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By James Read, CFNI

▶ Like many people, I love to study great leaders of our past. Their objective is always the same—to bring people from various backgrounds together in unity to accomplish a worthy goal, larger than themselves. As a minister of the Gospel, this speaks to me because we are often faced with the challenge of bringing various people together in unity for the sake of the Kingdom of God. We have different denominations, ages, cultures and so forth, which often poses many difficulties.

Charles de Gaulle, who was a field general for the French forces during World War II, famously asked, “How can you govern a country which has 246 varieties of cheese?” Some say that having so many types of cheese is a metaphor for the incredibly diverse tastes people have. While having so many variations of cheese is somewhat comical (the French love their cheese), it’s laughable how sometimes things like food, clothing or other personal tastes can serve as a barrier in our ability to relate to others in love.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus faced similar obstacles. The land was facing spiritual, cultural and social diversity. Most were not willing to embrace diversity or to change the way that they were thinking (which is what the word translated as “repentance” really means in Greek). Many proclaimed God as a God of the impossible, but still doubted that God could possibly be active outside of the box they had created for Him. Their God was limited to only their views and perceptions. They could not see Him working in seasons in their lives, let alone seasons in the lives of millions of others.

De Gaulle went on to serve as the president of the French Republic and led this country of 246 cheese varieties. In today’s church, we are faced with nearly as many varieties of people. Generation X, Generation Y, Baby Boomers, Millennials and the Digital Nation—how can we possibly minister to so many different groups?

With an ever-changing and evolving culture, we should be on the forefront of times. It’s an exciting time to be a believer, because the world is always developing, population is on the increase and countries are opening up to the Gospel. Because God has promised to pour out His Spirit on all men.

Since God is creative, expect His expressions to be creative! Some will do and some will pray; some will abide, while others serve. Some will be in a season of experiencing faith, while others learn to love for the first time. Some will be in a season of giving, while others are learning to receive. Some will fast, while others are merry and enjoying the delights of bacon or ham. Some may dress in ways that are difficult to relate to, sing songs we don’t get, or have technology seemingly imbedded into their hands. Yet, we are called to be a part of the end-time harvest. All of us are called to love others.

So, let’s make room for God to be God and celebrate all the “cheeses” He has given us! There is a time and a season for all things. Let’s celebrate with others in the season the Lord has given them. Allow the Lord to break through the boxes that we create for Him in our own mindsets. Remember, we’re all climbing the same mountain, sometimes just from different angles. 🍷

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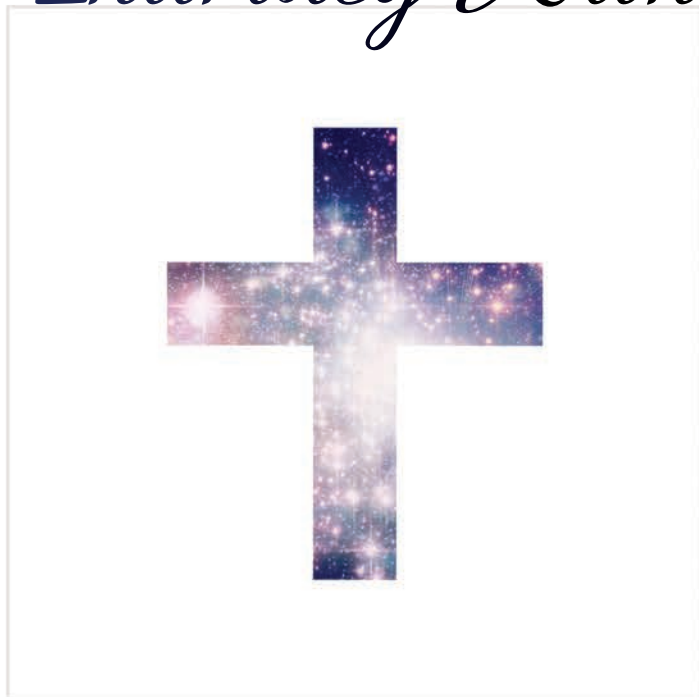
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Intimacy With GOD



• By Dr. Dennis Lindsay

TOUGH QUESTIONS

There are many tough questions in the Bible. One of the age-old questions, that both Christians and non-Christians have struggled with, has always been, “How could a loving God send anyone to hell?” We know that God is a just God, which means that God will never judge anyone unfairly. Yet, would God send someone to hell who has never heard the Gospel? If Jesus is the only way to Heaven, then what about someone who lived before Jesus’ time? Furthermore, what about someone who has never heard the name of Jesus, and lives in a pagan region of the world? Mankind’s opinions are many, but God’s Word has much to say on this subject.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Would God send someone to hell? The Bible reveals, “No.” It’s people who send themselves to hell. Our own free will gives us the power to choose our eternal destination, not God. The Bible tells us that God is a loving God, and that He does not want anyone to go to hell (2 Peter 3:9). However, no one is going to force you to read the Bible, pray or accept Jesus Christ. When the truth is known about why one is not in Heaven, it will become obvious that God pursued them all the

way to the gates of hell. God places road blocks in our path; yet, if we kick over every obstacle along the sinful journey, we will move away from the love of the Creator.

We read in Romans that since the beginning of time God has testified of Himself to every person (Romans 1:18-20). He testifies of Himself, both inwardly—through the human conscience, and outwardly—in the display of Creation and the heavens. Scripture reveals that every person who seeks God will find God (Proverbs 8:17; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 7:7-11; Acts 17:26-28). If a person simply makes an effort, God will reveal Himself. As we shall see, the real issue and question that must first be answered is, “How can someone be so rebellious that they would refuse to accept God’s love for them?”

SATAN’S REBELLION

Hell was created for the devil and his angels, but it has been enlarged for rebellious humans. God is saying that He has done everything to make man succeed, but man refuses God’s love. Hell was enlarged by necessity—not by design—by an inexcusable and rebellious rejection of God.

*He has done everything to make man succeed,
but man refuses God's love.*

MATTHEW 21:33-39

Scripture records that Jesus talked about hell 33 times, which is more than any other subject, because He didn't want anyone to end up there.

"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. 'The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.' Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. 'But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him."

The question is not, "How can a loving God send a person to hell?" It is, "How can anyone reject such a loving God?"

GOD AND HEAVEN

God's original plan for mankind was to have fellowship and intimacy with Him. He prepared a garden—a paradise where He could commune with man. God provided a canopy of love and protection over His creatures. He wanted His entire Earth to be a place where mankind could worship his Creator. Unfortunately, mankind misused this gift and blessing and brought sin into the world by opening the door for the enemy to enter paradise and bring about destruction.

Yet God's plan included a chapter for restoration where mankind could return to a canopy of protection. Jesus provides the door into His new Creation. Today, worship of the Creator

opens the door for one to enter into God's canopy of love.

So when Christ releases the same, identical power that raised Him from the dead to rapture the Church at His Second Coming, He is likewise able to transform the world in a "twinkling of an eye" into a world that will reveal His glory.

"Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole Earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen"
(Psalm 72:19).

"For the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea"
(Habakkuk 2:14).

GOD JUST WANTS AN INTIMATE FAMILY

All God wants is a family. At the end of time, all God gets out of this Creation is a family. Everything else is destroyed. Like in any family, each member has a choice to accept or reject the family. The greatest gift God gave each individual in His Creation is a free will. And the greatest gift that God gave mankind is Jesus, Who provided a way to pardon our rebellion, forgive our sins and be adopted into His family. God chose every human in the world to be in His family. However, the only ones in Heaven are those who choose Him. We can choose to love or not love God, but it makes Him happy when we choose Him.

No, God will never send an individual to hell. Man chooses to go to hell by his own free will. God created Heaven for His family—those who seek to be intimate with their Creator (John 14). The key to a blessed life is intimacy with God. The Bible message in one word is intimacy. God longs to have intimacy with His creatures. 🏠

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Eyes of the Heart

— *Prophetic Art*



Our Father wants to create with us. Creativity is in our family line.

• By Anna Elkins

It started with Ephesians 1:18: "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints."

I've always loved God and loved art, but I didn't always connect those two passions. And I had never heard of "prophetic art" in all my years as an artist.

One day, I thought of that Ephesians prayer in terms of creativity. What might it look like to partner with the Holy Spirit in the arts?

An island, a school of ministry and some life-altering encounters later, I began to have an idea. Then I started meeting other people who were not just having encounters with God, they were helping to create them for others.

One of my favorite stories of Holy Spirit partnership happened on a mission trip a few years ago. Kimberly Humphrey traveled with a team to a small town in

Mozambique. The prison there is so tiny that a hundred men take turns lying down to sleep.

Kimberly managed to get permission to paint a mural on the prison wall during the inmates' daily work time outdoors. The mural design depicted a golden doorway opening to a path that leads to a cross. The Holy Spirit opened a door for her to paint a door.

Before the trip, Kimberly had asked the Lord what to bring to Africa. He told her "paint." So she brought four small tubes of paint with her. That's it. Every night, she would pray that the colors wouldn't run out. In the morning, the tubes would be full, and Kimberly was able to complete her mural, "The Door of Hope." I asked her what she would say to someone who thinks they can't do something like this or that they can't be used by God in such a way.

She said: "Listen to the Holy Spirit. He won't fail you. He is thrilled to partner with you and speak through you. In our rest and play, He will rock worlds and

change hearts for eternity—I love that. So just take His hand and watch what He does through yours!"

When we work with Holy Spirit, we not only encounter His revelation while we create, but people can encounter that revelation even after we have created. Prisoners have been saved and healed by encountering Kimberly's painting.

That is the power of prophetic art.

(I found out later that Kimberly completed not just this mural, but four murals on that trip—all with four tubes of paint.)

You might ask yourself: So what is that? Is that prophetic art? Can I do it? Yes and yes.

Here's an admittedly oversimplified equation to explain what prophetic art is:

Creativity + Prophecy = Prophetic Art

Let's break that down.



"The Door of Hope" painted on a Mozambique prison wall by Kimberly Humphrey. Photo by Jonathan Thompsen.



Creativity

The first action—the first verb in Scripture—is *bara*: to create. And after God had created man, man's first assignment was to participate in creation. In Genesis 2:19-20, we read that Adam named the animals. Now, God didn't need Adam to name the animals. After all, He had created them; He was fully capable of naming them. But God invited Adam to partner with Him—to share in the act of creation.

I imagine Adam looking at a baby hedgehog with a smile, and God asking him, "What do you think? What are you going to call that one?"

The important part is remembering our identity as children of Creator God.

Our Father wants to create with us. Creativity is in our family line.

But whenever we say: "I'm not creative,"

guess what? We are what we speak. Proverbs reminds us that the power of life and death is in our tongue.

To say we aren't creative is to deny our birthright, our Kingdom identity. And if we say we can't prophesy? Same thing. Which brings me to the second element of the equation.



Prophecy

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul wrote unequivocally that we are all to eagerly seek the gift of prophecy:

"Follow the way of love and *eagerly* desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their *strengthening, encouragement, and comfort*" (vv. 1-3, emphasis mine).

"For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and *encouraged*" (v. 31, emphasis mine).

"... therefore my brothers, be *eager* to prophesy" (v. 39, emphasis mine).

Before we continue, I must note that Scripture distinguishes between the *gift* of prophecy and the *call* of the prophet. I am referring here to the gift.

The gift of prophecy is for the purpose of strengthening, encouraging and comforting. The gift of prophecy is not to direct or correct, but to bring out the best in people. And the best—"the greatest of these"—is always sourced in love. So a good way to filter the gift of prophecy is through 1 Corinthians 13:2: "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

So for example, even if you discern a negative in someone's life, speak the opposite over them. Strengthen, encourage, comfort.

Say you see despair in someone's life, but as you listen to the Lord, you sense that He desires to replace it with joy. Instead of saying, "The Lord wants to pull you out of despair," how about saying, "I feel that you are entering a new season of joy. I feel like the Lord wants to bless you with His joy." I call this the "positive opposite." It is the Philippians 4:8 focus on what is true, noble, right, pure and lovely; in other

words, focus on our destiny seated with Christ. Scripture tells us that we are seated with Him now. Since that's the case, it's probably a good idea to keep our eyes on what's in that throne room.



Prophetic Art

Let's put "creativity" and "prophecy" together and see what happens.

When I teach prophetic art workshops, I ask people to partner up with someone they don't know. Everyone takes a few moments to quietly ask the Lord what He wants to reveal to the person sitting next to them. What is on His heart for them? Some sense a color and a feeling that goes with it. Others "see" an image, hear the line of a song—the opportunities are endless... and fun.


In many cases, skill level is irrelevant. Prophetic arts are not just for those who consider themselves artists. And while excellence is absolutely necessary in the arts, prophetic art starts with presence, not performance. I've worked with people who said they couldn't draw a stick figure, and I've worked with professional graphic designers and fine artists. The impact of what they created to bless someone wasn't linked to artistic ability but to hearing what God wanted to do and then doing it.

In fact, one of the most profound pieces of prophetic art I have received was done for me by a young boy named Ben in England. His mother approached me on the wooden pew in the Anglican church where friends and I had been teaching a workshop. She gently put her hand on her son's shoulder and moved him closer. With a shy smile, Ben explained in great detail the significance of his drawing, what I was doing in it, and what God, the

Manager—"Manig"—had planned for me. I could feel God speaking to me through that obedient young boy. I still can.

The important part is remembering our identity as children of Creator God and opening the gift of prophecy He has handed us. Just like a child.

I have a feeling God wants to enlighten the eyes of our hearts. I consistently pray that he enlightens mine. I'd like to suggest that as we continually offer the eyes of our hearts to Him, we will see more and more with His eyes.

May we see with the eyes of His heart so that those around us can, too. 

Anna Elkins lives the equation of art + word + Spirit. She earned a BA in Art & English and an MFA and a Fulbright Fellowship in poetry. Her words have appeared in various journals and books, and her art has been exhibited in the US and abroad. She has written, painted and taught on five continents. Anna is available to teach her "Eyes of the Heart" prophetic art workshop just about anywhere; for more information, visit the link at annaelkins.com.



Eyes of the Heart logo
[annaelkins.com]



Skill level isn't the point when we're communicating God's heart. This piece, done for me by a young boy, has continued to speak into my life in the years since I received it.

Prophesying through Art in Your Community

Release prophecy that strengthens, encourages, comforts. Step out in faith:

- Be prepared to give away pictures, scriptures, blessings and quotes.
- Introduce yourself and, if appropriate, explain that you are just beginning in art. If you have already made a piece of prophetic art, you can begin to describe it and its meaning. Or continue developing the steps below and, when you feel appropriate, ask if you can create a quick work of art for the person.
- Start out by blessing someone to build rapport. What do you perceive about the person? For example, "I see that you are a great father," or "I really appreciate how patient you are with your customers," or "You have a kind heart."
- Ask questions and begin to activate the prophetic. "Do you play sports?" or "Do you like to write music?" or "You seem good with children. Do you teach?" As conversation grows, listen to the Lord for opportunities to offer prayer for people.
- Explain to them what your art means, and ask if it means anything to them.
- Practice, practice, practice. Make art cards, sing songs, write poems, paint pictures, doodle on a restaurant napkin, draw with sidewalk chalk, face-paint, write in the sand at the beach.
- Be sure to ask for feedback when you explain your prophetic art to the recipient so that you can start to see how the Lord speaks to people. Write down testimonies to build your faith. Many, many people have been healed through prophetic art.

These steps are just suggestions. Often they all blend together in the flow of communication. Avoid relying on formula. Remember: Jesus never performed a miracle the same way twice. We serve a creative Creator. So stay in the presence, stay flexible and be a blessing!

Bill Nye the Defiance Guy

• By Dr. Dennis Lindsay

A recent debate between creationist Ken Ham and evolutionist Bill Nye was watched by an estimated 3+ million people online and several million more later, on debatelive.org. Bill Nye is known as the “Science Guy” on public television who indoctrinates the public and particularly children with his humanistic, atheistic, evolutionary beliefs. Ken Ham is the founder of the Creation Museum in northern Kentucky. The debate was truly one historical moment for the creation movement. Ken Ham pointed out that he wanted children to be taught the right foundation of God’s Word as the basis for properly understanding science and God’s creation. On the other hand, Bill Nye pointed out that it is all right for adults to believe in the mythical Bible fable of creation, but that it is a tragedy for such parents to stunt children’s minds from becoming scholars in the area of science.

The debate centered around the question, “Is creation a viable model of origins in today’s modern scientific arena?” Science can be divided into two categories: experimental or observable science and, origins or historical science. Experimental or observable science is used to understand the present. Origins or historical science is used to understand the past. The proper way to understand the past must be interpreted in the light of Scripture. Any other way to understand the past will be based on the opinions of man.

Another essential factor in understanding the origins of the universe is that there are two starting points for interpreting the origins of the universe. In other words, whatever the evidence is that is being observed, it will be interpreted based on one’s starting point. The starting point for creationists is God and His Word—the Bible. The alternative starting point is man and his evolutionary humanistic belief system. Man will interpret any observable evidence based on his starting point.

The starting point for both Ken and Bill were evident during the debate. Ken’s starting point was the Bible while Bill’s starting point



was humanistic atheism. Both creationists and evolutionists have the same evidence. They come to different conclusions because they both have a different starting point.

The title of this article is Bill Nye the Defiance Guy. Why defiance? With every atheist, there is a defiant attitude towards the idea of a Creator God who reveals in His Word the law of accountability. The idea of a Creator God, Who states that He created man for the purpose of fellowship, but requires man

to follow His rules for loving fellowship, with the promise of eternal, loving fellowship in Heaven prepared for His children. On the other hand God gave man the free will to reject His offer of fellowship with the consequences of eternal separation in a place called Hell that was only created for Satan and his followers. This then reveals the heart and choice of Bill Nye.

Bill Nye has a heart problem, like every human being. Man wants to be God, better known as defiance and sin. The Bible states that the consequences of sin is death, yet God has a plan of rescue, free of charge, for those who will accept. Obviously, the Creation/ Evolutionism debate is a battle of two competing world views. The reason humanistic evolutionists refuse to change their minds is not because of the evidence; rather it is the accountability required by the Creator.

What is often so misleading and deceptive is the nature of humanistic individuals. They can reveal an attitude that appears to be humble and pleasant. However, just because one comes across as a brilliant scientist is no assurance that one is morally pure and correct. But under the fire, watch plastic fruit melt. 🍌

Both creationists and evolutionists have the same evidence. They come to different conclusions because they both have a different starting point.

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DENNIS PEACOCKE COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CHURCH

In spite of positive spiritual activity in numbers of churches, it is painfully clear that we as believers are miserably failing to obey The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and "disciple nations." They are socially, morally and economically falling apart around us as church membership decreases and radical secularism increasingly engulfs us. Even if you and yours appear to be ok, biblically, our corporate effect on society is a disaster. Please don't be offended—be actively concerned.

There are several major causes behind our current demise:

1. Fundamental ignorance concerning the historic Gospel of the Kingdom.
2. The world system's values and concerns polluting and "evangelizing" our personal worldviews and the cultures of our churches.
3. Escapist theology that erroneously legitimizes our privatized Christianity, rejecting the leavening of the Kingdom within the current world (Matthew 13) and instead focusing on the world system's inevitable corruption as being all-pervasive against Christ's current work of resurrection-transformation, countering its effect within the nations.

All these are major points to be addressed with vigor and insight. Yet, a fourth major poison goes largely unseen or diagnosed. That would be the issue of the Church as Christ's *ecclesia*.

As many of you already know, Christ used the Greek word *ecclesia* to describe the "church." He would build to overcome the gates of hell (Matthew 16:18). Some of you also know that

the word *ecclesia* was commonly known and used throughout the Roman empire as referring to the method of civil governing by political bodies developed by the early Greek city-states. All educated citizens during Jesus' time knew that the *ecclesia* literally meant the governing assembly being used on all levels throughout the empire. The riot in Ephesus in Acts 19 was a riot of an unruly *ecclesia* (Acts 19:30, 33, 39).

Because of the word's political implications, when King James authorized the modern printing of the Scriptures, he demanded that *ecclesia* be translated to "church" in all cases that denoted the assembly of the saints per se. The connection between the Church as a governing body and the clear theology of God's Kingdom is an essential understanding for all truly biblically-equipped theologians, pastors, and all others who presume to be accurately teaching God's Word. Unfortunately, that is not commonly the case, hence our current widespread failure to disciple nations, as I have pointed out in all my books.

I am generally familiar with the practices of many hundreds, if not more, of the current churches and apostolic networks throughout the nations. I know of precious few churches that consistently call their members to a matured governing assembly, which has altered their surrounding community on a provable historic basis. I have heard the claims of "transforming our city," but have found such claims to be issue-specific, rather than comprehensive, and even obvious to the unbelieving public. So much must be said and done to change this. Who is going to do this?

That is the bottom line. 🚩

Dennis Peacocke is the founder and president of Strategic Christian Services, a leadership organization dedicated to demonstrating the relevance of Christianity to every area of contemporary life. He is an accomplished speaker and communicator. To find out more visit www.GoStrategic.org

MILLENN



To know them is to begin to understand them. Like understanding a tribe, Millennials (also called “digital natives”) have their tribal ways. Born from the 1980s to the early 2000s, this tribe comprised of teenagers through the age of 33 is 80 million strong in the United States alone.

Advertisers seek to understand their independent minds and thereby woo their loyalty, opening their generous pockets. So why is it important for the Church to understand Millennials?

Connecting with this generation is vital to America’s future. These savvy teens and young adults are setting the tone and

reshaping cultures, nationally and globally. That reality makes the following statistic even more troubling: only 15 percent of the 80 million of Millennials in America call themselves Christians. They are an unreached people group, right here in the United States.

Another important aspect of Millennials is that their generation has grown up with the highest divorce rate in American history.

“They are a broken generation who has been wounded by a breakdown of the home,” says Joel Solomon, the young adult pastor at New Life Providence Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia. “This comes back to the identity issue. They look to movies, music groups, technology, and so on to find [their identity] when it solely comes

from parents and specifically fathers. And this is where the local church is struggling. ... [The church] doesn’t have mothers and fathers willing to invest in them over investing in building and programs.”

Research from the Boston Consulting Group points out that American Millennials are extremely comfortable with technology. They use social media as a natural part of life and work. They also tend to own multiple devices, from smart phones to tablets to gaming systems.

As a Millennial, family counselor Dr. Joshua Straub says there are pros and cons to how technology is used by his generation.

“Positively, technology helps Millennials

IALS

: America's Present Mission Field

• By Janet White



today stay connected to one another and the world around them. It's today's equivalent of yesterday's hanging out at the mall. Social media can be used to really strengthen relationships and build one's character. It all depends on how you use it. Although this generation is connected virtually, it doesn't necessarily mean they are connected with real intimate relationships," says Dr. Straub.

"I often question how deep their connections are. We have to be careful not to confuse real intimacy with virtual intimacy. Literally sharing a good belly laugh in person with somebody has a qualitatively different effect on the brain than simply typing 'LOL.' On one hand, we're more connected than ever before. Yet, research shows Millennials are more socially isolated too, meaning they have less confidants they can rely on."

Could this be the void the Church can fill?

"Reaching Millennials with the message of the Gospel starts with relational ministry. We place too much focus in the Church on programs, but miss the opportunity for deeper connections. They need discipleship," says Dr. Straub.

"Any major change I've seen take place in a Millennial's life is not through service programs, preaching or worship," says Solomon. "While those are all a part of the equation, the major breakthrough has been through relationships of parenting. Yet when they feel their soul is being spoken to, they see that they can trust you. The transformation is quite amazing," says Joel Solomon.

Youth pastors Jennifer and Joshua Young, originally from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, say that in addition to spiritual mothers and fathers, transformation can come when a generation encounters the presence of God.

Who Are They?

(Brad Mitchell, Missouri State University)

- ▶ Millennials are activists.
- ▶ Millennials were raised to accept differences.
- ▶ As the most racially and ethnically diverse group in American history, they are generally more open and accepting of social differences.
- ▶ They were taught volunteerism and citizenship from early ages in school and tend to carry those principals out in their daily lives.
- ▶ Their generation is defined by 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and other disasters. Having grown up watching others come together in times of tragedy, this generation seeks to mobilize around causes.
- ▶ Millennials support causes, not institutions.

A day in the life of a millennial's smartphone


(Brad Mitchell, Missouri State University)

- ▶ Smartphones are part of a millennial's morning routine, the same as waking up with an alarm, brushing teeth or having coffee in the morning.
- ▶ Millennials use their smartphones everywhere, including at the dinner table.
- ▶ Millennials converse digitally with their friends via mobile messaging apps as much as they do face to face.
- ▶ 90 percent share photos on social media platforms.
- ▶ 62 percent share videos on a social media platforms.

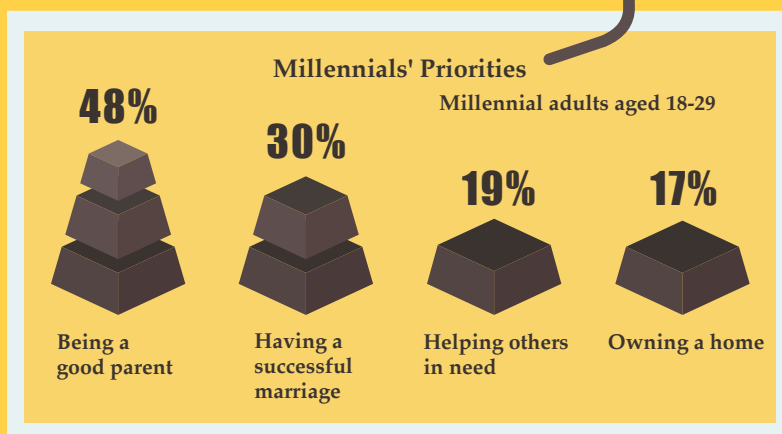
“Our goal was for teens to experience God encounters. This generation is looking for a family, a place to call home. They are hungry for God’s presence, if we’d just allow it,” says Jennifer Young.

Dr. Straub is convinced “the golden rule” will help us reach this generation.

“The best way to connect with Millennials is to follow the golden rule, but replace it with the word ‘understand.’ Understand others as you want to be understood. In other words, in order to connect with Millennials, we must first understand them—who they are, where they come from, what makes them tick,” says Dr. Straub. “Millennials desire authentic relationships. But in order to give that to them, we must understand their world.”

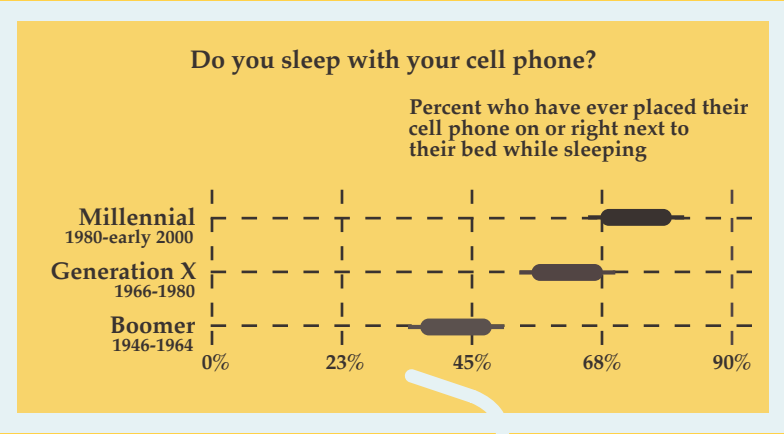
Millennials are the present mission field for the Church. As such, they challenge us, the former generation, to take steps to get to know them. Take time to be aware of Millennials around you. Get into their “digital native” space and step into the much needed roles of a spiritual parent and mentor providing face time with them at your Church and in your neighborhood. By it, they will discover and experience God’s amazing love for them. 

Janet White is a freelance writer with 20 years of television producing experience. Her trend spotting interest started while acting as the show runner and producer of a nationally syndicated youth culture program that aired on ABC Family.





Born around the 1980's	
Millennial	Linked to ending of birth after the millennial year 2000
Generation Y	Defined as the generation after Generation X
Digital Natives	The first generation to grow up with new technology





"WRAPPED

IN REACHING A

Hip-hop artist Curvine Brewington has entertained thousands of teens at venues across the United States and abroad, but don't let the music, lights, dancing or party vibe fool you into thinking he is just another rapper looking to put on a good show. When he takes the stage, he has a serious mission in mind.

After accepting Christ at age 17, Curvine realized he could use his gift of music to share God's love with youth. "My heart is for young people," he explains. "I want to see young people walking in what God has called them into."

Using music, humor and motion graphics, his concerts dynamically present the message of salvation. Brewington has ministered alongside internationally renowned artists, bands and speakers such as Israel Houghton, Hillsong UNITED, Planet Shakers, Carl Lentz, Lecrae, Kari Jobe, Reinhard Bonnke, Jesus Culture and many others.

While preaching the gospel is always priority number one, the artist says his calling has become even more clear to him since he and his wife had children—his daughter Lyric is 4, and his son Legend is 2. Becoming a father, he says, helped him understand what a critical role fatherhood is and how it is missing in the lives of many of today's youth.

"In that moment, I saw this generation as more than just a target audience," he explains. "Up to that point I saw them as a mission field; they needed Christ. They needed the knowledge of who God was and who God is. Once I became a father, I saw that the need was so much deeper than just preaching. They actually need guidance. They need love. They need a father."

It is a vital role that is missing in the Millennial generation. "I've found that almost every situation a kid goes through, all the struggles, whatever it may be, almost every time, it can be rooted back to the lack of a father—whether that's biologically speaking or even spiritually speaking—it's just the lack of fathers," Curvine says.

Since children often establish their identity and discern their purpose from their fathers, this lack negatively affects their perception of themselves and their future. "We have a generation of young people who don't have footsteps to follow in," he says, "so their default go-to is pop culture—the rappers, actors, athletes and pop icons. If no one else is going to take up this mantle and lead them, they will."

Curvine believes many of today's superstars were given their talents because they were anointed to lead generations. Unfortunately, rather than using their gifts to lead people to God, they are leading them away from Him.

Many of the teens he meets are dealing with cutting, eating disorders, violence, drug addiction or pornography addiction. Yet to their friends, they want to appear as though they are fine. They hide behind their "swag," Curvine says, and show off their cool shoes, extra makeup and trendy outfits. "All of that is just a facade to try to cover up the brokenness."

By Belinda Elliott



Curvine ministers to today's youth with a message of hope through his music.

He wells up with tears as he recounts stories of some of the teens he has met. One young man approached him after a service and handed him a razor blade tinged with dried blood.

"There were tears all over his face, and he said, 'I want you to know that what I'm giving you has been the lord of my life for the past five years, but tonight I realized I had more to live for,'" Curvine recalls. "There were cuts all over his arms and on his legs, but he said, 'Tonight, I'm free, man.'"

"We can talk about the surface stuff, or we can get right to the heart of the issue," he says. "There's just a need for love. This generation just needs to know that they're not alone. There is somebody who believes in them, and hasn't totally given up on them."

He knows this sentiment well from his own childhood. From age 12 to 17, Curvine was heading down a dangerous path. He became addicted to drugs, was kicked out of school, and repeatedly spent time in jail, on probation or under house arrest.

"I was that kid," he says, "that arrogant, obnoxious, filthy-mouthed kid with his pants sagging. I was that kid no one would want to take a chance on."

There was one person, however, willing to take a chance on him. His childhood friend Candace never gave up on him, he recalls. She even visited him in jail. "She would just point at me and say, 'You're a man of God,'" he says. "She would say, 'There is greatness on the inside of you, and God has a plan for your life.' When everyone had deserted me, this young lady was faithful to speak life into me."

Candace later became his wife, and the couple attended Christ for the Nations Institute. They now minister together—a shining example of how love can impact a life.

"She loved me when I was at my most unlovable state," Curvine explains. "You never know what one seed of love can do. It can touch one life, and it will affect generations after that."

It's this desire to see generations affected that has led Curvine and his wife into a new venture, working to abolish modern-day slavery. His team recently launched Death to Chains, a campaign designed to fight human trafficking.

After Curvine first learned about this issue, he and his wife spent two years praying about what God would have them do. He recalls God leading him to the story of Moses when the Lord spoke from a burning bush. Moses had plenty of excuses as to why he couldn't do as God was asking, but God replied with a simple question, "What is in your hand?"

Moses' answer was a rod, which God miraculously used to part the Red Sea. For Curvine, the answer was his music and creativity. That's what God was asking him to use.

He notes that in our society, music and the arts shape our culture, and it can be a powerful tool to communicate the travesty of human trafficking. Death to Chains uses music, cinema and creative arts, along with strategic partnerships, to raise awareness and equip youth to make a difference in their communities.

Sharing God's love with youth and empowering them to advance God's kingdom is at the heart of all he does. Whether the person in need is a victim of human trafficking, or a teen struggling with the pain of a broken family, Curvine's mission is to introduce them to their Heavenly Father—the only One who can bring true healing.

"The message we carry through this whole campaign is not just about one issue. It's not just about one cause, he says, "but it's about the heart of God for the broken."

Learn more at www.curvinemusic.com.



Curvine with his family.

FROM DRUG ADDICT TO DISCIPLE MAKER

Christian rapper Curvine Brewington routinely fills arenas and ministers around the world, but the talented musician was once walking a very different path. Though he was raised by Christian parents, he never saw the Christian faith as anything more than rules or traditions kept solely out of obligation.

He remembers being in trouble from an early age. At just 12 years old, he smoked marijuana for the first time. That soon led him to try alcohol, cigarettes and drugs like cocaine and ecstasy. By the time he was 17, he was a full-blown cocaine addict.

"I found myself doing things I never thought I would do and going places I never wanted to go, all to support this habit," he recalls. The seriousness of the situation began to dawn on him after he was arrested for his part in an armed robbery. His lawyer warned he would most likely face 10 years in prison.

"He actually told me that he thought I deserved to serve hard time," Curvine explains. "He closed the file on me, and I thought my life was over."

When his day in court came, the judge did something extraordinary—he showed mercy. "The judge pointed his finger at me and he said, 'Young man, I don't know what it is about you, but I'm going to give you a chance I've never given anybody,'" he recalls.

The judge sent him to Teen Challenge, a Christian-based, residential program that assists individuals with overcoming addiction. Relieved that he wouldn't be going to prison, Curvine entered the program but wasn't serious yet about changing his ways. He planned to say and do anything he needed to in order to finish the program and then return to the streets, but God had other plans.

Only two weeks into the program, Curvine realized his issues went deeper than his drug addiction. "I got there and the God of my youth wrecked my life," he explains. "I realized, 'I'm here because I need a Savior. I need someone to give me a clean slate. I need my life to have purpose.'"

He experienced a very different God than the one he thought he knew growing up. "He revealed Himself as not just a lawgiver, but as a Father who loved His son and had a plan for this broken mess of a life," he recalls.

In January 2004, he prayed and asked God to save him. "I remember praying, 'Lord, if what they're saying is true, and You can really take this mess that I've made of my life and use it for Your glory, then I'm done. I'm tired; I surrender.'" From that day forward, his life was radically different.

Another experience at Teen Challenge led to what would become his ministry. One night, a fellow student in the program asked him to listen to a Christian rap song. Curvine was initially hesitant, because he associated rap music with his former way of life—something he wanted to break away from completely. When he gave in and listened to the song, he sensed the Holy Spirit speaking to him.

"I began weeping," he recalls, "and it was in that moment that I realized if God can change a filthy wretched heart like mine and break the chains of addiction and sin off my life, if He can redeem a lost soul, then redeeming a genre of music is nothing."

The next morning, he picked up pen and paper and began composing rap songs. Since then, he has released five albums and performed for crowds around the world. When he looks back on his incredible journey, he is awed by God's grace.

"Ten years ago, I was a drug addict and now, there are thousands of teenagers and young people who hang on my every word," he says. "That is a huge responsibility."

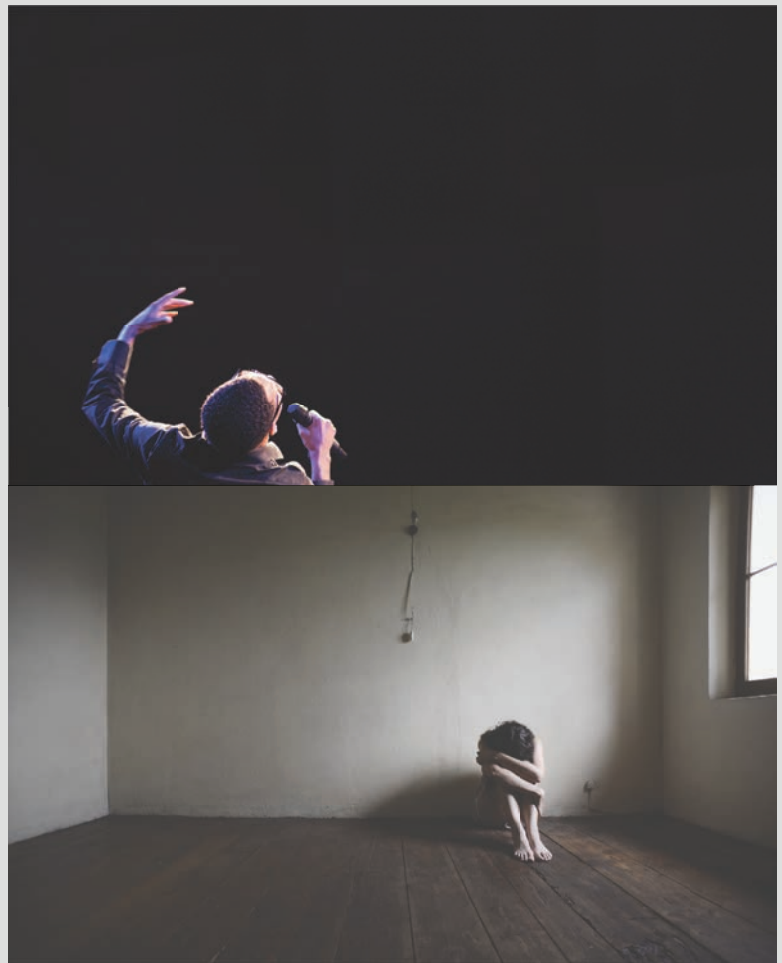
It isn't one he takes lightly. His desire is that his ministry extends far beyond what he does on stage. "I want to know that I'm impacting lives when I walk off the stage," he explains. "Am I making disciples?"



DEATH TO CHAINS

Death to Chains is a public campaign, organized by Curvine Ministries, that uses music, cinema and strategic partnerships to raise awareness and fight human trafficking around the world. The campaign includes a new album and a national tour featuring musicians, dancers, poets and painters in a candid presentation about how modern slavery is destroying lives.

Seventy-five percent of proceeds from the tour, and 20 percent of proceeds from the album goes to Stella's Voice, an organization based in Alabama that builds houses for at-risk orphans and those rescued from the sex trade in Europe. The tour also features multiple opportunities for attendees to get involved in the fight against human trafficking in their communities.



"The heart of the campaign is to mobilize a generation to see this need and to be pro-active in fighting it," Curvine explains.

As part of the campaign, he plans to go into public schools to teach youth to spot the signs of human trafficking, learn how to respond and discover ways to prevent it.

"They are the ones who are going to shape legislature in the next decade or two," he explains, "so if they can get a heart for humanity, for justice, for mercy, then over the course of the next 10 to 15 years we can really see change." 🎧

Learn more at www.deathtochains.com.



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HIS WORD
AND HEALED
THEM ;**

HE RESCUED THEM FROM THE GRAVE.
PSALM 107:20



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Toxic Thinking? Change Your Brain



● By Belinda Elliott

Most of us would agree the human brain is a beautiful and complex thing, but not many of us understand how it works. Caroline Leaf is on a mission to change that.

A cognitive neuroscientist and author of *Switch On Your Brain*, Leaf gave up her practice of more than 22 years to travel the world teaching people about brain science. It is an important message for the Church especially, she says, because science offers a way we can understand truths found in God's Word and learn more about His creation.

"God is revealing truths in this field daily that are just phenomenal," Leaf says.

She says it is imperative that Christians learn about the effects their thoughts have on their brains because we have more power over our minds than we realize.

More than 75 percent of illnesses that plague us today are a result of our thought life, Leaf believes. "Every thought in our brain that is toxic is recognized by the body as a viral invasion. If we have enough of those inside of our brains, we have a problem," she says. "Every toxic thought that we haven't released is increasing our vulnerability to illness."

According to Leaf, thoughts become physical structures within the brain. They take up "mental real estate" she says, and they are observable on brain scans. As we think, thoughts form and grow. They appear in the brain as tree-like structures that grow dendrites, or branches, to hold them. As we think, our thoughts generate signals.

"As you generate that signal, it's like your hand reaching out to the lights in this room and switching them on or switching them off," Leaf explains. "When we think negatively, we disrupt the natural electrochemical flow in the brain. We still build this thought, but it is now all

distorted. The proteins fold incorrectly and there's a distortion in the structure. We can see this in the brain."

This is important because it is the thoughts we build that cause us to act. "We live from what we have grown," Leaf says. "Everything you say and do have come from a thought that you have built inside of your head. That is why the Bible says, 'As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.' Whatever you have planted in the depths of your subconscious is what is going to drive your conscious decision making." That is why it is so important to spend time studying God's Word and praying daily.

Having been made in God's image, we are not wired to be plagued by anxiety, fear, depression or bitterness – all things produced by negative thought patterns. Instead, we are wired for love and created with the power of a strong mind as the Bible teaches in 2 Timothy 1:7. Scientists concur with this, a phenomenon they call an "optimism bias," Leaf says.

However, God gives us free will to choose how we respond to situations that arise in our daily lives. These day-to-day thoughts and choices determine what structures we create in our brains. For instance, choosing to not forgive someone when we have been hurt creates negative thoughts. "If you don't forgive, you keep that stuff inside you. You are building toxic thoughts; these are strongholds of the enemy," Leaf says. "If our mind is a mess, our life is a mess."

The beautiful thing, she explains, is that God designed us with the ability to renew our minds. We do not have to hold onto negative thoughts; we can replace them with healthy ones.

"God allows you through the design of

your brain to do mind work to change this," she says. "You design the landscape of your brain. You control your brain; your brain does not control you."

To change a negative thought life, we must do three things, Leaf says. "Admit it, quit it and beat it." This happens as we ask the Holy Spirit to identify negative thoughts in us. It takes 21 days to create a new thought—or destroy a toxic one—and an additional 42 days to reinforce that thought in our conscious and subconscious minds.

Once God reveals the negative thought that needs to be removed, replace it by focusing on positive thoughts. "Whatever you think about most will grow," Leaf says. "Start redirecting your attention in the direction of what God wants you to do, and start taking your attention off the negative. You have just renewed your mind."

It is something Christians should practice diligently if we desire to successfully do the work God has created us to do. "You cannot change the world unless your mind is right," she says. "When we get strong in our minds we will draw people to the Light." 🕯

5 TIPS TO IMPROVE THE BRAIN

1. Gather

Be aware of the signals that are entering your brain through your five senses. You can use them to better understand your mind, and the way that you think.

2. Focused Reflection

In her book, Dr. Leaf helps readers to discover the power within their own minds to change their circumstances. Think about what you are thinking about!

3. Write

The actual process of writing consolidates your thoughts into memories, and brings clarity to your thought patterns.

4. Revisit

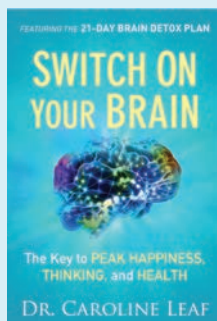
Revisiting the past helps you to find solutions by evaluating where you have come from, and where you are going.

5. Active Reach

This is the fun part! As you actively reach into your life, exercising your faith, old thought patterns will crumble and disappear, as the power of God works through your confession.



Caroline Leaf



Learn more about Leaf and her innovative learning techniques at her website, www.drleaf.com.



LIGHT



• *By* Belinda Elliott

I recently met a lady who has been living and ministering in India for 17 years. Her life-changing adventure began when, as a young woman just out of college, God called her to move to northern India—not to join an established ministry or mission organization, but to live alone among the people there and build relationships. Talk about scary! She knew no one there. Yet she gave up her dream of a promising career in the United States and purchased a one-way ticket to India.

Though she soon fell ill from drinking the putrid water found in village wells, she also fell in love with the people around her. As they came to know and love her back, they gave her the name “Jyoti,” which means “Light.” She had brought light to their darkness. “People said to me, ‘We’ve never seen a non-Indian drink water out of our wells,’” she told me. They realized she cared enough to become one of them and live like them.

She eventually implemented numerous humanitarian initiatives, such as orphanages, rural education and training programs, well drilling projects and operations to fight human trafficking. Thousands have been eternally affected through her efforts.

And, although her accomplishments are highly impressive, I couldn’t stop focusing on the name she was given: “Light.” This is how she came to be known among her neighbors. What an awesome identity!

This image of light has stuck with me. It wasn’t her creative initiatives or her discussion of theology that nonbelievers found attractive. It was her love for them.

So often, I feel like sharing Christ with others is a high-pressure activity. What if I don’t say the right thing? What if they ask me a question that is too difficult? I feel like I’m gearing up for a Bible version of the television show Jeopardy, with people’s eternal salvation at risk instead of money.

I meet women like my new friend who are doing amazing, life-changing things for the Lord. In comparison, I feel insignificant in my efforts for the Kingdom. What grand endeavors have I attempted for God lately?

Fortunately, the Christian life doesn’t hinge on doing “grand” things. God simply instructs us to reflect His light in the world around us. In our identity as those who are called to bear His light, we are called to love the person in front of us however we can in that moment.

Maybe we can’t all move overseas or start humanitarian organizations, but we can shine just as brightly wherever we find ourselves.

The single mom we see each morning as we walk the dog.

The co-worker who is a challenge to work with.

The widow who sits in front of us at church.

The neighbor who recently lost his job.

The homeless person that we pass each morning on our way to work.

We meet people each day who need to see a glimmer of light in the midst of their dark journeys. In our day-to-day activities, how are we embracing our identities as lights in a dark world? What can you do today to let your light shine?

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

—Matthew 5:14-16

God simply instructs us to reflect His light in the world around us.

Belinda Elliott is a freelance writer from Virginia. Her passion is crafting stories that help people live better lives and understand God’s love for them more fully. She earned an M.A. in Journalism from Regent University, and her articles and devotionals have appeared in numerous publications. Visit her at belindaelliott.com.

4 Money Principles to Teach Your Kids



• By Rachel Cruze

If you'll talk about money early and often with your kids, you'll be amazed by the impact this will have on their lives as they grow into adults.



Money doesn't have to be difficult, so why do we make it that way?

When you really boil good money management down to the basics, it's all about four things: working, giving, saving and spending. That's it.

So when you teach young kids about money, all you really need to do is show them a simple version of what you are (hopefully) doing already.

These are the four principles of money that my parents taught me and that my dad and I write about in our new book, *Smart Money Smart Kids*.

Work

Here's a truth that applies to both adults and children: The most powerful wealth-building tool you have is your income. When you teach your kids the value of work, you set them up to succeed later in life.

What does work look like for an eight-year-old? My parents paid me a commission, not an allowance. In other words, I got paid to work, not to breathe! When I completed chores around the house, like feeding the dog, taking out the trash or helping clean the dishes, then I earned a commission. Use the same approach, and you'll teach your kids discipline and work ethic.

Give

This is what it's all about. The whole point of building wealth is to change your family's future and to give like crazy.

Sit down with your kids and let them pick a charity. Instead of giving them a dollar in the parking lot at church, let them use their own money to tithe. When it's their own, they'll really feel the impact of giving. Then, follow up and show them how the money they gave helped a specific person or organization.

To win with money, you have to make giving a part of your life!

Spend

This is the easy one, right? Who doesn't know how to spend?

And that's the problem. Spending is too easy for most of us. And unless you teach your kids healthy ways to spend, they'll fall right into that trap. As soon as they get a \$10 bill, they'll go out and buy something they've forgotten about by this time next month.

It's all about priorities. It's fine to love spending as long as you teach your kids the importance of the other principles too.

Save

Saving seems so boring, I know. But it's one of the most important things you can teach your child.

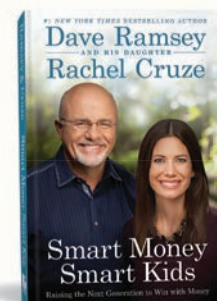
If your son heads off to college without understanding what it really means to save, he's probably going to graduate with a load of debt—or start digging a debt hole once he starts working.

Start talking to your kids about saving early. Help them see their money as it grows by using a clear jar or piggy bank. Then, once they are old enough, open a basic savings account.

Continue reinforcing these four principles as your kids get older. Don't just talk about them once and leave it at that.

If you'll talk about money early and often with your kids, you'll be amazed by the impact this will have on their lives as they grow into adults. 🍀

Rachel Cruze is a seasoned communicator and presenter helping Americans learn the proper ways to handle money and stay out of debt. Her first book, *Smart Money Smart Kids*, co-authored by her dad Dave Ramsey, will release on April 22, 2014. You can follow Rachel on Twitter at @RachelCruze, online at rachelcruze.com, or at facebook.com/rachelramseycruze.





What to Pack?

*Mission outreach time is here.
Here are some helpful things to bring!*



For Great Sleep

Insufficient sleep can throw your entire trip for a loop—biologically, your body needs the rest in order to acclimate to new surroundings. Your immune system requires all of your brain's available synapses to be rested and ready for the day. Packing a **face mask**, along with **ear plugs**, could mean the difference between adequate rest and illness on the road.



Hygiene

Though most airport security checkpoints will seize liquid toiletries, **dry shampoo** can be packed in larger quantities than liquid shampoo. This allows for maximum cleanliness without taking up space in your luggage.

Hand wipes might seem like they are only for children, but you'll be glad you packed them—whether it's after spilling your coffee on an airplane, or wiping your hands before a meal.



Preventing Illness

Vitamin C powder also aids your immune system, ensuring that your body is operating at its fullest potential.

Hand sanitizer is essential—remember to be diligent in killing the germs and bacteria that flourish in high-density travel hubs, like airports or train stations.

Keeping Organized

Wearing a watch might seem redundant in a world where our smartphones, tablets, and other gadgets tell us what time it is, but an old-fashioned timepiece can help keep time in a specific time-zone where connected devices might automatically adjust the time based on your location. Most watch batteries will outlast your iPhone, as well.



Zip-loc bags can keep your luggage's contents compartmentalized and weatherproofed—from different outfits, to electronics, to liquid toiletries.

Fit Foods: Coconut Pops Recipe



Coconuts are known for their miracle health properties! Stay healthy and refreshed this summer with this easy Coconut Pop recipe. Use your creativity to replace these ingredients with any other kinds of fruits you may have in the fridge.

You Will Need

- + Coconut water
- + Strawberry
- + Diced Blueberry
- + Diced Orange
- + Popsicle molds

Instructions

Fill your popsicle molds halfway with coconut water.
Fill the rest with diced fruit.
Freeze for about 4 hours.
Pop them out of the molds, and enjoy!





Seeds For Becoming

Who You Are

• By Dutch Sheets



s a father to this generation, I thrive on helping others realize and fulfill God's dreams for them. When imparting life lessons to emerging world changers, I always emphasize

that we can fully embrace our identity in Christ only when we willingly participate in the process God has designed for our success.

It is good to desire growth, change, maturity and results, but we frequently want results without embracing the process that will yield them. In the same way that we long for the "finished product," we also need to undertake and embrace a passion for the path—the journey—to our completion.

We cannot expect to be overnight legends in the faith. A life of obedience necessitates conforming to God's means (His process) just as much as to His ends (the finished product). If we continue abiding and abiding and abiding, it will happen. The truth *will* make you free.

"So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

Seeking Permanent Change

Several years ago the Lord spoke something to me that was one of the greatest revelations I've ever received. I was talking to Him about why the Word wasn't working in me. Truth be told, I was complaining about seeing a lack of fruit in my life. I'd sat under countless great teachers, listened to all the right tapes, read all the classic books, and all I heard was how I was supposed to be victorious in every area of my life.

With pure heart motives for being greatly used by God, I aimed

to be the best Christian I could possibly be. Often times along this quest, I would leave powerful church services and prayer meetings high on hope that I now had what I needed to finally see permanent change. But a few days later and—you guessed it—I was the same.

"God, why isn't this working for me?" I cried out. I was pretty upset, feeling like a complete failure. And then He spoke to me what without a doubt has been one of the most important things I've ever learned.

Because all truth comes to you in seed form.


Huh?

He continued: *For those people who are teaching you—the ones who are giving you all these testimonies of what worked for them—that truth is fruit in them now. But it isn't transferred to you as fruit. It comes to you as seed. Whether it bears the same fruit in you depends on what you do with it, because all truth comes in seed form. If you do what they did and abide in My Word, that seed will grow in you also, and the truth will make you free, just as it has for them.*

I chewed on this for a while. I began to think of all those I knew who were clearly bearing fruit in certain areas of their lives. A former drug addict whose mind was "fried" immediately began to immerse himself in God's Word after giving his life to Christ. For hours each day, he would read, meditate upon, memorize and speak Scripture. After only a few months, not only was this young man completely free of any temptation toward drugs, his mind was completely healed.

I recalled another young man who was set free from a poverty mentality, having only known extreme poverty up until that point in his life. Seeds of revelation were planted while hearing a man speak on true prosperity, being blessed by God to be a blessing. The transformation of his mind came about as he spent months identifying and meditating upon Scriptures on God's





Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

provision, sowing and reaping, and so forth. Before long that stronghold was broken, and in its place was an incredible faith for finances. He became one of the most prosperous men I know... and one of the best givers.

The Seed Principle

I could see the thread. It became what I call "the seed principle"—a process of growth until fruition. Suddenly, I knew I couldn't expect freedom in problem areas of my life if I had not spent time in God's Word regarding those areas. You have to work the process. Information seeds must become fruit-producing revelation. And for that to happen, you have to tend the seed.

Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8 all recount the parable of the sower in which Jesus talks in detail about this seed principle. He indicates that the maturity of the seed—His Word in us—is a growing process. And if that seed is nurtured, just like a natural seed, it will grow to fruition. Jesus summarized the process of tending the seeds of His Word as follows:

- 1. Hear: receive the written or spoken Word of God (Matthew 13:23).**
- 2. Understand: put these new pieces of God's Word together with the knowledge of God we already have for greater revelation (Matthew 13:23).**
- 3. Accept: receive and embrace with assent and obedience (Mark 4:20).**
- 4. Hold Fast: in our tending to the seed (Luke 8:15).**

Aborting The Process

Jesus also mentions a valuable truth of which we all need to be acutely aware as we tend to our seed: whether through fear,


financial stress, lust... Satan's primary goal is to get us to abort the process so he can steal the seed. His attacks will no doubt be well timed, sneaking in at our most vulnerable moments in life.

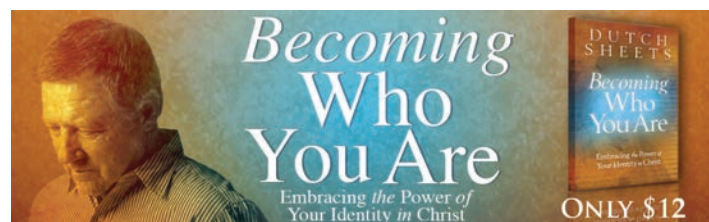
Despite the storms that will come to disrupt and challenge our maturation, we must strengthen ourselves in the Lord and "hold fast to the confession of our hope" (1 Samuel 30:6; Hebrews 10:2). If you continuously yield to the work of the Master Potter, He will give grace to help us in our time of need and bring to completion the good work that He's begun in you (Hebrews 4:16; Philippians 1:6).

Nurturing the Word

In summary, when we persist in nurturing the Word of God, revelation will come to enlighten and bring truth to us (Ephesians 1:17-18). If attended to (Proverbs 4:20), guarded (4:23), continued in (John 15; James 1:25), and meditated upon (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3), the Word of God will bear the fruit He has promised. Galatians 6:9 offers the perfect encouragement:

"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."

Anchor yourself in God's Word. Surround yourself with life-givers who will pray with you, for you, and hold you accountable to the standard to which God's called you. Continue to abide in Him, abide in His Word, and you will be set free to become whom God has made you to be, and experience the power of your identity in Christ. 
(Visit dutchsheets.org for more by Dutch Sheets.)



MAKING THE HOLY LAND HOLIER

By Sean Steckbeck

Sean Steckbeck is a minister who lives in Israel. He is married to a native-born Jewish Israeli, where they live with the purpose of bringing the truth of Yeshua in the Middle East. He shares of some miracles taking place there among unbelievers.



The Village Miracle

Yeshua is moving in the Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the rest of Israel.

- Recently we set out on an expedition to a small village deep in the heart of Palestinian Muslim territory. Our purpose for these visits are to find new friends in the community of Judea; someone hospitable who might show interest in becoming acquainted with us. We call this type of person a man of peace—one who opens his home to us after hearing the remarkable stories we tell the villagers.

On the day of our recent expedition, we found someone interested in our stories, and he opened the way for us to talk with more villagers. We told our new friends the remarkable story of Creation, as well as the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead. The room of Muslims became enthusiastic about what they heard and listened intently.

We then asked them to repeat the story in their own words and asked them, “How do these stories change your perception of God?”

Someone in the family needed healing, so we discussed how, even in the Quran, Isa (Jesus) heals the sick. We prayed for the person, and he was physically healed before their eyes. The Muezzin of the local mosque was

also in attendance. After seeing this miracle, he also asked for healing prayer in Isa's name—he was 80 percent blind.

As we laid hands on the Muezzin and commanded the blindness to leave in Isa's name, he asked us to take the electric machine out of our pockets. We were confused; what did he mean by an electric machine in our pockets?

He then told us that he felt electricity all over his body and was sure that we were concealing a machine that caused the feeling. We told him what he was feeling was actually the power of God. As he opened his eyes, he started to weep; he could see clearly for the first time in nearly 40 years! He later got a doctor's confirmation of his healing. He told the stories that we told him in the local mosque and continues to be interested in how Isa heals and saves. This is how another light is coming out of the darkness!

Church Planting Movements in The Holy Land

- This is just one of many stories where God is moving with His healing power among Arab Muslims, traditional Arab Christians, Druze, Bedouins, and the Jewish people in Israel. Even recently, the Channel 2 Israeli news broadcast the story of a woman with cancer in her foot who received prayer by one of our teams and was healed. The doctors themselves testified on TV that they have no explanation for the sudden disappearance of the large and lethal cancer.

More important than the healings, we are seeing the beginnings of a church-planting and disciple-making movement. David Garrison, author of Church Planting Movements, defines a church-planting movement as “a rapid and multiplicative increase of churches planting other churches within a given people group or population segment.”

Disciple-making movements, or rapid reproduction of disciples making disciples, are the primer for church-planting movements. To learn more about these awesome moves of God in the world, you may look to authors such as David Watson, George Patterson, Steve Addison, Victor Choudhrie, David Garrison, Ying Kai, and Jerry Trousdale. These are exciting times we live in.

Although keeping our heart for the Jew first, we have partnered with Maoz Ministries, an affiliate of CFNI, and have expanded our vision to include all people groups in Israel. Maoz has seven CPM (church-planting movement) teams on the field, over 53 house congregations and seeker groups have been planted, and in one area more than six generations of multiplication have taken place. (Meaning the gospel has been shared and accepted, then shared by that new convert, and again accepted etc., up to six times.)

We have teams in Galilee, central Israel and all over Palestinian-controlled areas. What is even more exciting is that Palestinians are reaching out to the Jewish people.

The hatred they once had for the Jewish people and the nation of Israel dissipates when Isa changes their hearts.

Engagement Projects

- We engage a new village or unreached area by several different methods. Our first goal is to find a “person of peace” (Luke 10) with whom we will work to start a movement in the area. Our engagement process involves healing the sick and power evangelism, community development projects, back-to-school backpack outreaches, media evangelism follow-up, and mobile clinics. We are also in the process of developing a community outreach center. The community development projects include working with the mayor, the city and social workers to start community projects.

While we are blessing the city, the community center will be a place where our development and outreach activities can be mobilized. The result of all these projects again is that we find many persons of peace where we begin disciple-making and church-planting movement.

Trainings

- Lastly, we provide training sessions for young disciples who are upcoming church planters. We work with other local ministries in Israel to help them develop disciple-making movements within their sphere of influence. We plan to host several training sessions in the coming two years including for women in the harvest field, Muslim outreach for beginners, Bedouin gatherings, and even seminars on how to reach out to the Orthodox Jewish community. Please pray with us together for provision for these projects as we are working to see a church for every Arab village in the Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Your prayers will make the ministering in Judea and Samaria more fruitful than ever, so we covet your partnership. We pray that all Israel and her Arab neighbors will hear about God's covenant of peace as promised in the scriptures! 🕊

If you would like to help support the work of Sean Steckbeck's and the Simeon's Cry ministry in Israel, please send your donation to Christ For The Nations C/O Sean Steckbeck to 3404 Conway Street; Dallas, TX 75224.



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CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

J

ust this morning, after I had shaken the sleep from my eyes and had my coffee, I had my wife sit down on the couch and I sat facing her.

• By Neal Cline

I looked her and said, "O great wife, greatest of ALL wives, I thank thee for hearing me today. Thou are the true wife and there is none like thee. I love and adore thee and follow no other."

"Beloved, hear my plea. Today I asked that thou wouldst make the bed. I plead that thou wouldst fix my dinner. I beg that thou wouldst get the car washed. I thank thee for all that thou doest and for how nothing could be done without thee."

"And now I will quiet myself to let thou speaketh to me and tell what thou wouldst desire me to do today."

Then I humbly bowed my head to listen to what she had to say.

Silly? Yes. Exaggerated? Of course. But I bet many of us have a dialogue with God in that exact same way every day.

My wife and I have been married for 28 years. We know each other as well as two people can know each other on this earth. But I've known God longer than that. He knows me even better than Tina does, because He can see the thoughts and intents of my heart. God and I are even closer than the closest possible earthly relationship.

Yet often when I am in conversation with Him, I find myself talking in the stiff, stilted kind of way you see above. As if I was speaking with a stranger instead of Someone who loves me and knows me better than anyone else.

I can almost hear Jesus laughing.

When I talk with my wife, I don't explain what I'm doing. I don't stop the conversation to say, "I'm going to be quiet now and just listen to what you have to say." Although she might enjoy that occasionally, it is stilted and artificial. A true conversation goes both ways; it ebbs and flows. Sometimes you talk, sometimes you listen, and sometimes you sit and think about what the other person said. Sometimes a conversation can last for several days, picking up where you left off. A true conversation is almost a living thing.

I came from a small family, just my dad, mom and brother. When we had dinner together, we would talk quietly and take turns speaking. It was very orderly. When Tina and I started dating, I went for dinner at her house. Did I mention she has four sisters and a mom? That house was drowning in estrogen. At Tina's house, all the girls talked at once. I was mystified. I had no idea who to look at. Everyone was speaking at the same time, and no one seemed to have any trouble following the conversation. It was a natural thing for them. It was totally foreign to me.

But I got used to it.

Get used to having conversations with God. Don't tell Him how or when to speak. Let Him speak any way He chooses to. You don't need to announce that you're listening; He knows that. And He is a genius at getting our attention. He might use a song, an email or even a movie clip. He might talk through the natural world He created. Or He might speak directly to your heart via the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the Great Communicator. Just look at the Gospels. People still study His teaching techniques today. Let Him start up a conversation. Don't get all holy and formal about it. Just tell Him how you feel and give Him space to answer. You just might be surprised at what He says. 🍷

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Your gifts to **MaozIsrael** and **IstandwithIsrael.com** are helping real people – believers who are part of the growing Messianic Jewish community in Israel. During the year 2013, our Maoz partners gave us the opportunity to distribute \$424,500 to 131 families and individuals from 34 congregations in the Holy Land. Here are a few...



Helping the Hurting

"Recently my family and I have received the generous help of **IstandwithIsrael.com** and wanted to express our deep gratitude for the difference it made for us in a difficult time. We are new immigrants. My wife is unemployed and our financial situation became even more difficult when I became injured. We turned to **Maoz** for help, and thanks to your generous assistance, we were able to cover our family expenses for the whole period of my convalescence. My family and I are grateful for your care, generosity and sensitivity in reaching out a helping hand in a difficult time for us."

Many blessings! -A.S.



Helping the Needy

"We thank you very much for your financial help for us during a hard time in our life. Your assistance really helped us to not go deeply in debt until Yael was able to finish her chemotherapy treatment. Right now Yael prepares for the next step – radioactive treatment for about two months. She will live in Tel Aviv (we are from Eilat). Thank God, my job is much better now than a few months before and we can go on. Again, we thank you so much. You were a real blessing to us and we bless you and wish only the best in your help to people in need and who are going through their hard seasons."

In Yeshua's love,
-Ariel & Yael Ben David

Helping Small & New Businesses



This truck has been purchased by the Joseph Project in Israel, founded by the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. The Joseph Project ships boatloads of goods given to them by businesses all over the world directly to Israel. They have 40 distribution centers throughout Israel. In 2013, our partners through **IstandwithIsrael.com** outfitted a second warehouse in the south of Israel for \$50,000 with palletized shelving, a mandatory anti-fire sprinkler system and a forklift. The truck, which cost \$90,000, will carry the supplies from this new warehouse to distribution centers.

Maoz donors contributed \$45,000 while another MJAA contributor matched our donation, supplying the full price of the truck.



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"We want to thank you for helping us in our need. We purchased an apartment and had to take several different loans. Your support helped us to pay the requested sum for the down payment. Thank you very much! It was a miracle for us –

an answer from God to our prayers. May the Lord bless you and help you in your work for His glory."

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"Praise the Lord, my soul,
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who forgives all your sins and
heals **all your diseases**"
Psalm 103:2-3

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