

SPRING 2024

DESTINY

M A G A Z I N E

MADE FOR MORE

JESUS: THE BETTER SAMSON

**THE ART OF LEADING
WITHOUT PRAYING**

**5 STEPS TO SPIRITUAL
LEADERSHIP SUCCESS**

**2024 DESTINY
GATHERING
REGISTRATION
NOW OPEN**



A WORD FROM PHIL & CATHY



Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Destiny Magazine! As I began to seek the Lord for a sense of direction for 2024, a word that has been impressed upon my heart in the closing days of 2023 has been advance. My spirit has been stirred; it's time to move forward. I've never been more excited about a New Year than I am 2024.

Destiny is poised to move forward this year. So, know this, Cathy and I will stand with you and serve our covenant family with all our hearts, joined by great men and women of God who will carry the values, mission, and vision of Destiny forward.

In this edition, pay special attention to the updates regarding our annual Destiny Gathering! Every year the Destiny Gathering is filled with fun and fellowship, and this year will be no different. We are launching a brand new schedule, with a bonus opportunity to fellowship at a baseball game on Monday night before conference.

We can't wait to see you in Texas!



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PUBLISHER

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PRINTING

Short Run Printing, LTD

LAYOUT & DESIGN

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IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR DESTINY MEMBERSHIP 2024

It's time to renew your Destiny Membership for the year 2024. 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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made for **MORE**

DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

Have you reached your full potential? You'll probably say, "No!" Even if you know your purpose and have discovered why God put you on the planet, I'll bet you believe there is more you want to accomplish. And most likely, there is something stirring inside of you to see just how far you can go, how high you can climb. How do I know that? Because you were made for more. Part of being created in the image and likeness of God is having a desire for more. It was God's idea. It's one of the most obvious elements in the creative miracle recorded in Genesis.

God created everything that lives with the potential to multiply, to reflect His nature of abundance through a reproductive process. God calls this process, fruitfulness. Evidence of this can be found in the earliest days of Creation. When looking at the Creation account recorded in Genesis Chapter One, notice all the implications of increase and multiplication embedded in the text.

For example, when God created plants and vegetation, there was immediately evidence of God's intent for multiplication. In Genesis 1:11, the Scripture says, "Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth'; and it was so."

When He created the fish, sea creatures and birds, we see, again, as the Scripture says in Genesis 1:20, "Then God said, 'Let the waters **abound with an abundance** of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.'"

"Abound with abundance" sounds like multiplication to me.

V22. "And God **blessed them**, saying, "**Be fruitful and multiply**, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

Then, finally, as He creates man, verse 28 says, "Then **God blessed them**, and God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply**"; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Everything God created, He created good, and part of that goodness was that He created living things with the capacity to multiply. Plants grow with seeds that, when planted, produce more plants; trees bear fruit with seeds that grow trees. In every fluffy head of wheat is a field waiting to be planted. In every fruit tree, there is an orchard waiting to grow. You don't get one fruit from one seed; you get an organic production engine in the form of a plant that can produce hundreds of fruits and seeds that produce more.

Regarding mankind, God created them with the potential to reproduce, as well, and the same command is given, "Be fruitful and multiply." In fact, in the early records of Genesis, we see the story of potential and production intentionally built into the creative process. Multiplication was God's genius, Genesis idea.

This idea is reiterated with the Patriarchs through the covenant promises of God. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are promised great blessing and multiplication of descendants and wealth as they are called to obedience in relationship with God.



And the story doesn't change in the New Testament. Let me show you what I mean. As with Creation, the concept of a God of more, a God of abundance is echoed repeatedly in the New Testament. One such case in point is in 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, where the Apostle Paul is appealing to the church at Corinth to contribute a love offering for the suffering churches in the grips of famine in Judea. The promises he makes in the passage in question are directly related to the financial giving of the church. And he uses an agricultural metaphor of sowing and reaping that can be traced to Genesis and Creation to support the concept. The idea is that sowing a seed releases the "more potential"

built into Creation from God. In this case, giving was characterized as sowing.

In this passage, I want you to notice all the quantitative (the "more") words in the passage. (I've highlighted them for emphasis and included some brief comments at the end of each verse for clarity).

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

V6. "But this [I say]: He who sows **sparingly** will also reap **sparingly**, and he who sows **bountifully (with blessing)** will also reap **bountifully (with blessing)**." Notice the quantitative underpinning and the

proportionality that is suggested. Sow a little, reap a little; sow a lot, reap a lot.

V7. "[So let] each one [give] as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. *Giving to God is not a tax; it's an opportunity. God designed giving to begin in the heart and then flow out of our hearts into the world with joy (cheerfulness, generosity). God created us with the capacity and hunger for more. But, to release that more, we need to sow a seed. This is the divine order in Creation: first, a seed must be sown; then, a harvest can be enjoyed, and the process repeated into great multiplication.*

V8. "And God [is] able to make **all** grace **abound** toward you, that you, always having **all sufficiency** in **all [things]**, may have an **abundance** for **every** good work." See the divine intent and the process at work? Paul promises that when we give generously, we move into an "all grace" environment. When "all grace" abounds, there is a sufficiency in all things creating an abundance for every good work. It is simply a surrender and an embracing of the potential and production God installed in everything that lives at Creation. Of course, this was designed by God, not to feed our lust, but rather to bring glory to God in the multiplying process. God wants more for you and from you. In fact, it is expected.

V9. "As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." This Old Testament quote is taken from Psalm 112. Do yourself a favor, and read the entire Psalm. It is a psalm that speaks of the righteous delighting in the commands of the Lord, whose descendants are mighty in the earth, upright and blessed. They are wealthy in their "house," and their lives are filled with light. They have an abundance through which they can lend to others. They are steadfast, confident in God and sure. They are not soon forgotten. Paul encourages the Corinthians to give generously and supports this encouragement to action based on this promise from the Old Testament.

V10. "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, **supply and multiply** the seed you have [sown] and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while [you are] enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God." Here, the Apostle Paul finishes with a prayer asking the God who created us with the capacity for more to supply and then multiply what we have sown, in this specific context, the seed sown is money the Corinthians have given in the offering. Paul can pray this because He understood the nature of God demonstrated from the very beginning of time was potential and production leading to multiplication. A process called fruitfulness.

This is the argument I am making. You were made for more. There's more in you and for you than broken relationships, an empty bank account, and a "hold on to the bitter end" lifestyle. You were made to excel, to achieve, to walk in abundance. But there are several concepts you need to embrace and principles of obedience you need to practice.

1. YOU NEED TO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS A GOD OF MORE.

I have shown you from Scripture that from the very beginning, God created everything that lives with the potential for multiplication. That includes you! In fact, God gave His Creation the command to be fruitful and multiply. Fruitfulness is a command. God never gives a command that we cannot obey. He installed the potential in the organic structure of everything that lives and then added the blessing as the life of the seed.

Never let the hard things you've gone through change what you believe about God. Never let tragedy redefine your theology. While some seasons of life can be hard, and difficulty comes to us all, yet we must believe that God's nature and intent is to bless us, to develop us, and to assist us in the process of fruitfulness. Joseph of the Scripture in Genesis Chapter 37 was prophetically destined for the throne of Egypt. This was God's intent and plan, yet he endured the process of the pit and the prison before the fruitfulness of the palace became his reality. Our difficulty, in no way, changes the plan and purpose of God for our lives. We must believe that God is a God of more and wants more for us and from us!

2. WE MUST BELIEVE THAT OUR FRUITFULNESS BRINGS GLORY TO GOD.

In the famous "I am the vine, and you are the branches" passage recorded in John Chapter 15, Jesus says in verse 5, "I am the vine, and you are the branches, He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit." And then, in verse 8, Jesus makes this big statement, "By

this My father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so, you shall be my disciples." Fruitfulness brings glory to God. When we experience the tangible results of blessing, God receives the glory. Jesus also says in this passage that, "...apart from Me you can do nothing." When we are abundantly blessed and are enjoying the fruitfulness of God's blessing, all the glory goes to God. Blessing should never be an opportunity for us to take the credit and become arrogant or prideful. This actually makes the blessing a curse. Every good and perfect gift comes down from above James says in James 1:17. It's God's blessing; it's God's glory!

3. FRUITFULNESS IS DEVELOPED OVER TIME AND THROUGH OBEDIENCE.

A famous phrase often quoted from the Scripture is, "seed, time and harvest." The suggestion of this statement is that there is time that lapses between the sowing of the seed and the reaping of the harvest. We would all love to reap instantly, but God's process of fruitfulness suggests that there is a development, a process that must be endured before the fruit can be enjoyed.

Many today are waiting for their big opportunity, their "big break." "If God will open a door, I'll go through it," they say. But, this is not a fruitful mindset. I often tell young leaders, "Your destiny is more like a seed to be planted than a door to be opened." God is more interested in growing something great in you than doing something great for you. God has given you the potential; you must develop and increase your personal capacity and learn through obedience to the command of the Lord. This leads to the fruitfulness God has planned for you.

You were made for more because God is a God of more. He has equipped us with blessing and given us the command to be fruitful and multiply. In our fruitfulness, God is glorified. Whatever you're going through, whatever season you're in, be patient, be faithful, be obedient, and trust that a great harvest is on the way.

Events that Inspire



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**SAVE THE DATE
THIS FALL!**

LOUISVILLE, KY
SEPTEMBER 6-7

ROUND ROCK, TX
SEPTEMBER 13-14

ELLSWORTH, WI
OCTOBER 4-5

OCEAN SPRINGS, MS
OCTOBER 18-19

LANCASTER, PA
NOVEMBER 8-9

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JESUS *the better Samson*



DR. LANDON GALLOWAY

The Book of Judges, a collection of narratives from a tumultuous period in Israel's history, introduces us to the compelling story of Samson—a flawed deliverer in a flawed world. The opening verses of Judges 13 set the stage for a profound exploration of Israel's moral decline, leading to four decades of Philistine oppression. As we embark on this journey through the Judges' account and delve into the complexities of Samson's life, we will unravel the broader context, analyze the recurring themes of compromise and disobedience, and draw parallels between Samson's flawed deliverance and the redemptive narrative woven throughout biblical history. The lesson to leaders is clear. We have an enemy lying in siege waiting to take advantage of our compromises. When we fail to protect our character, we are in danger of a downfall. However, there is a thread of hope. Even when we fail like Samson, we can trust in Jesus, our better Samson.

To grasp the gravity of Samson's story, it's essential to contextualize the broader struggles of the Israelites. Having been liberated from Egyptian slavery and

established as a nation in the Promised Land, Israel found themselves at a crucial juncture. Despite God's promises and guidance, they failed to fully possess the land. **Promised land is not possessed land.** Instead of obeying God's command to confront and expel their enemies, the Israelites grew complacent. The Promised Land, intended to be possessed, remained elusive as the Israelites engaged in a recurring cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, deliverance, and fleeting peace—a pattern that unfolded at least six times throughout the Book of Judges.

In the midst of Israel's disobedience and complacency, Judges 13 introduces us to Samson—a man chosen by God to be a deliverer. Despite the Israelites' acceptance of their prolonged oppression under the Philistines, God, in His grace, chose to intervene. The parallels between this narrative and the Christmas story become evident—a Savior sent to an undeserving world, steeped in sin and darkness.

Samson's life unfolds as a tension between his divine calling as a deliverer and his flawed character. His birth, foretold by an angel to a barren woman, who was married to a man

named Manoah, was nothing short of miraculous. However, Samson's journey was marked by compromises that mirrored the broader narrative of Israel's disobedience.

Samson's decision to marry a Philistine woman stands out as a microcosm of the Judges era—a time when individuals did what seemed right in their own eyes. This theme is emphasized twice in the text, underlining the dangerous allure of actions that appear pleasing but lead to spiritual decay. Samson, much like the Israelites, engaged in activities that were visually appealing but spiritually detrimental.

Samson's life unfolds as a series of compromises and lapses in judgment. His encounter with a lion in the vineyard, the violation of his vow, and the subsequent marriage to a Philistine woman all showcase the internal struggles and weaknesses within his character. Even when the Spirit of the Lord manifested upon him, granting him strength to defeat the lion, it did not absolve him of the consequences of his compromises. The narrative in Judges 14 reveals Samson's visit to Timnah, a Philistine city, where he encounters a lion. In this moment, the Spirit of the Lord empowers Samson to tear the lion apart with his bare hands. Yet, Samson's subsequent actions reveal his inclination to compromise. He returns to the lion's carcass later, discovering a swarm of bees and honey within it. In direct violation of his Nazirite vow, Samson partakes of the honey and even shares it with his parents. This episode foreshadows the pattern of compromise that will characterize Samson's life, leading to tragic consequences. **Don't mistake God's longsuffering for his approval.**

Samson's subsequent decision to marry a Philistine woman, despite the objections of his parents and the clear prohibition in the Law, further illustrates his defiance of God's commands. The text suggests that Samson's desire for this woman was based on what was "right in his eyes," reflecting a broader theme of moral relativism prevalent during

the Judges era. **A lot of things that are easy on the eyes are hard on the soul.**

Compromise becomes a defining characteristic of Samson's life. His vow required abstinence from wine, yet he ventured into a vineyard. His Nazirite consecration mandated avoiding contact with dead bodies, yet he ate honey taken from a lion's carcass. The Spirit of the Lord continued to manifest in moments of rebellion, but this should not be confused with divine approval. God's longsuffering does not equate to endorsement of our actions.

Samson's tragic end is further foreshadowed by his actions in Timnah. His disregard for God's commands, his inclination towards compromise, and his repeated violations of the Nazirite vow create a pattern that will eventually catch up with him.

The climax of Samson's story unfolds with his betrayal by Delilah, and his subsequent imprisonment, blindness, and ultimate sacrifice while destroying the Philistine temple. His tragic end, filled with potential, serves as a stark contrast to the redemptive narrative found in the ultimate Savior, Jesus Christ.

In comparing Samson to Jesus, the parallels become striking.

Just like an angel showed up to Manoah and his wife to announce a miraculous pregnancy that would result in a savior, there were angels that appeared to Joseph and Mary about a pregnancy that results in a savior.

Just as Delilah sold a savior for silver, Judas sold another savior of Israel for silver.

Samson was mocked and jeered by a crowd. Jesus was mocked and jeered by a crowd.

Samson stretched his arms out wide and died. Jesus also died with outstretched arms.

But this Savior wasn't defeated by sin. He defeated sin.

This Savior didn't kill His enemies, but died for them.

Samson couldn't touch a dead body. Jesus touched dead bodies and saw them come back alive. Samson couldn't drink wine. Jesus turned water into wine.

Samson's death resulted in the destruction of the Philistine temple. Jesus's death resulted in the destruction of the veil of the Jewish temple, which means I'm no longer separated from the presence of God!

Samson was a flawed man sent to deliver an undeserving people from their physical enemies. Jesus was a perfect man sent to deliver an undeserving people from their true enemies—sin and death.

The tale of Samson, intricately woven into the fabric of biblical history, presents both caution and hope to Christian leaders. It warns against the consequences of compromise, the danger of doing what seems right in one's own eyes, and the importance of unwavering obedience to God's commands. The temptation to compromise in life and ministry is unparalleled in our current times. We, too, live in a world where morality is relative and absolutes are absent. Samson's sad story reminds us that God's mercy does not equate to his approval, and that a lack of character always catches up to us.

On the other hand, Samson's story also serves as a poignant reminder of the redemptive thread woven throughout history, with Jesus emerging as the flawless Savior who overcame sin and death, offering salvation to an undeserving world. Even when I fail like Samson, there is a better Samson who stretched out his arms, died in my place, and defeated my enemies.

THE ART OF LEADING

Without Praying



FRANKIE MAZZAPICA

Are pastors preaching without praying? Have leaders learned to lead without praying? Do worship leaders know that praying just before a Sunday service is not enough?

you look favorably on me—on me and your people—if you don't go with us? For your presence among us sets your people and me apart from all other people on the earth" (Exodus 33:16 NLT). That was my answer. You can find someone with the skills to do what I do, but if I am a man of prayer, the presence of God will be where I am, and this will distinguish me from the rest.

There is an art leaders in the church can easily learn which gives them the ability to appear they are a person of prayer, though they are not. First, teach on the importance of prayer. Second, speak often about spiritual things. Third, carry yourself in such a way that your persona gives the illusion of one who prays.

While ministering in San Paulo, Brazil, I met a senior pastor whose tender eyes and humble countenance testified of how important his prayer life was. Over the course of conversation, he told me, "In the Western church, a large congregation is the goal for the pastor, and it's enough to satisfy." I was stunned by the accuracy of his perception.

PROOF OF THE ANOINTING

As a youth pastor in my early twenties, I decided to have a layperson on our leadership team preach for me. The following week, he took the mic and preached much better than I ever could. I was jolted when I realized that people in the audience could communicate better than I could, and many were far more of a superior leader than I was.

I asked myself what proof was there that I genuinely was anointed in a way that set me apart? Moses asked a similar question, "How will anyone know that

GENERALS OF THE FAITH ON PRAYER

"Ministers who do not spend two hours a day in prayer are not worth a dime a dozen, degrees or no degrees." - Leonard Ravenhill

"If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day." - Martin Luther

"A man who doesn't pray is as weak as any other man." - Charles Finney

THANKFUL FOR INSOMNIA

In the fall of 2017, I distinctly remember staring at the ceiling fan around midnight as I was battling insomnia. The Spirit of the Lord started pulling on my heart as He began to invite me to be a man of prayer, to be one of the ones He speaks with like a friend speaks to a friend. I decided that when the sun rose, I would aim to pray regularly for hours at a time and start memorizing pages of Scripture. The burning desire was to experience His presence in ways very few have. I desired more than anything else for that to be the story of my life. My passion blazed the day I watched a video of Kathryn Kuhlman looking into the camera saying, "The Holy Spirit is more real to me than you are."



THREE THINGS THAT HAPPEN WHEN YOU PRAY

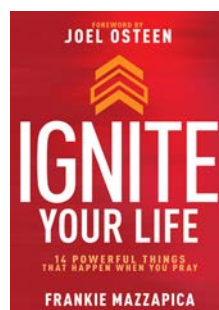
In my book *Ignite Your Life*, I identify fourteen things that happen when we pray. For the sake of time and space, I will mention three.

First, I'll discuss the greatest reward. The presence of the Almighty God begins to make Himself known. Many say it, but you will experience it. Moreover, you become keenly aware of the Holy Spirit around you, so much so that if you're praying with your eyes closed, you genuinely believe that if you open your eyes, you'll see Him. People who've experienced such powerful moments are forever ruined. They live their life in hot pursuit to experience His presence over and over again.

Secondly, the trajectory of your life begins to shift. When I turned 40 years old, I went into a deep depression. I looked at where I was and the rate by which I got there to determine where I'd most likely be in ten, twenty, or even thirty years later. My depression and discouragement nearly overtook me. I decided that since it seemed as if I wasn't going to be as successful as I anticipated, I would spend the rest of my life praying to go deeper and deeper into His presence. I can testify that the Lord holds true to His promise that, "Those who seek Him will find Him" (Jeremiah 29:13). Without realizing it, doors of opportunity began to be presented to me, doors I

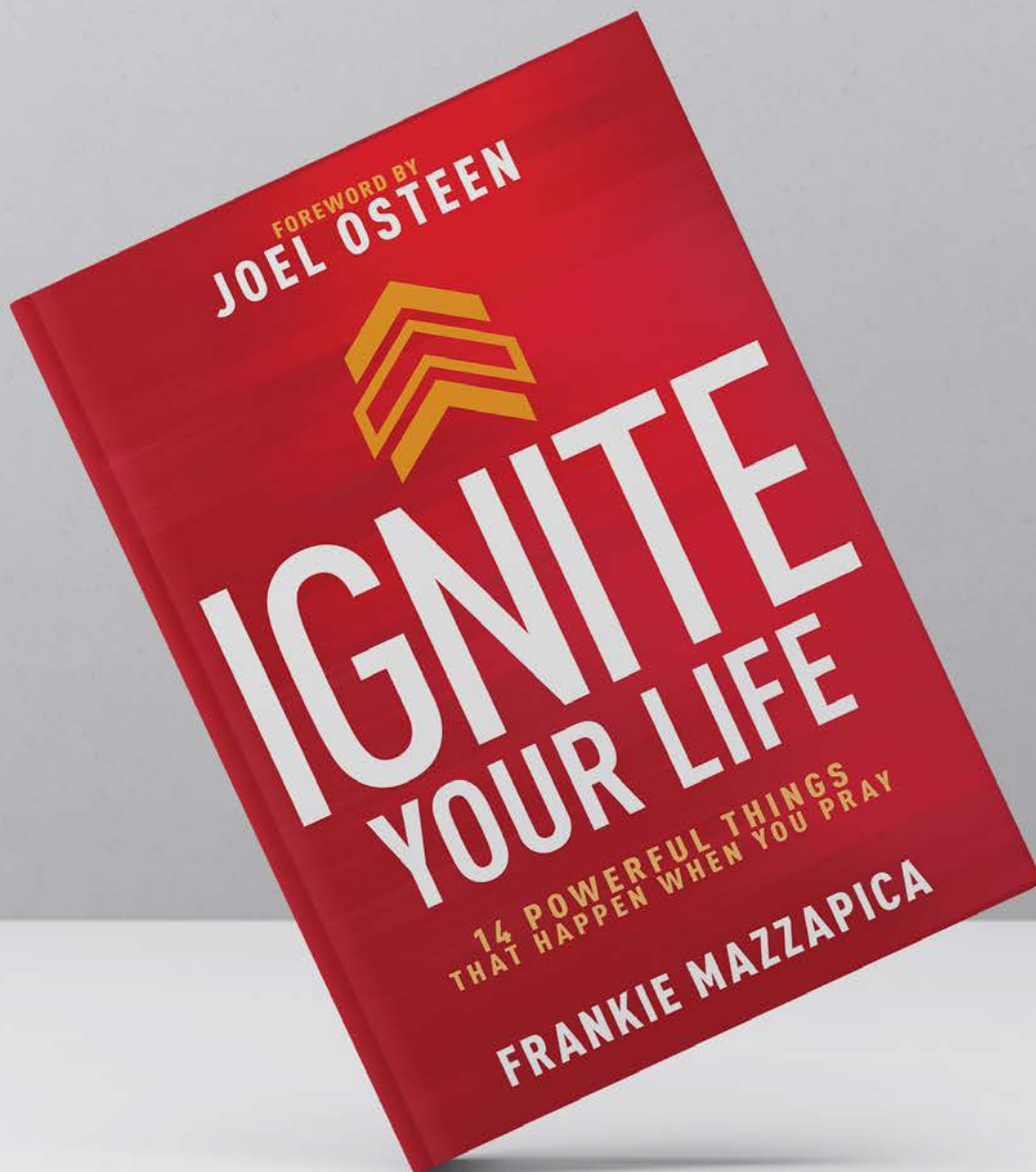
could have never opened for myself. Such blessings have changed the trajectory of my life.

Third, I began moving in spiritual gifts with great confidence with wonderful results. For the first two decades of ministry, I only experienced one undeniable physical healing when I prayed. Since I've ramped my prayer life up, people get healed anytime I go for healing. Not everyone I pray for gets healed, but every time, people get healed. I once spoke for a pastor, and he said, "I want you to teach on healing to build our faith, but if no one gets healed, that's okay; I know you can't manipulate the Holy Spirit." I replied, "People will get healed; the only question is, how many?" I have hours and hours of testimony videos of people who've been healed over the years, including the opening of deaf ears, blind eyes, and bones moving. We can build churches without prayer, but a move of God will only happen if we pray.



Ignite Your Life, 14 Things That Happen When You Pray, was written for those needing to set their prayer life on fire. This resource has also been given to church leaders to cultivate a culture of prayer with the congregation. This resource can be ordered wherever books are sold.

Frankie Mazzapica is the founding and lead pastor of Celebration Church of The Woodlands, TX. Frankie's messages are nationally broadcast each Sunday on TBN. He is a published author of two books, *Your Divine Invitation* and *Ignite Your Life*.



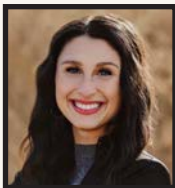
IGNITE YOUR LIFE, 14 THINGS THAT HAPPEN WHEN YOU PRAY, WAS WRITTEN FOR THOSE NEEDING TO SET THEIR PRAYER LIFE ON FIRE. THIS RESOURCE HAS ALSO BEEN GIVEN TO CHURCH LEADERS TO CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF PRAYER WITH THE CONGREGATION.

THIS RESOURCE CAN BE ORDERED WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD.

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!



YOU NEED A STRONG OX



CHELSEA BRIGGS

I once heard that a perfect appearance is not the same as a meaningful life, and the power of that thought has stuck with me ever since. What wrecked me about that statement wasn't its profoundness, because it's something I already knew, but rather the fact that so many of my thoughts and behaviors didn't reflect that I believed it. **Proverbs 14:4** says, *"Without oxen a stable stays clean, but you need a strong ox for a large harvest."* I know we would like to think when given the choice, we would choose a harvest over a clean stable any day, but if you're like me, you've probably let pride rear its ugly head more times than you care to admit. Imagine with me for just a minute that patience is the strong ox, and pride is the clean stable.

I have always known patience to be good and pride to be far from it. After all, the Bible calls patience love and pride something that God detests. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to spot the difference. It wasn't until recently, though, that I realized they are truly opposing forces. Enough of one begins to cancel the other.

I've witnessed this to be true in my own life in simple instances, like when I allow my children to exercise independence in tasks that I usually handle for them. With five people living in our home, we frequently go through towels, but I cannot remember the last time I ever folded or put one away. I am happy to report that the towel management position now belongs to our amazing three little stooges. Since the job turnover, every time I open a towel cabinet, I am reminded that I obviously have WAY less pride than I used to, but I also know this is directly tied to me gaining an incredible amount of patience. Meanwhile, their responsibility and my time are simultaneously persevering.

Jesus knew better than anyone that **perseverance is a patience matter, not a pride matter.** Our salvation was never purchased through pretty circumstances or Jesus passing the cup of suffering like He naturally desired. No, in fact, we are reconciled with God because He traded His throne for a messy stable, His perfection for our imperfection, and endured the pain and punishment we deserved... while we

were still sinners. If this is not the ultimate picture of patience, I don't know what is. The precursor to the most meaningful harvest ever reaped was the utterance, *"...nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."* He knew what it took to get to the words, *"It is finished."*

We all have dreams we're reaching for and hoping to achieve in this new year, whether it be in our churches, our teams, or our families. The danger of beginnings for leaders is that we can tend to focus so much on a strong start that we haphazardly make a clean stable the goal instead of a large harvest. **Ecclesiastes 7:8** tells us, *"Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride."* **If we're not careful, we'll find ourselves exercising authority instead of faith and controlling people instead of progress.**

One of our favorite family verses our kids love to sing is **Matthew 6:33 (CEV)**, *"But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what He wants. Then the other things will be yours as well."* Culture teaches us that we persevere through mind over matter, but we only achieve what God wants by putting what matters to Him (a harvest) over what's on our minds (clean stables).

Let's get better at telling them apart. Pride issues pressure; patience issues purpose. Pride looks like a performance; patience looks like a pursuit. Pride cares about possessions; patience cares about priorities. Pride seeks perfectionism; patience seeks peace. Pride produces paralysis; patience produces power. Pride procrastinates; patience plans. Pride obtains problems; patience obtains promises.

A strong ox for a large harvest may cost us some clean stables, but the trade-off is far more costly.

Chelsea has been married to Marcus Briggs for 14 years, and together they serve as lead pastors of Riverpark Church in Shreveport, Louisiana. She is passionate about being on mission from Sundays to soccer fields to supper at the table with their three children. Their dream as a family is to live authentically and show their community who Jesus is.



THE DESTINY GATHERING 2024

June 4-6 | Grace Church: Humble, TX

BONUS NIGHT OF FELLOWSHIP

This year, the Destiny Gathering kicks off a day early with a bonus night of fellowship and fun! **Monday night, June 3rd**, Phil and Cathy Brassfield and the Destiny Team are hosting a night at Minute Maid Park for a Houston Astros Baseball game. It's sure to be loads of fun, and we will have a special section reserved with you in mind! Don't miss the opportunity for an exciting evening of food, fun and fellowship. Bring your team, call a friend, and let's get this year's conference started off right! You can purchase your tickets through Destiny on our conference website.

BRAND NEW SCHEDULE!

We are so excited to introduce an all new schedule for activities during this year's Destiny Gathering. **Tuesday** starts the official Gathering off with our traditional welcome party in the lobby at Grace Church at 6 p.m. Enjoy everybody's favorite food from our Chick-fil-A food stations, and catch up with friends as the anticipation builds for a great conference. At 7 p.m. on Tuesday night, we will find our way into the worship center for a fun-filled

hour of celebration, information, and orientation as we set the stage for the next two days of the Gathering during our Destiny Rally! We wrap at 8 p.m. and get a good rest. Wednesday is going to be a BIG conference day!

Wednesday morning, doors open at 8:30 a.m. with light breakfast pastries and morning coffee in the lobby. This year, we are starting the day off with the Destiny Conference Academy. At 9 a.m., six different learning labs will be in session, and there will be something for everyone from children to senior adults! Some of Destiny's best presenters and speakers will be showcased with powerful sessions designed to move you forward into God's purpose for your life!

After the Conference Academy, don't miss a special lobby meet and greet with a light brunch provided from 10-11 a.m. The morning service begins at 11 a.m., in the main worship center, and it's going to be epic, featuring powerful worship and an awesome message. Service will be dismissed at 1 p.m., and you're on your own for lunch to enjoy Houston's many dining options.

Wednesday evening, doors will open at 5:30 p.m., for a variety of specialty meetings that will be happening prior to the evening service - check for announcements and text updates for times, topics, and locations. In the Main worship center, don't miss fantastic worship and a powerful message; plus, we will celebrate our DLI Graduates at the close of the service.

Thursday Morning, doors open at 8:30 a.m., with light breakfast pastries and your morning coffee in the lobby. At 9 a.m., another great day of learning labs begin with the Conference Academy. At 10 a.m., join your friends for a fun hour of fellowship in the lobby with a light brunch and beverages. Then, in the main worship center at 11 a.m., we begin a spiritual impartation service kicked off with a powerful worship experience followed by a keynote message from Destiny's Executive Director, Bishop Phil Brassfield, followed by our annual ordination service and an open altar impartation service led by the Destiny Council of Bishops. This will be a great climax to a powerful week. There will be no Thursday evening service.



This year's activities include:

**MONDAY NIGHT BASEBALL
GAME AT MINUTE MAID PARK**

**THE DESTINY WELCOME PARTY
AND WELCOME RALLY**

THE CONFERENCE ACADEMY

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR YOUTH

**A BRAND NEW
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

THE DESTINY KIDS GATHERING

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

**SINGLE: \$99
COUPLE: \$180
FAMILY: \$210**

**FOR A COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, AND TO REGISTER,
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT THEDESTINYGATHERING.COM.**



BISHOP NELSON & PAM HIGHT

celebrating 40 years of pastoring



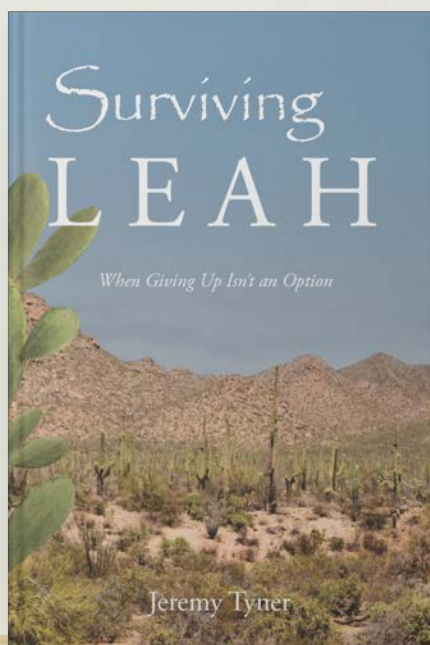
Destiny is celebrating with Church of the Crossroads (Corinth, MS) Bishops Nelson and Pam Hight for 40 years of pastoring. On January 24th, 2024, members of the Corinth community joined with the Crossroads church family for a surprise anniversary service. Not only was it a local celebration, but Destiny friends from all over the country came to honor this wonderful achievement. Bishops Nelson and Pam have served the same church and community for 40 years. Last year, their reach extended into a secondary location of Church of the Crossroads in the neighboring Prentiss county. Their mission is for the people of their seven county area to realize and engage in God's purpose for their lives. Their adult children, Jared and Cheri, Aaron and Jessica, and Barbie and Ethan serve and lead alongside them in this mission. Their family and church has been a part of our Destiny family since the start, nearly 24 years. During this time, Bishops Nelson and Pam have become a "pastor of pastors." Their heart is to come alongside fellow churches and see the Kingdom of God advance into the generations to come.

Order your copy of ***SURVIVING LEAH*** today!

*A new book by **Jeremy Tyner**, available at Barnes & Noble, Amazon and Walmart.*

When Giving Up Isn't an Option

*If you desire to see your dreams come to life, you will need someone capable of giving birth. Even though you want a Rachel life, **let me introduce you to a Leah Season.***



SURVIVINGLEAH.COM

The Purpose of **LEAH**

JEREMY TYNER

*(an excerpt from his new book
Surviving Leah)*

I imagine that when Rachel walked into a room, she turned heads. She was, without a doubt, the most beautiful girl in the area. Rachel was a girl that you wanted to be around and be seen with. She would give any ugly guy instant credibility! I assume every man wanted to date her, and every woman wanted to be her. If Rachel lived today, she would be a social media influencer and on the cover of magazines or have millions of followers on social media sites.

Having a Rachel life means people notice you. Whenever you enter a room, people watch. The hand of God is so apparent in your life that people can only stop and stare.

Living a Rachel life would be financial freedom. It would mean our dreams transitioned into reality. You would be waking up each morning to the beautiful life God wants you to live.

If you can imagine your dreams and locate your desires, you are viewing your Rachel life. It's a life that we would love, honor, and cherish! Just like Jacob was head over heels for her, we yearn for Rachel.

I love how the author again wanted to ensure we knew the difference between Rachel and her sister Leah. And he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years. (Genesis 29:30 ESV)

After Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his other daughter Leah, he worked another seven years to marry Rachel. It took fourteen years to marry the girl of his dreams! Many of us barely have the patience for a fourteen-minute oil change.

It's essential to know how Jacob truly felt about Leah. It's not just that he loved Rachel more; he didn't love Leah at all. To be brutally honest, Jacob hated Leah. He despised her all together.

What a difference between these two girls. One is beautiful, and the other is unattractive. One is wanted, and the other is undesired. One is preferred, the other is not—or has never been! You could not find more polarizing opposites than Rachel and Leah.

We want our lives to mirror Rachel. One that is beautiful and desired. However, appearance isn't everything. You love her, but Rachel will not provide you with everything. You will soon figure out that something is missing.

When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. (Genesis 29:31 ESV)

There was only one problem with Rachel. She could not have children. In those times, being barren was a shame and disgrace. The lineage of Abraham and Isaac would now end with Jacob. So much for the descendants being like the stars in the sky!

A Rachel life is pretty and nice to look at, but it's usually barren. Please remember that a Rachel life will usually never produce children for you. She will not birth your dreams or desires. Even though you want to spend every minute with her, there are just some things that she cannot provide.

If you desire to see your dreams come to life, you will need someone capable of giving birth. Even though you want a Rachel life, let me introduce you to a Leah season.

It's vital that we get this. As I already mentioned, God wants us to live abundantly. He wants us to have a Rachel life. However, He will usher in a Leah season to give birth to your destiny!

We know all about a Rachel life, but what is a Leah season? The best definition is simply this: It's the times in life that we despise. Actually, if we are going to be honest here, we hate it! Just as we match Jacob's obsession with Rachel, we hate Leah just as much, possibly even more.

Remember the meaning of Leah? Weariness. That's precisely what a Leah season is. It's a time of exhaustion. You will go through unwanted seasons that take away your joy, laughter, and happiness.

A Leah season is unwanted, unloved, and full of weariness.

Leah will bring exhaustion and fatigue. It's despised, loathed, and hated entirely by everyone.

It's also important to know that Jacob never asked to marry Leah. He never worked a single second to have the honor of marrying her. Leah, with the help of her father, just showed up. It was sudden and unannounced! Like an unwanted and unexpected bill in your mailbox, it just appears.

I have never asked for hard times or tough days. I never asked for the things that keep me awake at night. But here I am, married to Leah, and Rachel is nowhere to be seen.

I don't recall asking God for debt, sickness, car accidents, job layoffs, pay cuts, broken relationships, or anything else that's not hidden deep in my heart. I do not remember asking God for difficult days and moments of frustration that seem like they last for eternity.

A Leah season is a broken-down car in your driveway. It's the red numbers that are showing in your bank account. That one coworker that makes your life miserable is courtesy of Leah. She has you looking over your shoulder because you feel at anytime a freight train is about to run you over.

Why then? Why do we end up with Leah moments when he desires us to have and live a Rachel life? It's because He wants to bring in something new, and the only way for this to happen is for God to switch our Rachel life for a Leah season.

Please know that Leah is only temporary. That's why it's called a season. God does not desire us to live every day in weariness. However, he will use weariness to birth what we've prayed for.

Even though Leah was never wanted or desired by anyone, she was desperately needed by Jacob. It would be impossible for him to know the significance of Leah when she first appeared. Perhaps it was the perfect combination of shock and horror of her arrival that had him upset and angry. What Jacob received was the very opposite of his expectations.

Jacob did not or could not realize how vital Leah would be for him and his future. He did not understand the importance that Leah will play in his life.

It's possible that the problematic seasons that we face were allowed so we can give birth to our dreams. God promised Abraham that his descendants would be numbered like the stars in the sky. That promise went to his son Isaac and now Jacob. How can God fulfill this promise when the woman he wanted to marry was barren?

Again, we are seeing the sovereignty of God on full display. He was not tricked or caught off-guard the night Laban switched Rachel for Leah. God either designed it or allowed it to happen. The reason? Jacob needed children, and Leah was the solution. Leah will always show up when we pray for our hopes and dreams. She is challenging and demanding. Leah will make you want to quit. She is a season that is not for the faint at heart. Leah will make you cry and make you question everything in your life. However, Leah will be one of the most critical seasons you'll ever encounter. Why? It's because she holds the keys to your future.

I have never seen the "good ol' days" give birth to anything in my life. The only time I have experienced God giving me anything has come through

a season of weariness. The only time something new was birthed in my life came through Leah.

Before you decide to throw away a difficult season, I will ask you to wait. The pain you are facing has a purpose. You will learn lessons that will be valuable later in your life. Do not waste your pain.

God has a purpose and a plan for you. The answer you have been searching for is in the womb of weariness. A Leah season is ugly, unattractive, tiring, and unwanted. However, your feelings for her will change eventually. A Leah season can be and ultimately will be a blessing as long as you do not give up. Surviving a Leah season will take grit you have never experienced before. Get ready; this pain is about to produce something awesome. You may not believe me now, but you will eventually.



Jeremy Tyner is a pastor, teacher, and author who resides in Leander, Texas.

He is a consultant specializing in mentoring, encouraging, and coaching churches by cultivating leaders and developing new growth strategies. Jeremy is a sought-after speaker for various conferences and workshops nationwide.

His passion is to help build local churches and empower every believer who follows Christ. Jeremy and his wife, Nina, have been married since 2001 and have three children: Cohen, Ellie, and Victoria.





Introducing **ACACIA CHURCH**



RUSS AND STEPHANIE CRIPPS FOUNDED ACACIA CHURCH IN 2011. RUSSELL IS A GRADUATE FROM GORDON CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AND STEPHANIE IS A GRADUATE FROM AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY. THEY HAVE TWO DAUGHTERS AND THREE GRANDDAUGHTERS.

RUSS & STEPHANIE CRIPPS

When thinking about how to introduce Destiny to Acacia Church, I think that introduction has to start by revealing at least a smidge about the grace-filled ragamuffin founding Pastor – me. I say that because the church always takes on so much of the DNA of the Pastor. Sometimes that's good; sometimes that's bad, but all the time, that's true.

So, it's important to note that while I was raised in church, there was a time in my life where I walked away from the Church.

Far away. That time away produced not only much pain and suffering, but many terrible scars and painful memories. With that said, Acacia is a place where others experiencing pain and suffering, tattooed with scars and memories, are not only welcomed with arms wide open, we tell them, "Welcome Home," on their very first day. That angle of Acacia's story, (and my story), matters. It matters, because while we've tried programs and ventures and campuses that have had various shades of failure, we will never fail at helping others come to know Jesus and realize that He loves



them in spite of how large their own pile of failures may be. Let me say it one more time for those in the back – my own personal story is the subplot for Acacia’s story, because when I failed in life, the Church never failed me. In my life, I’ve seen the bad sides of the Church, but I choose to focus on the many more good sides of the Church, and I think Acacia represents that idea well. We don’t always get everything right, but we don’t give up on people.

One more thing about me - I never thought I would be in ministry, (note the “past” part of the story). I never thought I would pastor. I never thought I would plant a church. But like so many others, thirteen years in, I’ve come to realize I’m living proof of what someone once said: “God doesn’t call the equipped; He equips the called.” If I were preaching to you right now, I’d ask for a good, loud “amen.”

Some people ask, “What’s with that name? Acacia?” I’m glad you asked. I wanted to name our church something unique, yet meaningful. One day in my Bible reading, I came across the fact that the Ark of the Covenant was made with Acacia wood. And as many of you know, the Ark of the Covenant was where God’s presence dwelled. The Ark of the Covenant was also called the Mercy Seat. Well, putting those angles together, I wondered, “What if we had a church where God’s presence was so thick, everyone there realized that they had access to His mercy?” Hence, Acacia was born. A place where His presence dwells and His mercy flows, and no one is too far gone.

Acacia Church launched in a tiny rented space in the heart of Baton Rouge on Super Bowl Sunday, 2011. We didn’t know what we were doing then; most days, I feel we don’t know what we are doing now. But by God’s grace, we moved from that tiny beginning to now having our own building and now doing three gatherings each Sunday morning.

Our mission, (what we’re doing), and model, (how we’re doing it), includes many normal things churches do. We don’t necessarily operate with some form of secret sauce. Thankfully, we have our foot in the door with several recovery houses and try our best to help them toward sobriety. We have ministries that focus on students and children. We have local outreach days where we serve local organizations. We have a partner orphanage in the Philippines that we faithfully support. We encourage folks to serve at the church and attend various small groups. I would say the mindset that has helped accomplish these ministries and efforts over the years as we have continued to move forward is simply faithfulness. Our story isn’t one where we launched and had 1,000 people in 10 minutes. Our story is slower. Our story is not even as flashy. Our story is, though, faithful, which is actually one of the aspects of every effective church: striving forward, while simply being faithful at the things that still matter.

At Acacia Church, we love to say that, “No Sunday is just another Sunday.” We’ll open the doors with a simple expectation that God is going to send someone brand new into the building, and He’s going to trust us to help lead them to true hope. As Eugene Peterson once penned, our story is like a “long obedience in the same direction.” And we’ve loved every step of the journey.

Having now rolled into 2024, Acacia’s current focus is shining a light on our homes and families. We want to build strong homes, and that requires strong families... and that requires strong people. One might come to Acacia and not fully understand everything, but they will understand that Acacia Church, its pastor, and its people want them to win and want them to grow in their life and spirituality. And what a joy it is that we, I, get to do this.

Join your Destiny family for a night of

BASEBALL

HOUSTON ASTROS **VS** ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

\$50 PER PERSON

JUNE 3, 2024

Monday night before the Gathering

LIMITED AVAILABILITY! ORDER TICKETS AT
[DESTINYLEADERS.COM/THEGATHERING](https://destinyleaders.com/thegathering)

DESTINY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Alumni Spotlight



URSULA SERNA
*Grace Church Tomball
Kids Director*

Hello there! What a journey it has been to grow under the leadership of DLI. The knowledge and tools that have equipped me are and will always be invaluable. Destiny Leadership Institute does a work in the heart of a believer. It undoes untrue myths and beliefs and lays a solid foundation. Teaching each student how to lead and care for the flock, each class is another brick, and each webinar is a cornerstone that holds the house. I believe this is why Christ made immense strides to change the heart. YOU can change your actions temporarily but your heart changes actions permanently. In these courses I learned what it means to truly lead with everything that you are, but also as someone who loves God's kingdom. I currently serve as a

Kids Ministry director at Grace Church Tomball and everything (and I mean EVERYTHING) that was taught to me, God has given me opportunities to put into practice. From teaching elementary students biblical principles to counseling parents, God has shown me the importance of serving His people. One of the most valuable principles I have learned is the importance of being a servant leader. Christ took time to wash the feet of the disciples and showed believers that serving is how we lead. It's by this example and love that I choose to walk by. I'm so grateful and full of hope for ministry. God has shown me His goodness and love within every service, and I know the best is still yet to come!



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DESTINY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
VISIT [DESTINYLEADERS.COM/DLI](https://destinyleaders.com/dli)
OUR NEXT SEMESTER BEGINS IN SEPTEMBER!**

THE CHURCH HAS

LEFT THE BUILDING



PAUL COOK

My stomach is queasy. \$187,000 invoice for seven more 3-phase rooftop HVAC units. None of our church contributors gets to celebrate a heart swelling gospel win on this one. It's just one more reality of ownership for a 44,000 square foot church building.

I don't resent the time and money invested in church facilities, just like I wouldn't resent the work required to have a personal home. Buildings generally have a significant role to play in the North American church context. The local church is like the importance of a strong, healthy family. It helps to have a home! Inside that home, we have order, raise up respectable people, celebrate newcomers to the family, enjoy the comfort of being known and knowing.... We do life together, and we contribute to the wider world because inside the home, we have developed a bond of love and good character. So, it is commendable to have an excellent facility as part of our stewardship of ministry to a church family.

However, families don't live all their life at home. And for church families, the church building and institutional involvement is not our end-zone for the gospel—Christ is the end zone. People's lives are not transformed by buildings; they are impacted by passionate believers. We don't justify avoiding our wider Kingdom roles in the outside world just because we have a big load to carry with our church housework. Volunteer roles that support the local church are a baseline commitment for responsible family members, but it's not our real job.

A young man I mentor is leaving his lucrative role in the tech industry to become a teacher. The pay is far less than half. In his thirties, he has realized that his ultimate calling was most expressed in his twenties when he served as a missionary-teacher in China. His God-given superpower is his relational style and ability to make learners. When he is around, young people find their way and find Jesus. Now, he is also able to coach his 10-year-old daughter on a community softball team. Ask him why! "The school children and neighborhood families need God-hearted influence." He comes to church, has a small group, his kids do Sunday School, but teaching is his role outside the church house! In the truest sense, he is a missionary! He will likely see more people that need Jesus in one day than we see in most church buildings all week. Oh—and he gets paid to do it!

If the building is the end zone, we are in trouble! How many can we seat? For us, maybe 2,500 people in multiple services in a metro of 7 million - That math won't cut it. Jesus said, "Go," so we can't just say, "Come." Besides, what are church leaders in impoverished or financially depressed areas of the world supposed to do to acquire a cost-prohibitive site? Raise funds in affluent areas and pour money into their dark abyss of need? How is the gospel to quickly, globally expand? Just buildings? That's not how Jesus set this up.

Alan Hirsch shared in his book *Forgotten Ways* that China and the Early Church are clear examples of explosive growth in the number of believers in relatively short periods of time without our expected real estate requirement. In both situations, there were no formal organizational structures, no professional ministers, no institutional training, no worship

bands, no budgets, no youth ministries, no Sunday School, NO BUILDINGS, and they both existed as illegal organizations under persecution and threat of death.

God was the first one to leave the house when the veil of the temple was ripped. Jesus warned the disciples not to get too enamored with the temple. He tried shifting the mindset of Nicodemus in advance of the physical and spiritual dismantling of his Jerusalem-centric, temple-bound way of life. At Pentecost, the Spirit took up residence in the hearts of people, so the gospel could be mobile and relational. Jesus even demonstrated a missional model—He was always meeting and eating in homes. They accused Him of being a glutton, winebibber, and a friend of sinners. Maybe shift to that missional format before we get too overfocused on the activity inside of our facilities. Unfortunately, spiritual leaders can feel subtle pressure to measure their worth by what they can build from an institutional perspective. Young leaders who are doing a great job reaching people in their community can feel invalidated unless they become a church planting pastor with church service times at some site. The religious elite of Jesus' day sure loved the temple, but Jesus just leaned into relationships and went out in the community. He came "eating and drinking."

There is a relational pathway for leaders in small settings to courageously thrive in their efforts to impact the world without inordinately mimicking larger well-funded churches. These soul-winning champions don't have to have big budgets or buildings to make a community impact. It is impossible to fully achieve institutionally what God intended to be accomplished relationally.



My pastor friend, Jonathan Perry, was prompted by his son, Grant, to begin a ministry based in downtown Toledo, Ohio. They refurbished an 18,000 square foot historic building on a low budget, faith move and began Rustbelt Coffee. The huge 6,000 square foot coffee shop portion soon became a gathering place for business leaders, non-profits, and government people. The energy in this collaborative space has spawned ministries to the underserved in the community, and Rustbelt is like a poster child for the betterment of their city. The space is also rented to a healthy partner church on the weekend. Part of the space is a cool throwback barbershop called Billy Sunday's. People are buzzing all over it, AND it all makes money! Before Rustbelt, the Perrys hardly knew any pastors in the city, let alone government and businesspeople. Now, they serve on countless boards, lead efforts for non-profits, pastors and business leaders, and the community. They know and are known by thousands of people. Jonathan and Grant will tell you, "We did more impactful ministry and met more people within 3 years of opening that coffee shop than we did in 30 years of ministry on our suburban church property." Maybe we should think like the Perrys?

Many of the people we are trying to reach have dismissed the church for various reasons from suspicions to prejudice to worldview. Subsequently, the church property becomes a barrier

more than an invitation for them. We need other ways to reach outside of our church homes.

Our local church was forced by financial necessity to think creatively about our property.

After fighting an uphill battle with the debt, we worked with a developer to build apartments on four acres, and the windfall from that effort put us over the top and debt free. People from the apartments attend church. We started a childcare center in partnership with Lionheart, a ministry whose vision is to take over the industry for Christ by using church property. Now, 130 families are in and out of our building every weekday, and dozens have made our church home. It makes money. We also lease our space to four other churches who have become more like partners—we share big events, a conference, First Wednesday worship, and other community efforts. Our building is very busy. Partnership money covers the whole cost of maintaining our property and our entire church staff! We aren't that smart, really—God led us here. By thinking outside of our own church family needs, we have become more impactful and more financially viable. Now, our church family is experimenting with micro-church, a decentralized system of making disciples, raising up leaders, and reaching people who are less likely to come to our building. My wife, Julie, and I feel called to be micro-church missionaries to our Lionheart

Childcare families. Our building will be the hub for all sorts of missional work by fostering micro-church leaders. It is too long a subject to tackle in this article, but here are a few of the books that are schooling our direction: *Saturate* by Jeff Vanderstelt, *Forgotten Ways* by Alan Hirsch, *Starfish & The Spirit* by Rob Wegner. These concepts are catching fire in the North American church and are an elegant solution for disciple-making that doesn't lean on facilities.

The church has left the building. Sunday services aren't the only play in our playbook. Healthy church families leave their house on mission. Better buildings or our preferred slot on a church team are not the apex of ministry. Individually, our most vital gospel work is relational, not institutional. Go make friends. Meet and eat. A loving lifestyle is what Jesus designed for making disciples. Each of us are individual missionaries outside our church building.

Paul Cook, and his wife Julie, have served in ministry for over 40 years. Paul is a Bible practitioner, teacher, leadership developer, mentor, organizational coach, entrepreneur, clinician and artist. Paul and Julie have served as senior pastors at Central Church in Plano, Texas since 2011.



5 STEPS TO SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

Even by secular standards, Jesus Christ is the most influential figure in human history. If *leadership is influence*, then He certainly deserves the crown. There have been more books written about Him, more lectures about His life, opinions, and teachings than any other person in history. If the Christian enterprise was considered in business terms, it would be considered a global phenomenon. Virtually every city in the world has a company franchise (church - often several), and the book about His life (The Holy Bible) is the number one best selling book in all of history and has been the best selling book every year for over 500 years (since the printing press was invented). But, how did He gain such a following—such global influence and dominance with His brand? Was He a self-promoting genius? Did He have huge money behind Him—the best publicist, the most incredible team of promotional experts? No. As a matter of fact, His style of promotion was totally outside the conventional wisdom of both His time and ours today. He broke all the rules of publicity and promotion.

Interestingly enough, even His own followers were clueless as to His real mission, at least until the end of His life. In the New Testament, Jesus blew His disciples' minds when He said in Mark Chapter 10 that, *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."* Here is the long awaited Messiah, the very one that they had been taught would come and lead the nation into freedom from outside oppression and into national righteousness - a Mosaic-type figure who would re-establish an authentic observation of Mosaic Law and a restored, pure Aaronic Priesthood, saying that He did not come to lead, but to serve. This must have been scandalous, and so hard for them to process. That was exactly the case.

The Prophet Isaiah had actually predicted this very different approach in several places hundreds of years before Jesus was born. And in one of his specific predictions recorded in Chapter 42, and proven to be Messianic by its application in Matthew Chapter 12, we can discover several keys to Jesus' leadership style and the promotional genius and ministry

effectiveness that the Holy Spirit had embedded in His life and ministry. The passage reveals several fundamental keys to Jesus' Messiah-style of leadership and promotion. These keys should be clearly embraced and lived out in our lives as leaders and communicated by everything we say and everything we do in ministry.

Isaiah 42:1-4 NKJV

1 "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2 He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.

1. Dependence: He demonstrated an extreme dependence on God.

Verse 1, "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold." As J. Oswald Sanders says in his book *Spiritual Leadership*, "He (speaking of Jesus) surrendered the privileges of His God-nature and became dependent on His Heavenly Father," (Pg. 24). How far this level of existence must have been from what Jesus had previously known. After all, He was God the Son from the beginning with all the divine attributes and purgatives. While, according to the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:6-7, He knew that it was not robbery to be equal with God, yet He humbled Himself and became dependent on God the Father. I have never met a leader who, once they had attained a lofty position of power, would (for any reason) lay that power aside and become the servant of an inferior. This is a great condescension, to say the least. But, Jesus did just that. Jesus gave us an example of Spiritual Leadership in His surrendering His rightful state and humbling Himself to serve those He came to lead.

As a leader, the sooner we understand our dependence on God and embrace all that this reality suggests, the quicker we will find peace in every situation and develop the clarity and focus to lead effectively. This takes faith indeed. But, where does this kind of faith come from? In my experience, it comes as a result of enduring trials and testing. I once heard Adrian Rogers, the great Baptist pastor say, "A faith that has not been tested cannot be trusted." This kind of faith in God comes as a result of experiences where our faith has been tested and God has proven Himself faithful. When He does, a calm confidence in God becomes our foundation of leadership, and a deep dependence on God results.

Sometimes my dependence on God comes, not so much as a result of my tested faith, but because I have no other obvious alternatives, no other possible solutions; I am desperate. I heard Bishop Joseph Garlington say one time, "Heroes are not born; they are cornered." My grandfather used to say, "Man's extremity becomes God's opportunity."

Whether through bold faith or desperation, God is still pleased when we become totally dependent on Him

as our hope, source and solution. Jesus made Himself totally dependent on God.

2. Divine Approval: He cultivated amazing, divine favor and approval.

Verse 1, "My Elect One in whom My soul delights," God is holy, full of justice and truth. His Law is an expression of His attributes and character, and therefore, demands perfection - not in an uncompassionate way, but simply because of its perfect standard. In the letter of the Law, there is no room for mercy, while at the same time keeping its integrity and justice. To practice one, the exclusion of the other is required. If you steal my TV, and I simply forgive you, I have been merciful, but in my mercy, justice has been violated. You need to bring it back or get me another one. God is certainly both merciful and, yet, just. Therefore, to cultivate favor with God, one must keep the Law perfectly. Jesus lived without sin, satisfying the righteous demands of the Law and, thereby, obtained the favor and approval of God as a man in a legitimate sense. He put God first and foremost in His focus and passion.

3. Humility: He was self-retiring and modest, not seeking to capitalize on personal opportunities to gain a following - He was humble.

Verse 2, "He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street." Jesus did not try to draw attention to Himself; He put on garments of humility. I say 'put on humility,' because when you are the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, humility is a choice. The value of Jesus' humility is demonstrated by the reality that it was optional. He chose to humble Himself and condescend. This type of humility is a virtue that creates great gravity because of its rarity. Jesus would heal someone and quickly say, "See that you tell no one" (Matt. 8:4), yet, the "fame of Him spread throughout all of Syria," a great distance from His humble surroundings in Galilee (Matt 4:24). In His example, I learn that promotion comes from the Lord.

4. Empathy: He loved and had great compassion for the people.

Verse 3, "A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench." People know when they are truly loved. They also have a

way of discerning or sensing when they are being used as a means to an end. Jesus never looked past someone and to the opportunity their situation presented. He also did not take advantage of someone else's misfortune to promote Himself. Every encounter was an opportunity to make a difference for the better, to change a life, rescue someone in trouble. His highest purpose was to do the will of God. His greatest impact was to love others and serve.

5. Optimism: He was incredibly optimistic.

Verse 4, "He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth." Optimism is perhaps the most important quality a leader can possess. Optimism is defined as hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something. In my mind, it is closely connected to determination. In this verse, we see that both are associated with the leadership ministry of the Messiah. Optimism and determination are rooted in the attitude of a leader. Attitude is an internal perspective that becomes the motivation for decisions that lead to actions.

While Jesus faced incredible negativity and opposition to His mission and purpose, He was always positive and determined. I believe that His positive perspective and confident determination sprang from His confidence in God. He focused on the will of God and the means of God to produce that will on earth as it was in Heaven.

As a leader, too often, my confidence has been in me - in my natural abilities and native genius. Sadly, when I face obstacles that I know are beyond the limits of these abilities, I have, at times, lost hope, became fatigued and burnt-out.

I have learned to say with King David in Psalms 25:1, 5 "In you, Lord my God, I put my trust..." "for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."

Jesus, the Messiah, lived in perfect submission to God's will, His ways, and His provision. Consequently, He was always at peace with God's plan and, therefore, optimistic about the outcome.



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