. Jesus gave her a new spirit and a new mind.**

She surely remembered that day that Jesus freed her from her spiritual oppressors. She undoubtedly remembered the day she began walking with Jesus. She remembered His laugh, His miracles, His compassion, and His ability to light up a room.

But, now, all that was gone, and she walked alone in the dark to a grave. However, she encountered something quite unexpected.

#### **John 20:1-2**

**1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"**

The tomb was empty! The only logical response is that someone must have stolen the body. After all, dead bodies don't tend to move around.

Peter and John are confused by the news and need to check it out themselves.

#### **John 20:3-10**

**3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.**

Peter and John have a foot race to see who can get there first. This detail always makes me smile. Of all the things that happened on the biggest day in history, John wants to make sure that we know that he outran Peter.

Inside the tomb, all they find are two stacks of laundry. Where Jesus' head had been, there were grave clothes folded. Where Jesus' feet had been, there were grave clothes tossed. Both saw the laundry, and both believed. But, just *believing* isn't what matters. *What* you believe is what's really important. Peter and John believed that the tomb was empty, but not that He had been resurrected.

Peter and John ran back to where they were staying. They ran there, and ran back. It makes sense though. They had a funeral to attend. Jews would sit *shiva* for 7 days



after burial. There was a formal process of mourning and remembering their loved one. They didn't want to be rude to the deceased, so they went back to where they were staying. They could try to find the body later.

I can't help but notice that everyone is running! Mary Magdalene ran to the disciples. The disciples ran to and from the tomb. I can think of no imagery that better exemplifies the day we live in. Everyone is running. We are winded, overwhelmed, and desperate! The pace of life is exhausting. The pressure of leadership in an age where each day brings a new crisis causes a hurried and frantic approach to life. The seemingly omnipresent and omniscient devices in our pocket demand constant attention.

But if we don't stop running we may miss our Garden moment.

#### **John 20:11-12**

**11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.**

Peter and John ran back. Mary stood still. Peter and John saw two piles of laundry. Mary saw two angels. Where some see dirty laundry, others see angels! What do we miss because we refuse to ever stand still?

#### **John 20:13**

**They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."**

The angels are aware of news to which Mary isn't privy. If she knew what the angels knew, her tears of grief would be tears of joy. And, I'm convinced that if we knew what heaven knew about our lives, our tears would be transformed too.

#### **John 20:14-15**

**14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."**

Mary is confronted with the same question, but this time by a strange man. She's not sure who it is, but she assumes He is the gardener. **Wait. The gardener?** Adam, the first man created, was a gardener, entrusted with tending

Eden. But, there is a Second Adam, the firstborn of all creation. To regain the Garden for His people, Jesus had to become the second Adam. That is, He had to come in our likeness, so that He could obey God perfectly and succeed where Adam failed as our representative. Paul makes this connection for us.

#### **1 Corinthians 15:45**

**So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.**

**Adam turned the garden into a grave. Jesus, the second Adam, turned the grave into a garden. Adam took fruit from a tree and brought the curse. The second Adam became fruit upon the tree and broke the curse!**

The place of Mary's greatest despair became the place of her greatest miracle. The place of death replaced by resurrection life. The grave became a garden! The seed wasn't buried, it was planted! A couple verses later, the restoration of the garden is made even more explicit. The resurrected Jesus appears to the disciples, minus Thomas and Judas.

#### **John 20:21-22**

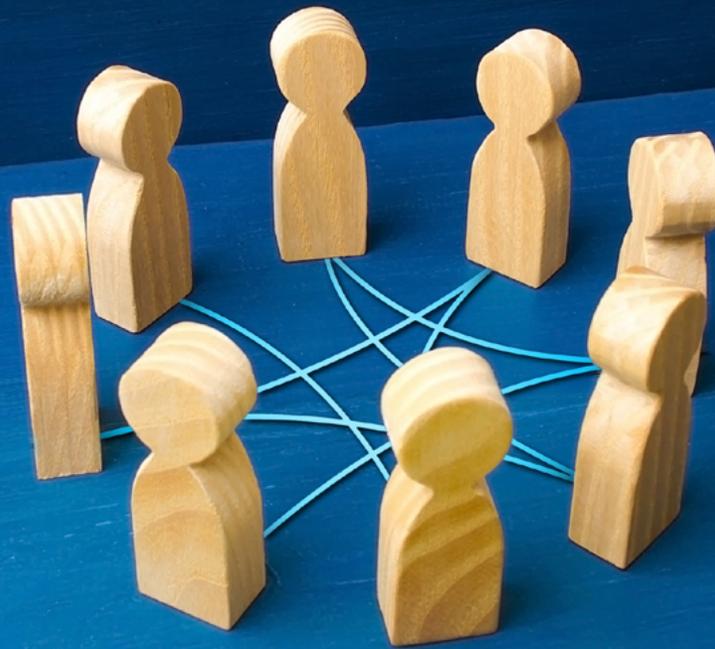
**21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."**

Just like God breathed His life into creation in the garden, Jesus breathes new life into new creation after His resurrection. Jesus wants His disciples to stop mourning the cross so they could experience the resurrection. In other words, it's time to live again!

The last couple of years have been unprecedented. Many people have placed their lives on hold, caught up in the chaos, the panic, and the pandemonium. Life has revolved around a pandemic, posts, and politics. They see death, despair, and destruction all around us. This Easter, let's point them to the Gardener and remind them that it's time to live again!



*Landon Galloway is the Director of Education at Destiny Ministries and oversees Destiny Leadership Institute. Landon also serves as campus pastor of Grace Church in Tomball, TX. Landon is married to Sarada and they have two daughters, Vanna and Zarra.*



# 5 BIG IDEAS TO CONNECT

- 1 STRATEGIZE WAYS TO MEET NEW PEOPLE.** Often churches and ministries stall in growth because they fail to have a strategic plan for meeting new people. Creating new relationships is the absolute key to growing your church or ministry. Take time to analyze your plan for meeting new people. Here are a few ideas to get you started: have a “Bring A Friend to Church” Sunday (serve food, bounce houses, etc), throw a college meet & greet, launch small groups, have a game night or family movie night.
- 2 GET OUT OF THE CHURCH AND INTO THE COMMUNITY.** As the salt and light of the world, the church is to be visible and influential in the community. Find ways for your church or ministry to be engaged in the motion of the community. Determine to be a presence and a positive force in the community in which you reside. Here are several ways you can engage with your community: pass out water at community sporting events, set up a booth at a local festival, adopt-a-block, host a holiday meal, be a part of community projects.
- 3 ANSWER THE QUESTIONS PEOPLE ARE ASKING.** Here relevance is king. The old cliché is true that too often the church has been guilty of answering questions no one is asking. The gospel is relevant to every generation but it’s our responsibility to package it in a way that effectively answers the challenges of the culture in which we live. Understand the culture, follow the trends and the language of the day, and don’t forget technology. People live in cyberspace.
- 4 BE A SOLUTION TO SOMEONE’S PROBLEM.** 70% of people come to Christ in times of crisis and personal trauma. If we refuse to be involved in the lives of troubled people we effectively eliminate 70% of our harvest potential. Determine to help those in need whether in your backyard or around the world.
- 5 CLARIFY YOUR CONNECTING POINTS.** The growth track used by many churches has been wildly successful because it clearly defines the path by which new people can connect with God and the church. Sadly, too many churches fail in the fundamentals of making clear paths for people to follow. Analyze your path. Is it clearly marked, defined, and easy to access for new people with whom you are trying to reach?



## *Alumni Spotlight* **CALEB RIVERA**



As I was approaching my high school graduation in 2016, I found myself asking the same question many people ask themselves as they are fixing to step into a new season of life, "What's next?" I knew I wanted to further my education and pursue ministry, but I also felt led to stay and serve as the Youth Pastor at the church I grew up in called Riverside Church located in Victoria, Texas. So, I prayed God would direct my steps, so I could further my education while still being planted at my church. Thus, the opportunity of enrolling at DLI came my way, and I couldn't have asked God for a more perfect situation and study opportunity. Not only was I able to serve at my local church, but I was also able to build a strong theological foundation and make sense of things in relation to God, the Bible, and the Church that I had been unaware of in the past. And if that wasn't great enough, I met some incredible people within my courses. I highly recommend DLI to many people within our church that are in ministry, the workplace, business, or simply people desiring to go deeper in God. I'm so thankful for Dr. Brassfield, Pastor Landon, and all the people at DLI that have made this possible and affordable, so that anyone and everyone has an opportunity to develop and mature into who God has called them to be. I will forever be grateful for DLI!



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# IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR DESTINY MEMBERSHIP 2022

It's time to renew your Destiny Membership for the year 2022. Renewing your membership has two dimensions. First, there is the annual Certification Fee of \$75 for Ministry Ordination or \$50 for General Ministry License, and then, secondly, making your monthly financial commitment to support Destiny Ministries throughout the year.

Over the years, Destiny has relied on the faithful support of our members to serve the Christian Leaders and churches we love so much. Every day we are engaged in the efforts to provide pastoral care for five-fold ministry leaders, to provide life-giving resources for our members, missions outreaches and opportunities, support for church planting efforts, and training disciples and leaders for ministry service both here and abroad.

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## HAVEN'T JOINED DESTINY YET?

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JUNE 7TH-9TH  
2022

CHRIST CHURCH  
WEST MONROE, LA

*Join us back at Christ Church West Monroe, LA for the 2022 Destiny Gathering Conference! We will kick off Tuesday evening with a Welcome Party. On Wednesday and Thursday mornings we will begin with large group worship and 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 mini conference. There is something for everyone at the Destiny Gathering! Bring your family and your team for a time of fellowship, worship, and refreshing! We can't wait to see you there!*  
**Let's Do Something Great Together!**

# REGISTRATION

**SINGLE:** \$90  
**COUPLE:** \$180  
**FAMILY:** \$200

*Registration includes conference meals.  
Register before April 30th and use the code EARLYBIRD  
and receive a 10% discount.*

# HOTEL BLOCKS

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**Phone:** 877-424-6423

## HAMPTON INN

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West Monroe, LA 71291  
**Rate:** \$119.00  
**Phone:** 318-938-2800

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**WELCOME PARTY - FELLOWSHIP - WORSHIP**  
**DLI GRADUATION - BREAKOUT SESSIONS**  
**DESTINY KIDS - DESTINY YOUTH**  
**SPECIAL LADIES' BREAKOUT**  
**ORDINATION - REVIVAL NIGHT**  
**PRAYER & CONSECRATION**  
**INSPIRING SESSIONS - ON TIME MESSAGES**  
**FAMILY TIME**



**BRING YOUR TEAM! BRING YOUR FAMILY!**



# To Be Known

## APRIL RODGERS

I recently visited my favorite coffee shop to grab a cup of coffee. I remember feeling adventurous that particular day, so I decided that I would try something new off the menu. When I reached the counter, I had made my decision and thus, confidently placed my order, not realizing that I had ordered off the frozen coffee menu. The friendly barista looked sideways at me and asked, "Is this for you, Honey, or are you ordering for someone else?" I was a little taken aback, but I replied, "It's for me." To which she said, "Oh no, Sweetie. That's a frozen coffee, and you like your coffee hot. How about I make you a Flat White." It was a statement, not a question.

Dumbfounded, I replied, "Okay. Let's do that." Moments later, she carefully handed me the steaming mug of coffee sprinkled with raw sugar. I took a sip of the velvety coffee, looked up at her and said, "It's just right." She nodded and moved on to the next customer, obviously pleased with her work.

I sat down at the table thinking how nice it felt to be known. It reminded me of the psalm that King David wrote about how wonderful it is to be known by the Creator of the earth. He said in Psalm 139:1, "Lord, You have searched me and known me."

The phrase "to be known" signifies how a friend or companion would know someone. Naturally, when I think of my closest companion on earth, my mind instantly goes to my husband, whom I have known for over twenty years now. At first, we were just classmates in a study group, but slowly we morphed into boyfriend and girlfriend and eventually into husband and wife. We didn't know everything there was to know about each other right away, but rather, it took time for our relationship to develop. After all this time of spending day after day together, we now can often finish each other's sentences. He knows exactly how to push my buttons, but he also knows the little things that make me happy. He knows my hopes and dreams, as well as my greatest fears. I am known by him because I willingly spend time with him and we share life together.

The Lord wants the same intimacy to exist in my relationship with Him. He wants me to share my life with Him! Because He intricately formed me in my mother's womb, He already knows what makes me feel happy or sad, excited or scared, loved or rejected. Yet He still desires that I bring my victories, as well as my fears or failures, to Him.

However, sometimes, I have trouble believing this about God. Why would He want to have a relationship with me? What



do I have to offer in the way of friendship? It's one thing to have a friendly barista know my coffee drink order or my husband to know my daily routine, but it's an entirely different feeling to have the Almighty know when I sit or stand or even my innermost thoughts...especially if my thoughts and actions are cringeworthy. This is why it's so important that I read and believe God's Word as truth. Psalm 139:11-12 reminds me, "If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light around me will be night' - even the darkness is not dark to You. The night shines like the day; darkness and light are alike to You."

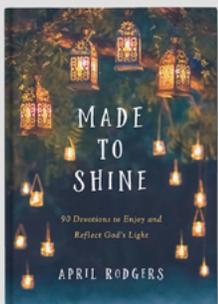
This tells me that even my darkest thought or moment is not hidden from the Lord. In fact, as a faithful companion does, He brings His marvelous light into my darkness and assures me that He still wants to be my friend. I can think of nothing sweeter than that truth.

He wants to be your friend, too! No matter what you've done or haven't done, no matter if your ministry is thriving or just starting out, no matter if you have a long history with Him or a short one, He wants you just as you are. Bring Him your hopes and dreams, and release all your hurts and failures. Talk to Him like you would your closest confidant. He knows it all anyway, but He also knows that life is richer when you spend time with Him.

So, share your life each and every day with the One who created you. Enjoy the process of watching your relationship grow over time, and when you stumble, allow Him to bring light into your darkness. You are fully known by your Savior and He calls you His friend.



APRIL RODGERS IS THE PUBLISHED AUTHOR OF *MADE TO SHINE: 90 DEVOTIONS TO ENJOY AND REFLECT GOD'S LIGHT*, AS WELL AS THE DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S MINISTRY AT CHRIST CHURCH IN WEST MONROE, LOUISIANA. AFTER LOSING HER BROTHER IN A TRAGIC CAR ACCIDENT, APRIL HELD ON TO JESUS AND ALLOWED HIM TO TURN HER DARKNESS INTO LIGHT. NOW, SHE LIVES TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO REFLECT THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IN THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES BY SPEAKING AT CONFERENCES AND SHINING GOD'S LIGHT ON HER YOUTUBE CHANNEL TITLED "THE REFLECTING LIGHT SHOW." APRIL IS A SEMINARY GRADUATE WITH HER MASTERS OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, MOM TO TWO SWEET DAUGHTERS, AND WIFE TO AN AMAZING MAN. HER FAVORITE THINGS CONSIST OF COFFEE, COMMUNITY SMALL GROUPS, AND SUNDAY AFTERNOON NAPS.



## HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SHINE?

ARE YOU LIVING DAY-TO-DAY, GOING ABOUT YOUR ROUTINE, CHECKING OFF YOUR LIST, YET FEELING TIRED, DULL, AND ORDINARY?

*MADE TO SHINE* WILL RESTORE THE LIGHT OF PURPOSE TO YOUR LIFE, ENERGIZING YOU WITH PASSION AND HOPE. THROUGH THE ART OF STORYTELLING, APRIL RODGERS BRINGS YOU REMINDERS OF HOW MUCH GOD TRULY LOVES YOU, HOW MUCH HE DELIGHTS IN YOU, AND HOW EAGER HE IS TO REFRESH YOU WITH HIS LIGHT SO YOU CAN RADIATE HIS LOVE TO THOSE AROUND YOU.





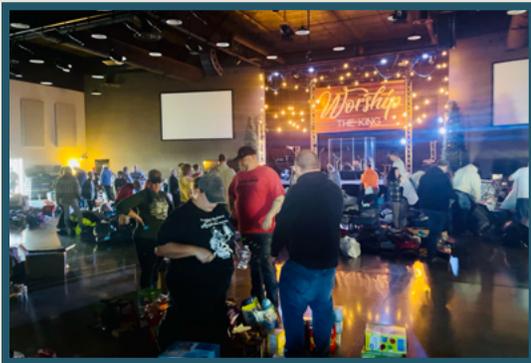
# The Story of the Storm



## PASTOR STEPHEN BOYKEN

On December 10, 2021, our church and community were forever changed by an EF-4 tornado. For over three hours, the twister ravaged across the state of Kentucky, taking lives, destroying buildings, and leaving a trail of devastation over 165 miles long. As the tornado ripped through Mayfield, our family found shelter in a bedroom closet, prayerfully waiting as it passed within 4 miles from our house and a mile and a half from our church.

About 15 minutes after the tornado passed, I received a call from the candle factory where I serve as a chaplain. The HR Manager wanted to make sure we were safe and then see if I was available to come check on the employees that had been working that evening. I made sure that we were in the clear before getting my rain jacket and heading out the door.



I headed toward the plant, but was unable to cross several of the roads because of downed power lines, debris, and trees everywhere. A 10 minute trip took 30 minutes to travel. When I arrived on the scene, it was like something you would see in the movies - lights flashing everywhere, and men with chainsaws cutting trees trying to clear the road. There were combines and tractors, along with semis, picked up and thrown across the parking lot.

As I came over the hill where the candle factory once was, there was a moment of shock—it was gone. A tangled heap of debris remained. Myself, with men from our church and volunteers from all over our community, began to climb across the metal rafters of what once was a roof searching for survivors.



We were there until 3:30am before the emergency management team sent volunteers home. We pulled out those who survived and some who didn't. Prayed with those trapped under walls of concrete and witnessed the peace of God settle on those that were suffering.

Around 6:30am, we began setting up rescue and relief efforts out of the church. It was dark - 28,000 in our county were without power. But by 9:00am, we had a large enough diesel generator to power a



portion of the church with lights. By noon, we had hot meals. People rallied; there was no hesitation.

I am so grateful for the response of people everywhere. But, can I tell you how significant it was to us to hear from our Destiny friends and family? Dr. Brassfield was already scheduled to speak Sunday. He showed up Saturday ready to serve and was a source of strength and wisdom. Sunday morning came, and he spoke a short message on being light, offering comfort to the hurting as we gathered in our dark sanctuary.

Monday came, and as he returned home, I heard from so many in our tribe. Your words, prayers, and texts were so kind. Pastor Micah Sutton, who I count as a dear friend and a man of great insight, drove 8 hours from Sylvania, Ohio and stood with me as I was interviewed by national & international news media, prepared a prayer vigil, and connected with relief organizations across the country.

Within a week, Pastor Nelson Hight had already reached out and began sending teams from Church of the Crossroads to volunteer, making the trip himself with Mrs. Pam just to take Andrea and I to get a bite to eat. Destiny churches have given generously, and we are humbled by your heart to help. Pastor Mike Acosta, thank you for your insight working with the various relief organizations on the ground.

We have since been engaged in relief and recovery efforts, hosting teams, distributing aid, and preparing to rebuild. The road ahead is long. In a town of 10,000 people, 257 homes are gone, 478 had significant damage, and some of the major businesses of employment have suffered damage likewise. We remain, however, confident in God's redemptive work. In fact, the Sunday before the storm, I began to unpack the vision for our church, preparing our congregation for the reset God was about to do.

Thank you to everyone that has reached out and prayed for us. It has been relationships that have carried us through this far. We are so thankful for a loving Father and for loving friends. The story of the storm is not a story of defeat, but amongst the backdrop of hurting hearts, we see HOPE as we point people to Jesus.



*Stephen with his wife, Andrea, has served as the Lead Pastor of His House Ministries since the Summer of 2019. Together, they have served in ministry for over 20 years and have been a part of the Destiny family since 2007. They have 3 incredible boys, Andrew, Samuel, and Caleb.*

# DESTINYCONNECT

## BIGGER. BETTER. STRONGER.



### VISIT [DESTINYLEADERS.COM/CONNECT](https://destinyleaders.com/connect) TO REGISTER FOR SPRING EVENTS!

We have three remaining connect events this spring! Join us as we worship together, participate in transformational conversations and dynamic breakout sessions, and hear powerful messages that are sure to help you take a huge step forward in your leadership. You do not want to miss a minute of these awesome events. While children and teenagers are welcome at this event, we will only be providing child care for children ages 1-5. **Cost is \$30 per person.**



AUSTIN, TX: MARCH 28TH

TUPELO, MS: APRIL 8TH-9TH

OWNESBORO, KY: MAY 15TH



# TEAM SERMON BUILDING

WITH PASTOR SCOTT JONES & PASTOR LANDON GALLOWAY

By nature, preaching seems to be a solitary endeavor. We tend to think of it as an individual preacher sitting behind a desk, with a bookshelf behind him laboring for hours, to build a sermon that is both biblically relevant and culturally accurate. Many pastors report spending at least 10-15 hours per week in sermon preparation. While it is true that Scripture calls for pastors to dedicate significant time to preaching and praying, the reality is that the demand to preach fresh and relevant material every single week is often overwhelming. The many other responsibilities of a busy leader often choke out his study time and leaves him feeling unprepared for the weekend.

Therefore, it might be time to consider involving other people in the sermon preparation process. You can assemble a small team, inform them about the upcoming sermon series, and ask them to either come up with content ideas or to even build a sermon outline for you. Even if you don't have a large paid staff or team, you can pull astute lay leaders into the process. There are many gifted minds in your congregation that could greatly contribute to your Sunday sermon. In addition to saving time, here is a list of other benefits:

**DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES.** When other people are involved in the sermon process, they will naturally approach a text differently from you. Since your audience is made up of all kinds of different people, it is beneficial for someone who differs from you in age, gender, and ethnicity to contribute to your sermon. Even if you have been preaching for years, you might be surprised at what exists in a particular text that you had never noticed until you saw it with someone else's eyes.

**DIFFERENT PASSIONS.** As preachers, we all have particular ideas and emphases that get us excited. Some people love to preach about the grace of God, while others are overwhelmed by

His miracle-working power. Some people are passionate about emotive preaching that moves the congregation to an immediate decision. Others get fired up about practical preaching that moves the congregation to life-changing action. If you aren't careful, it's easy to preach the same pet topics and to elicit the same type of response week in and week out. When others get a chance to contribute, they bring in their passions which can make your Sundays more effective.

**PROVIDING A PLATFORM.** Since many churches only have one weekly service, preaching opportunities are in limited supply. Many of us grew up going to multiple services weekly. The Wednesday nights and Sunday nights often provided pulpit time to preachers other than the lead pastor. Since we don't have as much pulpit time to share, allowing other people to express their voices through sermon writing provides a much need opportunity for those who have a gift and passion to preach or teach.

**THEIR CONTENT, YOUR VOICE.** When you allow a team to help with your sermon planning, you get to incorporate their perspectives and passions in your own voice. You can use your own illustrations, re-write certain sections that don't resonate with you, and re-organize the material in a way that best meets the needs of your audience. By the time you have re-worked it, you aren't preaching someone else's sermon. You are preaching your own sermon that someone else helped you to develop. Other people help us develop sermons all the time. We consult commentaries, resource books, and listen to other preachers. If we depend on these voices, why would we object to relying on the voices of those on our teams?

*SCOTT JONES PASTORS GRACE CHURCH IN HUMBLE, TEXAS, A CHURCH WITH OVER 6,000 MEMBERS IN 4 CAMPUS LOCATIONS. LANDON GALLOWAY IS A PART OF THE CREATIVE TEAM AT GRACE AND SERVES AS CAMPUS PASTOR AT GRACE CHURCH, TOMBALL.*

# DESTINYNOW

## Conference Recap

DestinyNOW Conference was definitely one of the highlights of our student ministry's entire year. I have been to dozens of camps and conferences in my seven years of full time student ministry, and I can confidently say that the worship, speakers, production, activities, and the way everything was planned was one of my all-time favorite events I have ever been a part of. The Lord moved in such a powerful way during every single session. I have students that will never be the same after this event, which is all you can ask for as a youth pastor!

Destiny Ministries handled the whole conference like they had been doing it for years and years. You always go into a conference expecting some hiccups along the way, but anything that came up was handled professionally and with excellence. The communication between the administration and those of us actually attending the event was fantastic. Quick responses, easy registration, nearby accommodations... They made everything so smooth and easy that it didn't even feel like this was a youth conference!

Ring in the New Year with hundreds of students from around the nation was an experience that I will never forget. It was like we got a small taste of what heaven will be like one day when we all get to worship the King together from all different backgrounds and cultures. The momentum gained from the first year of the DestinyNOW Conference is going to propel this event into a student ministry movement across the nation. Watch out! It MIGHT GET LOUD!

### **PASTOR TURNER SCHWARZ**

*Student Pastor, Calvary Church, Fort Worth, TX*



"DestinyNow changed my life. During the conference, I experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the first time. I have gone deeper and deeper with Jesus ever since, and I am so thankful for DestinyNow"

### **YAMILET REED**

*Student, Cornerstone Church  
Vidalia, LA*





There are Jordan River-Crossing moments in the life of every Christian where you look back forever and recognize the significance of what God brought you into. There's no question or doubt that DESTINYNOW 2021 will forever be enshrined in my heart as one of those dear moments. Launching a youth department for Destiny was a dream come true for Evelyn and I, and I never could have imagined how fruitful and impactful our first life-changing conference would have been, for not just us, but so many more.

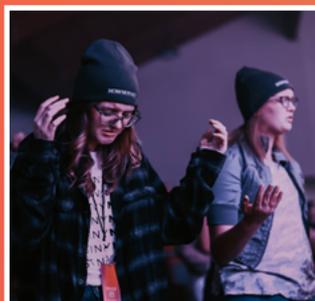
All the young people that were saved, delivered, immersed in the Holy Spirit, and commissioned into their callings - not to mention the sheer FUN that we all had - made up an amazing week for a couple hundred of our best friends. And the hospitality, talent and anointing that rested on our dear friends at Calvary Church only served to make it one of the best events I've ever been a part of. The video clips, pictures and emails from youth pastors across the country capturing the testimonies, prayer meetings, and growth in their youth ministries were the icing on the cake. I just can't wait to see all the fruit that will come of it, and I look forward to all that God will do and continue to do as we pray into the future of this generation. We're not the NEXT generation. The time is NOW.

**JARRED MOSS**  
 Youth Director, *Destiny Leaders*  
 Staff Pastor, *The River, Searcy, AR*

The DestinyNow conference was life changing for all of our group. We came to the conference fully expectant; however, what we received from the Lord was, by far, much bigger than we could have imagined. We have been to several different conferences and watched our teens have amazing moments with Jesus, but this conference was different for everyone. A lot of our teens encountered the Holy Spirit for the first time during DestinyNow. Throughout the entire conference, the Holy Spirit moved so heavy throughout our group and seriously changed so many of their lives forever. We saw many of them literally at the feet of Jesus laying their problems and struggles all out with full intentions of not picking those chains back up again. We saw them get baptized in the Holy Spirit and gain so much clarity to who He truly is. One of our youth was so ready to get baptized that we baptized her in the hotel pool because the time is NOW.

We went to the conference as a group that had a lot of division, but we left as a unit in Christ - ready to take on the Kingdom of God together, hand and hand. Since the trip, our teens have stayed on fire and ready to set ablaze all of those around them. We have started weekly prayer meetings where our teens are not only praying over each other in the Spirit, but also over their leaders. Our midweek youth service has had such a shift since DestinyNow, as well. Our kids are so in tune to the Holy Spirit each week. What happened at DestinyNow Conference was beyond special and holds many testimonies that our teenagers will remember forever because these are the stories that set the foundation for their lives with Jesus. We cannot wait until next year's conference. Thank you, Destiny, for believing in the NOW generation.

**CHELSEY BARRON**  
 Youth Pastor, *Cornerstone Church, Vidalia, LA*



# DESTINY TEAMS UP WITH FCA



## ETHAN ESTES

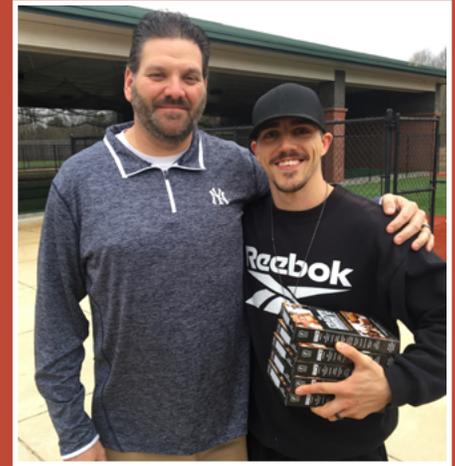
My name is Ethan Estes. I am married to the one-of-a-kind, beautiful, Barbie Estes. This past year, we welcomed into the world our first son, Ezra Tyler Estes. We live in Corinth, Mississippi. We love serving as a family in our local church, Church of the Crossroads. We both are called by God to advance His Kingdom in Corinth and the surrounding communities through serving in our church and through FCA.



FCA stands for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. It was established in 1954 by a man named Don McClanen who had a thought. "If athletes could endorse shaving cream, razor blades, and cigarettes, surely they could endorse the Lord, too." The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is the bridge for the Gospel and the Church to reach beyond pews and Sunday School classes. The Gospel is advancing into dugouts, locker rooms, fields, and courts in over one hundred countries. If you want a map of the timeline of FCA, just visit [timeline.fca.org](https://www.fca.org/timeline) to see how God's hand has been on the ministry of FCA.

I serve as the FCA Area Director of Northeast Mississippi. I cover three and a half counties, thirty-three schools, and thousands of coaches and athletes. One of my roles is to hire a diverse staff; to place people with a passion for the Gospel and sports in the locker rooms, fields, and courts. We recently hired our first part time staff, my sister, Callie Estes. Callie is a part time FCA Area Representative as well as a full-time teacher at one of our local





schools. She has been involved with FCA since she was in high school and has been an important person in the impact of FCA in our community.

FCA wants to lead every coach and athlete in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. Our hope is that people will be Christians that happen to be coaches and athletes, not coaches and athletes that happen to be Christians. Personally, I want to take the guesswork out of being the Christian influence that a team needs. I remember what it was like not knowing how to use my platform for Christ. That's when baseball became all about serving the unholy trinity - me, myself, and I.

Destiny Ministries has been integral to our ministry in Northeast Mississippi, specifically in 2020. The year the world shut down was confusing, hard, and intimidating. I am faith-funded, and I have the privilege of being supported by the generosity of others who believe in what God has called us to do through FCA. However, 2020 stopped most in-person gatherings, and we lost our major fundraiser that year, leaving a \$10,000 deficit in my budget. I was scared, vulnerable, and wondering, "What now?" I love to tell people that Destiny is more than credentials and conferences. Destiny is a family. Multiple churches, pastors, and individuals helped me through that year by their generosity and encouragement. I still have not met some of these people. Yet, they heard that someone in the family was in need, and they were the first people to extend a helping hand. Had it not been for the Destiny family, I'm not sure if I would still be serving coaches and athletes through FCA. I owe a major debt to those of you who have reassured my calling to this ministry! Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

However, Destiny has been investing in me long before I ever thought about going into full time ministry with FCA. In 2015, I moved home from college with no sense of purpose or direction in life. It was a, "Now what?" moment where Destiny Ministries showed up, and I enrolled in Destiny Leadership Institute. I learned so much from my two years in DLI. What I learned most was truth, grace, and patience from my teachers, for which I was on the receiving end a lot.

Growing up, I enjoyed learning, just not the subjects in school. Most of my effort was focused on learning and getting better at baseball. Teachers didn't appreciate that. DLI redeemed a love of learning in me. The teachers cared about me as a person. They didn't just teach. They invested. Destiny has also been a major part of redeeming God's plan to use sports as my platform for Christ. My years of playing baseball are over, yet I am still serving the very schools that I grew up in and played against.

I want to sum up in one word why Destiny Ministries is so needed. It's not popularity, influence, status, or money. It is far more valuable than any of those. Here is the one word: Relationships. Every time I have found myself asking the question, "Now what?," Destiny has always been there. It wasn't an app, a five step system, or Google. No, God used real people to help me through real problems.

This is the power of God through Destiny Ministries. When you join Destiny, you are joining a family. If I have learned anything, it's this: Don't wait until you need someone to need someone. Decide ahead of time, and make a list of communities to be a part of. Do me a favor, and put Destiny Ministries at the top of that list.



# The Revelation of a Mission

An excerpt from Dr. Phillip Brassfield's  
book *Pilgrimage to Pentecost*

## DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

**Matthew 28:10: "Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.'"**

*Epiphany* is a word that describes a moment of enlightenment, a revelation, a moment when the light goes on and understanding is achieved. Educators look for it. Inventors live for it. Musicians are on a continual quest for it. An epiphany moment is when what has been unclear, misunderstood, without harmony, or has been kept in secret is finally revealed. What a discovery! What a feeling!

Working with leadership groups through the years, I came to understand early on that if a leader is to have success in developing a team, and to be effective in casting a vision and a mission for that team, there must be a moment of epiphany. There must be a moment when the light comes on and each individual "gets it." It will most certainly come

at different moments and through different means. But it must come.

Knowledge without revelation is nothing more than mere matter in motion. But add a clear revelation and you have conviction. It is an element that must not be taken for granted. For in its presence a fact becomes a truth and an idea becomes a principle. It produces a cause with force inside. It brings power with it. It can produce a cause for which to live, and, if necessary, for which to die.

Jesus knew that. He knew that if he was to leave the destiny of the church in the hands of common people like you and me, it would require a revelation. It would require an impartation. So before he could send his disciples to Jerusalem to receive power, he must send them to Galilee to receive revelation. Power without understanding will always produce confusion.

When we harmonize the Gospels we find that after Jesus was resurrected, he sent his disciples into the region

of Galilee to await his arrival there (Matthew 28:10). This meeting would become an extended time of explanation and revelation. Even after the resurrection, the disciples still did not get it. They were, in many ways, still in the dark as to the plan of God and what had been accomplished on the cross and through the resurrection.

They were in the dark partly because of their own shame. They couldn't have been feeling very good about themselves at this time. I am sure that their emotions were confused as well as being ashamed of their actions during the trauma of Jesus' trial and execution. And now that he had risen, they were overjoyed at his appearing, but felt even worse about themselves. What would Jesus do to them? How would he relate to his leadership team, who had just blown it so badly?

The answer to this question comes after they have migrated to Galilee and gone back to work—back to fishing. (It was Peter, their leader, who had initiated this grand excursion to go back to their dirty, heavy nets.) It is

early one morning when Jesus appears on the shore after they have fished all night and caught nothing. He invites them, once again, to do things his way and, of course, they experience a great catch of fish. Then he invites them for breakfast. It is time for their first “post-failure leadership meeting,” a performance review of sorts. They brace themselves. Here it comes. At least an “I told you so”—or maybe even worse.

### **An Invitation to Restoration**

It is during this encounter that I am awed by the leadership style of Jesus. He feeds them and encourages them and never even mentions their failure. Never *mentions* it. Instead, he cuts right to the heart of the matter with the one who was the king of failure, Peter. The one who had lied about him, cursed, and even swore to God that he did not know him. And Jesus’ word to this man was an invitation to restoration. Restoration, it seems, always leads to fresh revelation.

“Peter, if you love me, feed my sheep.” I would imagine that Peter was quite taken back by this. “What did you say Lord?” he might have said. “It sounds like an invitation back into ministry. Have you forgotten what I did? What I said? . . . You of all people should know that I can’t come back. I’m disqualified. I’m a quitter, a loser, a coward in the first degree.”

But Jesus’ response was simply to say again: “Peter, if you love me, feed my sheep.”

It had been necessary that Jesus take them to a private location, where he could explain the events of his life, death, and resurrection in light of the Old Testament.

It would be easy for us to get a little judgmental toward the disciples at this point, but it was not so much about unbelief as it was about misunderstanding. They could not deny that Jesus was alive. He clearly was. The question was, “What does it all mean?”

Sometimes, making sense of it all is half the battle. Even in our lives, when we have been through a similar pattern regarding our own destinies and dreams—and we all have—it takes a little while, maybe even a seminar with the resurrected Lord, who can bring a

revelation to our thinking so that we can understand the plan of God and why things happened the way they did.

Jesus, during this extended time together, was able to explain to them the whole story from the beginning. **Luke writes (Luke 24:44-49) that he discussed how the Law and Prophets and even the Psalms spoke concerning him and his mission to earth. Can you imagine what it would have been like to have been part of this class?** What an opportunity it must have been to hear God explain his intentions and the accomplishments of redemption to those eager ears.

For example, he may well have explained that the blood of a spotless lamb could never take away the sin of a man, but rather that the lamb represented a sinless Man who could; that the scapegoat could never banish the sin of the nation of Israel, but rather represented the Man who would carry away the sins of a new nation, a nation of redeemed people, whose king would buy their freedom with his own blood.

There had to be understanding and clarification before there could be an acceptance of the mission that would become their life’s work and the purpose and the mission of the church. So powerful was this time together that almost all of them would eventually die for the truths that were communicated and clarified during this forty-day seminar. And not one would recant or deny the reality of what they had learned there.

After Jesus explained it all again, Luke says that he opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). As he gave them revelation, suddenly it all made perfect sense. With this new enlightenment, now they could see him everywhere in the Old Testament: in the tabernacle, the priesthood, the temple, and yes, of course, in the feast, and in the wilderness.

Revelation will always precede a new mission, a new level of authority, a new season of responsibility. Therefore, equipped with this divinely released revelation, they were now ready to receive their mission and purpose. With complete understanding they would be able to defend their faith in a hostile social system and world. Their

faith, based upon their understanding of the purposes of God in Christ, would become the foundation of fulfillment of their mission.

Their mission would be to “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel [Good News] to every creature” (Mark 16:15). It would be to “Make disciples of all nations . . . Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19, 20). To accomplish this objective they must have a revelation and be able to bounce back from the greatest trauma of their lives, the events of the Jerusalem experience.

And so do we. A fresh revelation is the price of passage into your future, especially after you have been traumatized by failure. Those Jerusalem moments—the garden, the rejection by the religious, the misunderstanding of the world, the death of their dream—each event had to be processed and put in its place so that those who had experienced them could move on.

The disciples had to understand those moments as part of a divine plan to accomplish God’s purpose in Christ. They had not been misled or deceived. Even their failures fit into the plan. God did have a destiny for them all, and this plan was never out of control. Rather, God was calling the shots at each moment, even the uncomfortable ones. As a result they would never be the same again.

I guess now they also were not as likely to judge others and their failures. There is something very humbling about being broken by your own weaknesses. When revelation comes, and with it a proper perspective, that healing can position a leader for greatness.

After the Lord opened their eyes and demonstrated his love for them in spite of their failures, it brought a new perspective to their thinking. From this new perspective they could forgive themselves and see the light of destiny through the dark clouds of despair. They finally understood. With this revelation came the realization that there was work to be done.

But Jesus also said there was still a part that must be completed. You need power, he was saying: Go back to Jerusalem.



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