

BARRY LANDIS



GET WISDOM

INSIGHTS FROM CHRISTIAN PROFESSIONALS WITH:

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BARRY LANDIS



THE BRINER INSTITUTE

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FOREWORD

Thank you for picking up this copy of *Get Wisdom*. Many people have contributed to this work, and they are all dedicated to the idea that Christians need to influence our media and culture as positive role models. This notion is not new and was inspired in many of us by the late Bob Briner, who wrote the book *Roaring Lambs*. In his memory we established a not-for-profit organization called The Briner Institute, which seeks to achieve its primary mission of cultural engagement and influence through educational activities.

The Briner Institute and its members seek to *educate* interested persons in how to ...

Advocate for the proliferation of successful, quality faith- and family-based content movements in movies, music, games, and media.

Mentor developing promising artists, writers, and musicians to provide a tax benefit to the inventor and artist community—whereby equity in small amounts is contributed up front to the institute, so that the future

success of these properties, artists, and creations perpetuates the institute's capital and endowment needs.

Network with like-minded persons globally in order to engage in the policy and culture-shaping mediums of expression that form and influence our cultural belief systems.

Provide scholarship to college-age "roaring lambs" with tuition grants, helping them acquire the necessary educational and professional credentials, so that they will be equipped to enter various culture-shaping careers with influence and credibility.

The proceeds of this book are being donated to The Briner Institute, and we thank you for your help. To learn more about The Briner Institute, visit us at www.BrinerInstitute.org.

BARRY LANDIS

Chairman of Ribbow Media Group
Executive Director of The Briner Institute

DR. HARRY JACOBSON

Co-Founder & Partner of Tristar Technology Ventures
Chairman of the Board of The Briner Institute



CHOOSING YOUR FRIENDS

A few years ago, my son, Matt, said something that stuck with me. He said that he had decided to choose friends based on who would help him to be who he really wants to be.

Now this is really smart, because most of us tend to “fall in” with people we happen to know or feel comfortable with, without ever being intentional about who we want to develop friendships with. But as you head into college or into the new world of life and work after college, you have the chance to break free from past connections and build new ones. And this time you can look around and purposely choose the people you want to build friendships with. You can target the people who know how to have fun but also make good choices. You can pursue friendships with people who are perhaps a step ahead of you in walking with God and living out their faith in the world so they can draw you in that direction. You can choose to



connect with people who are discovering the joy of living life for something and Someone greater than themselves rather than those who live like the world revolves around them.

Who you are going to be has a lot to do with who you are in relationship with. Choose your friends well and then love them well. Good friends of great character put the smile into life.

NANCY GUTHRIE*Author of **Holding On to Hope***

**Listen, my son, to your father's
instruction and do not forsake
your mother's teaching.**

Proverbs 1:8



DREAM BIG AND WORK HARD

Throughout our childhood our parents always stressed the importance of having a strong educational background. We are very fortunate to have found balance between our education and music career over the years, and we are still learning every day. We wish all students the best of luck as they experience this new chapters of their lives. Work hard and always dream big.

KEVIN, JOE, AND NICK JONAS
The Jonas Brothers



MAKING LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS

In 1985, I started a Bible study with three other guys from my dorm at the University of North Carolina. We prayed for each other, played ball together, studied God's Word together, and eventually shared an apartment. We became best friends. During our senior year, in 1988, we went on spring break together. Each one of us took about two hours to share our hopes, dreams, and concerns for life after graduation. We then prayed for each person. At the end of that spring break, we committed to get together every year for the rest of our lives.

And we've done it ever since. None of us makes a major decision in life without asking for input from the other three. We continue to share our hopes, dreams, fears, and frustrations. We've been there for each other to celebrate marriages and children. We've been there for each other through some extremely difficult



times. I don't think I would be anywhere close to the man God wants me to be without David, Dave, and Tom.

I encourage you to commit to lifelong friends. You will make new friends along the way, but if you have a group of Christian friends already, it will be tough to replace that history. Make sure they know all about you now—be brutally honest—so that twenty years from now you have people who will call your bluff and love you anyway. God puts people into your life to mold you into His image.

KEVIN FORD

Chief Visionary Officer
Managing Partner
The Armstrong Group



DON'T LOOK FOR A JOB, MAKE A JOB

I'd like you to do me a favor: Close your eyes and picture your dream job. Think about it for a minute. What does it look like? Are you working with people you like? Are you making enough money to do what you want to do? Is your workplace fun and relaxing? Are you helping people?

Now I want you to add one more thing to your image: consider that you didn't apply for that job but you created that job. If you want real job security in life, it's much more likely that you will have created it than applied for it.

How do you do that? Here's one way: Look for a problem in the world and think about how to solve the problem. And you don't really have to solve it—you just need to be driven to try to make a difference.



Mark Zuckerberg wasn't trying to solve a technology problem—he was trying to solve a connectivity problem. And by working on the problem, he created Facebook.

Consider Elon Musk. His goal was to establish civilization on Mars. But to do that, he needed to perfect the science of sending many more rocket ships into orbit that have been available until now. He decided to try to build reusable rockets, which have had many accidents and explosions trying to figure out how to launch or land. There's even a blooper reel of exploding SpaceX rocket tests. But now, he's launching a revolution in space exploration.

Look for a problem in the world and point your energy towards solving it.

Don't apply for a job; create one.

ASH GREYSON
Founder & CEO
Ribbow Media Group



IMPACT THROUGH SERVICE

How does one evaluate success in one's career? If you survey a number of people, the responses you hear most often fall into one of three broad categories - impact, income, and influence (recognition). They are not of equal importance. This is especially true if one does not properly prioritize them. It seems intuitive but unfortunately not pervasive that the primary goal with one's career should be to make an impact. The best way to make an impact (and to experience joy in one's career) is through service.

Rabindranath Tagore, winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature, wrote "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw life was service. I acted and behold, service is joy."

If you type the word "servant" into Google the first term that drops down is "servant leadership". Go ahead and do that



and read up. Servant leadership is both a secular and biblical philosophy and one that will help you get your career priorities straight. Throughout all of time, making income or influence the goal and measure of a successful career has been met with disappointment and often, failure. However, it happens over and over that making an impact through service not only leads to satisfaction, but brings along with it (deservedly so) financial success and the right kind of recognition.

DR. HARRY JACOBSON

Co-Founder & Partner
Tristar Health Partners



This is what the LORD says—
“... I am the LORD your God, who
teaches you what is best for you, who
directs you in the way you should go.”

Isaiah 48:17



CHOOSE GOD'S PLAN

One lesson I learned after graduating was that making plans for yourself—both short- and long-term plans—is a good idea. But beware. Don't get so caught up in following your plans that you miss the direction the Lord is taking you.

Had I followed my own five-year plan I would quite possibly have a physical therapy practice somewhere in Canada. Instead, because I was willing to take a risk and let go of my own plan, I have been able to travel as a professional musician and be a part of what God is doing around the world—a career path I never even dreamed of pursuing.

This Bible passage rings true in my life: *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, ‘plans . . . to give you hope and a future’*” (Jer. 29:11). My life experiences have been so much richer because I chose His plan, not mine.

JEREMY THIESSEN

Drummer for *downhere*



ARE YOU LISTENING?

The world is a noisy place. Between the literal noise all around us to the noise of information, opinions, and everything else that is going on, quiet is a rare commodity.

And you are busy. In school, busy is assignments, labs, research, papers, lectures, and exams. As you move into the work world, busy will mean training, tasks, projects, assignments, meetings, and more.

But don't be too busy to listen — for God and to people.

I often see people at their desks or in their offices with their headphones on. I see chat status set to “do not disturb”. Understandably, there are times where you may need to be heads down to get work done, to do your best work using the gifts and talents God gave you. Your day-to-day work matters to God, whether that's as a project manager, teacher, engineer,



support advisor, writer, sales person, or something else.

God also has other assignments for you where He has placed you. If you don't listen, you'll miss them. Opportunities will pass you by. People will come and go. Lessons and gifts God has for you will be lost.

So make a point to open your ears and eyes to all around you. Not just to that still, quiet voice inside that is there to guide you. Listen for people. Listen to people. Really listen. Then listen for what God wants you to do.

Go to her and listen. Offer him help with that project. Bring her that chocolate bar that she likes.

If you listen and obey who God assigns you to comfort, encourage, or support, your work will be even more fulfilling than you could have ever imagined.

KYLA CRAGG

Support Manager
Apple



ENJOY THE RIDE

Walt Disney World, where I started my career and which provided some of my earliest childhood memories, serves as a perfect metaphor for life. Ever since I visited the Magic Kingdom as a little girl and rode my first roller coaster, I have been captivated by the thought that our lives are really one raucous, never-ending Space Mountain. Life is a wild ride full of thrills and adventures, twists and turns, ups and downs. New sights, fresh sounds, and unforeseen experiences come at us with amazing speed.

One moment we are slowly climbing an incline, our adrenaline pumping. We can't imagine feeling any better. Suddenly, we scream downhill so fast we think we might die. We are thrown in sudden turns—right, then left, then upside down. Sometimes we feel nauseous but we fight it, refusing to admit defeat. We are tempted to get off the ride if only we knew how.



But we find inner strength and push ahead. For me, God is my inner strength, *“the stronghold of my life”* (Ps. 27:1).

My advice to you: Anchor your life in Christ. Let Him be your stronghold through all of life’s thrills and spills. If you let Him, God will be your lap bar, the One who keeps you from flying off the rails. Whether you are up or down—and, believe me, you will be both—He will always be with you. Have a great ride: Grab hold of Jesus and don’t let go.

JODY DREYER
Former Senior VP of Marketing
Walt Disney Studios



TWO QUESTIONS

1. Who are you?
2. What do you deserve?

The world's most powerful lie is that the second will answer the first. From the beginning of your life, the world whispers tales of beauty won through valor, of glory beyond the skies, of championships defining legacies. When the allure of childhood dreams fade, your worth begins to be measured in numbers. You will "mature" your expectations, pursuing letters after your name, a faster car, a fuller bank account. Someday, if you're lucky, you will be knighted, have a statue in your likeness, or a building with your name.

But it's strange; as the second answer comes into focus, the first becomes more blurry. And inevitably, after two or three or four decades proving your worth in a hundred different ways,



you begin to forget that you asked it in the first place. Finally, sadly, as you near the end of your life, when all that remains of the first question are echoes, you feverishly fight for your right to return to a Home you barely remember.

It doesn't have to be this way. In fact, though it seems impossible, the answer to the first question is easy to find.

Ask Jesus.

The second will follow the first.

JONATHAN LIAO

Portfolio Manager
500 Startups



THE MIRACLE TOUR

Before I began working in Media, I wrote a manuscript called The Miracle Tour. The narrative was a duel storyline and compared the life of the disciples hitting the preacher path against the life of an emerging band headed for a tour. There were many similarities in this premise: each had a promotions man, required an audition, and involved road life with all its challenges. The band had a lead singer who left and they had to determine if they were going forward with their musical destiny. We know that the disciples had the same decision to make when Christ returned to heaven leaving a team of spiritual interns beside the ocean of decision.

This describes the ultimate decision we must all make concerning our destiny and tour of life. We've all been handed talents and opportunity. Naturally it's a bit scary and risky, that's the basic DNA of any good adventure with God. The disciples



witnessed a number of occasions where God used a few crusty loaves of bread to demonstrate the kingdom capacity of abundance from surrender. Pay attention to that part. It's a matter of giving what we have received and allowing God to multiply it. That is a life that will satisfy you and send you down the path of the miraculous. Always.

JOAN TANKERSLEY
Director, The Five Key Collective



Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

Luke 12:15



WHERE IS YOUR VALUE?

Be careful of a society that assigns value to a person based upon its wrong view of collecting “stuff”. Your value as a human being, as a person, is not based on your ability to collect “stuff”. If you have jumped on this train of thought, you will be derailed because the first money principle will get you. Money is “active” in the philosophical realm as well. When your priorities get off track, money will take command instantly because of its active principle. I love the old adage “Measure your wealth not by the things you have, but by the things for which you would not take money”.

Money is simply a nonentity that must be manipulated. The better we are at manipulating it, the more of it we will control. Until we take this “active” and “amoral” view of money, it will continue to have the upper hand in every part of our lives.

DAVE RAMSEY

Author, Speaker, Radio Host
Financial Peace University



THE ART OF BEING TEACHABLE PART 1

One of the clearest memories from my time in graduate school was the day when a test we had taken was given back to us. The professor, a highly renowned man in his field of study who had years of educational and real-world experience, was explaining to one of the students why the answer he chose was not correct. Instantly, the student was up in arms, defending his position with absolutely no respect for the professor or his vast knowledge. I am not saying that professors are always correct, but this story shows how far we have come from being teachable and willing to be corrected.

Hebrews 12:11 says, *“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”* And 1 Peter 5:5–6 reads, *“Young men, in the same way be*



submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

No matter what phase of life we are in, we will never be perfect or all knowing. Let's humble ourselves so that God can teach us, correct us, and encourage us, even if through the mouths of our parents, teachers, professors, or bosses. This truth, like all those found in Scripture, holds true whether you are a student for life or a professional musician touring the world.

ERIC PATRICK
Flyleaf Road Pastor



Get wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or
swerve from them.

Proverbs 4:4–6



THE ART OF BEING TEACHABLE PART 2

The Bible says that in the last days people will not listen to sound doctrine and they will be lovers of themselves. They will gather around teachers who say only what their ears are itching to hear. I want to say amen to Eric's words because he has seen me with a "live by my feelings and only hear what I want to hear" heart. Thankfully, my heavenly Father would never let me stay that way.

I would not have matured past that point if God had not let me reap the destruction that came from sowing my own arrogance. You don't have to learn that way! You don't have to regret wasting your time only to learn later that you should have gotten wisdom by fearing God and heeding warnings. Humble yourself and listen to godly people who speak about the hard issues so that you can avoid them.

LACEY STURM
Flyleaf Lead Vocalist



COASTING WILL KILL YOU

I host one hundred segments a week, ranging from four to twelve minutes in length. That's a lot of time to fill.

Sometimes my producer, Duane, and I will add a regular guest as a weekly feature. At this writing, fourteen of one hundred segments are filled on a regular basis.

While that number might someday go as high as twenty-five, I can't imagine it will ever go higher than that. Pre-programming a week would be too easy. It would quickly go stale. Preprogramming is safe, and it's easy, but it is too close to coasting, to going on autopilot, and it would kill the program within a year.

Just as it will dead-end your career if you allow it to. No matter the calling, there will develop an easy familiarity that repetition brings, and with that familiarity will grow the temptation to



enjoy the comfort of the predictable and to allow that pleasure to erode ambition.

You won't fail, but you'll never top out either.

The antidote is obvious. Mix it up. Grab a new assignment. Teach a new course. Talk a new area of expertise. Or if you have to, change jobs or careers.

There are no conveyor belts in the influence hunt. It never comes to you, and you never get there standing in place.

This is classic coach talk, the familiar pattern of phrases and clichés that roll off the tongues of coaches everywhere.

With good reason. It's true.

HUGH HEWITT

Radio Talk Show Host, Lawyer, Author



LET'S ROAR

So, what do you feel called to do? Pastor, Teacher, Doctor, Artist, Entertainer, Athlete, Mom, Business owner, fill in the blank... How can you follow this call, this desire to go and do something and take the gospel with you? You were created to do something, God has always had a plan for your life. The pull to a vocation is part of that plan and discovering that the thing you want to do is OK, and even ordered by God can bring you freedom. But it also comes with some instructions.

Matthew 5:13-16 tells us *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. 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.”

No matter what the thing is you feel you are supposed to do, remember that you were created with a purpose, a plan, and God has given you the necessary gifts to go and do it, and do it with greatness. You can impact culture right where you live and become the salt and light he wants us all to be.

Find someone already doing what you desire to do, interview them, ask what its like to do it, and even how they are being salt and light. Ask and Learn!!!

SCOTT MILLS
President
Engage Media Partners



SUCCESS REVEALS YOU

I became an executive for the first time at the age of 23. In retrospect I was too young and inexperienced to be in the role I was appointed to, but God saw fit to make it happen so there I was. I learned a lot in that role, but not because I did well. I learned a lot because I made a ton of mistakes by often thinking I was the smartest person in the room. Thankfully I had a boss who saw potential in me despite my youthful arrogance and allowed me to make those mistakes in an effort to humble me early on.

Looking back over my last 12 years of progressively responsible leadership roles in the private, public and nonprofit sector, I'm so grateful for what I learned and want to share three of my main takeaways with you.

1. Don't allow your emotions to drive you. Our lives are lived



in one of three continuous phases; before, during and after. If you aren't going through anything, just wait. It's coming. If you're going through something, just wait. It will pass. If you got past something, don't get too comfortable. Something's on its way. Knowing this truth is helpful to keep you grounded because we become grateful for "the after", have patience in "the during" and stay humble in "the before".

2. You are response-able. I've come to believe that leaders are neither born nor made. Leadership is simply choosing to confront our deepest fears, insecurities and failures while moving forward in spite of them. We too often compare our start to someone else's finish and get discouraged, but we should instead use someone else's finish to inspire our start. Leadership requires discovering the spiritual fortitude to keep pressing forward when we feel we've given our last and that requires making the decision that neither failure nor forfeit is an option.



3. Past mistakes don't have to limit your future potential.

Success is not the acquisition of notoriety or wealth. Success is the ability to stand at the apex of a mountainous pile of mistakes and realize that your vantage point is now higher because of them. Success is growth and growth is sometimes the reward we get for failing forward. Allow your past mistakes to keep you humble, not hindered.

I have watched many of my contemporaries find success in their various professions and vocations and I've learned one simple truth; success doesn't change you, it reveals you. Above everything you aspire to acquire, acquire the character needed to make you truly worthy of the success you want to achieve. Humility, generosity, diligence, forgiveness, and honesty. These will take you further than intellect or ingenuity ever could.

NONA JONES
Faith-Based Partnerships
Facebook

DON'T SETTLE

Early in life I adopted a philosophy of “Never accept a NO from someone that doesn’t have the authority to say YES”. In dealing with service providers or utilities or things of that nature - the first layer of people you reach on the phone seldom have the real authority to help you. They are in position to sell you...but not always to help you. The next layer - the “supervisor” - is usually the one that has the authority to work with you towards a reasonable resolve.

CHAZ CORZINE
Manager of Michael W. Smith



GIVE IT ALL TO GOD

First Peter 5:7 (NLT) says, “*Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*” Okay, cool! But how do we really do that?

Many of us can't even keep track of the times people have told us not to worry and to just “give it to God.” Good advice, but what does this mean exactly? For most of us, we muster all our faith to believe that everything will work out in the end, but struggle with giving our problems to the Lord one day and taking them back the next. We're like a gardener who plants a seed and worryingly digs it up to see how the roots are growing, doing more damage than good. Does that sound like you?

I think we can all admit that we struggle with that line between what I should control and what the Lord controls. How much am I supposed to do or how little? And how do I build up my faith



enough to consistently “give it to God” and not worry?

I would encourage you to grab a friend today and dig into God’s amazing Word. By learning about His ways, you will no longer struggle on a day-to-day basis to muster the faith to “give it to God.” It will just become natural for you. You’ll gain an unwavering assurance that enables you to not only trust the Lord, but also trust that you will like where He’s taking you.

My life motto: Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.

TAMMY TRENT

Acclaimed Singer, Songwriter,
Author, and Speaker



STANDING OUT

In this age of blogging, everyone can be a critic and you can be subjected to withering criticism for the work you do, no matter how good it is or how unqualified the critic may be. This is a difficult but real truth we must face: negative feedback is not easy to handle, no matter how thick-skinned you might believe yourself to be. Even when you are doing God's will and the fruits of your labor are plentiful, that may not stop somebody from saying spiteful things to bring you down. Success also breeds envy and resentment, and when you are doing something you believe in—something that is making a difference in the lives of others—and it comes under attack, it can be tempting to counterattack despite your Christian ideals.

Instead, when you are working in God's purpose for your life and you face unwarranted criticism, remember the example of Jesus. Everywhere he went, for as many people as he healed



and as many he inspired to follow his Word, there were almost as many saying ill things about him behind his back.

That's just the nature of standing out.

DEVON FRANKLIN
President of Franklin Entertainment
Fox Studios



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” An oft asked question of young people, as if once answered, all else falls into place. As if you will not change or grow or find new passions and purposes. As if the career you prepared for and studied hard to achieve will always be what you are being called to do. As if that still small voice inside you will never suggest a different path. As if life came with a Users Manual.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Psalm 46:10

Eight words that are your salvation when the storms begin to overwhelm you, when you cannot decide to go left or right, to stay or go, to open or close. Eight words that call you to quiet, to prayer, to God. He has the answer to that question of what you

will be because He has written it upon your heart and He knows the end of your story. He also knows there is more than one answer and that if you remain faithful and free He will provide you the path, the people, and the freedom.

As for me, I am still trying to figure it out because God has written many things on my heart. I am a baby boomer, an indie film producer and a woman of God who still asks herself “What am I going to be when I grow up” but now I know to sit still and listen.

PAT PATTERSON

President
Pâte Productions



DETECT YOUR PASSION

Here is what matters most: Tap into your passion. Your passion is a place where you belong, where you fit in, where you matter and what you do matters to you. It's where your desires can come to fruition—which means to bear fruit that will feed yourself and others.

If there's something you're interested in and it means something to you, run with it and see where it leads you. If fashion is your passion, for example, that doesn't mean you'll become a fashion writer or that you even want to become one. But if you recognize it as a thing that you love, your writing about fashion is more likely to flow freely, the experience of learning and conveying that knowledge to readers far more enjoyable.

Now for the difficult part. In our society, we have done everything possible to leave behind any complexity that the word *passion* demands. We speak of it in lingerie ads, adrenaline-junkie



excursions, and bad song lyrics by modern rock bands. But to my knowledge, only one product of our pop culture-crazed time—Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*—hints at that other meaning, the darker one. Do something you love, and you must suffer.

But if it’s your passion, you’ll keep doing it, through the hard times, through the suffering. Recognize what your heart beats for. Recognize what your passion is about. Figure out what it is you were born to do—and if you don’t know, search for shreds of evidence with a private eye’s zeal. It’s not something you think about as much as something you feel. Leadership expert Steven Covey describes this in terms of “detecting rather than inventing” your life’s mission.

That might not happen today, tomorrow, the next day, or the day after. It might change over time. But it’s somewhere inside you waiting, like a wondrous story, to be discovered, reported, and written.

LOUIS R. CARLOZO

Managing Editor for the Bank
Administration Institute in Chicago
Investment Contributor for U.S. News
& World Report



HE HAS A PLAN

You are embarking on an exciting journey! This is a special time in your life that will go too fast and yet make a forever impact on your. God will use these precious years to prepare and equip you for the plans He has for you.

Stay connected to His truths.

Talk to Him.

Listen for him.

Know His word.

The world will try to bombard you with lies. Just as a pail of water melted the Wicked Witch of the West, Gods word will squelch the lies Satan tries to tell you. Try it. It works. Shine His light on any darkness and watch it disappear.

When you stumble, remember Romans 8:28 never ever fails! I promise. He will use ALL things for good according to His



purpose for those who believe.

Look for Him.

Remember He is at work.

He has a plan for you.

Live your life knowing you are loved by a God who has amazing plans to prosper you and who sent His son to give you life abundantly! How amazing is that?

KELLY GRIMSLEY
Youth Leader



WORDS OF WISDOM

I can think of a number of “best advice” moments I had as a young man. Each one helped to shape me into the person I am today. I got in a whole lot of trouble with my parents once and spent some time in asylum at my grandparents’. My grandpa didn’t care to know what I did; he just told me, “Don’t ever do it again.” In short, learn from your mistakes. To this day I take apart my mistakes and try to learn from them. I grieve my foolishness or lack of skill and then I move on to live another day.

Which brings me to another great piece of advice: Live one day at a time. Truthfully, that’s all you can live. Living in the past or the future is a waste of the present. And while you’re doing all that living in the moment, remember to “always confirm, never assume.” Once I made the mistake of driving all the way to Santa Barbara from Sacramento for a gig that wasn’t scheduled



until the following week. I was going off of a conversation I'd had with the club manager several weeks earlier. I assumed everything was as we had previously planned but it wasn't. Always confirm, never assume.

Some other outstanding advice I always come back to is this: You only get one chance to make a first impression. So take your time with things. Don't rush into stuff. Don't over think it, but do some quality thinking about what you'll say, how you'll look, what you'll do. That's just smart. It's why people will tell you that poor planning leads to poor performance.

Finally, keep your hands clean. No one wants to shake a dirty hand as they welcome you into their office for a job interview. Oh, and say thank you, a lot.

CHARLIE PEACOCK
Author and Recording Artist



GOD WILL PREPARE YOU

Pay attention to where and how God may be at work in your life—He could be equipping you for a future giant.

Before God called David to slay Goliath, He gave him some lion and bear experience, and David remembered. David was a shepherd boy, working long hours, but not doing the things you would think necessary to prepare for a giant. When a lion and a bear confronted David, his responsibility was to protect his sheep, but he relied on God to bring down the animals.

Here's a point where it's easy to go astray. Our preparation may not include traditional or recognizable practice. Had David not recognized God's hand in the deliverance of the lion and the bear, he may have developed confidence as a lion and bear killer, but lacked the confidence to face a giant. David was prepared for the giant because he knew that God had



delivered him from the lion and bear. So when Saul told the young shepherd boy that he didn't stand a chance against the giant who had been a soldier since youth, the boy answers, *"The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine"* (1 Sam. 17:37).

Be aware of God's preparation; recognize His Hand in delivering you from other threats, and you'll be ready to face a giant.

CHIP MURRAY
Managing Partner
The Panda Fund



As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.... We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

2 Corinthians 6:1, 3



EMBRACE GRACE

Make grace the theme of your life. Be a picture of how wide and long and high and deep God's love is.

There are plenty of plank-eyed judges, record-keeping lovers, arrow-straight reflection worshippers, whitewashed fence-sitters, condescending radicals, truthful gossips, side-huggers, bitter forgivers, considerate bigots, cynical caregivers, empathetic loan sharks, coat-holding pacifists, zealous pearl-pawners, three-car treasure-buriers, serial petition-signers, rich young patronizers, and swivel-necked rule-keepers. The world doesn't need more of them.

You have been shown grace. Praise God and share it recklessly.

CHRISTOPHER GRANT

C. Grant and Company Marketing Communications
Wheaton, IL



RECLAIM YOUR CULTURE FOR GOD

In the beginning of time we know that God created the heavens and the earth in His wisdom, His love, and with His genius imagination. He then created man in His image not only to worship Him but also to fill the earth, in which man would then build and govern a society. He gave man the insight and creativity to mold and shape our culture. But what once was evidence of God's honor and glory has now been duplicated, carbon-copied, and mass-produced so that we have forgotten where it came from. For centuries God and His church have inspired the greatest minds and the most influential musicians and artists of our time.

To this day God is searching for those of you willing to be used by His wisdom, love, and imagination to reclaim and restore our societies and cultures. In Him you have the knowledge, understanding, and God-given gifts to change this world back



to the way God first intended it to be. You have seen the past and now God has given you vision for the future. You are the hope of tomorrow and the heart, mind, and soul of a new revolution. You are the voice of today!

SONNY SANDOVAL
P.O.D. Lead Vocalist



KEEP GROWING

In former generations a person set his or her career path in a linear fashion. It ideally moved undisturbed within one company or trade toward a gold watch retirement party. That sort of workplace rarely exists anymore. Our emergent work environments are fluid and evolve at lightning speed. It seems that one needs to reinvent oneself about every three to five years. Change is inevitable but growth is optional.

Therein lies your strategy. Keep growing. The entire experience of life can be used as a forum for learning. There is nothing that will happen to you from which you cannot learn! This process demands fearless honesty and the ability to constantly monitor your thoughts and feelings. Reflection on our thoughts, both instantaneously as they occur and later as a little time has passed, provides the opportunity to strategically analyze and change. We evolve!



A crucial element in this process is critique. Not the unconditional love that we get from loving family and friends, but the observations that come from those who are courageous enough to crucial element in this process is critique. Not the unconditional love that we get from loving family and friends, but the observations that come from those who are courageous enough to tell us what we need to hear. There are occasions when the most valuable information you will receive will come from someone who is unhappy, even furious with you. Dare to think that even someone who could be considered an “enemy” will provide you with knowledge about yourself that you can use. From your secure position of knowing that God and others love you, let the criticism come in just a little bit to see if there’s something there that you can use for your own growth.

DAN KEEN
Faculty
Belmont University



Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21



THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL

“Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” - John 15: 4-5

Upon thinking about wisdom to share with you, it all starts and ends with Jesus. Only when you are resting in the grace you receive by the blood shed on the cross, will you experience the fullness of joy, being rooted in your identity in Jesus and remaining steadfast in Him as your cornerstone when the distractions of the world are thrown at you.

Recently, a coworker asked me how I have so much peace and don't seem to ever get stressed out. She asked me, “How do you do it?” And the answer was simple: “It is nothing I could



do on my own, it's all because of Jesus.” However, before I made Jesus the Lord of my life, my life was the exact opposite - working way too much and the feeling of being overwhelmed and anxious was my “normal”. It took a coworker inviting me to church for 3 years before I finally took her up on it and starting reading the Bible for myself. Despite being extremely skeptical, I began to experience a peace beyond understanding and knew that I needed more of God’s Word and more of Jesus.

Following Jesus has required what some people might call “risks” - I prefer to call them “adventures” - including taking a pay cut of over \$40k less per year, declining my dream job offer, traveling overseas alone during an international travel warning, and moving across the country. Fast forward and I’m now working as a marketing manager at one of the fastest growing technology companies in the world, but my identity is no longer in my “day job”, it’s in Jesus! My workplace has a Christians@ employee resource group where I get to have bible study and



prayer time with coworkers. In the evenings and weekends, I volunteer helping ministries use technology to share the Gospel with people all over the world. God has literally brought my two biggest passions--Him and technology--together in ways that will blow your mind! Talk about grace!

As Mark reminds us in Chapter 14 - it was as soon as Peter took his eyes off Jesus that he became afraid and began to sink in the water, but when his gaze was transfixed on Jesus' face - Peter was walking on water!

What miracles does Jesus have in store for you as you abide in his embrace and follow wherever He might be leading you?

CHRISTY CHILDERS

Follower of Jesus

Employer Brand Professional in Silicon Valley



LIFE ISN'T FAIR

Some of us grew up in families where fairness was one of our primary family values. If you had a sibling, your childhood chores had to be split evenly; you may have shared dish washing duty with your brother or sister, for example. But if you got stuck washing the dishes two days in a row, then boy, did you let everyone hear you complain.

We can look back at our childhood selves and laugh at such triviality, but the truth is, I bet that you still carry the mentality and expectation that life should give you a fair shake. And while the idea of fairness is a great value for each of us to cultivate and develop, the unfortunate fact is that this attitude is not transferable to life in general.

The sense that life is going to be fair, to give and take equally from each of us, is perhaps one of the unhealthiest of expectations. Life is random. Life is full of chance. Life delivers



its blessings unequally. Life's challenges, hurdles, and obstacles are often distributed unequally and, sometimes it seems, capriciously.

The net result of expecting life to be fair is that we begin to question why we were chosen for the horribly unfair treatment we are experiencing. We begin to believe some very unhealthy and unproductive notions. We begin to think like and act like victims. Being a victim robs us of our sense of freedom and it limits our ability to see the many possibilities that are available to us.

Of course, we should practice fairness with all of those we come into contact with in our lives. But to expect the same treatment in return is a setup for utter disappointment and disillusionment. Don't sit back, being a victim. Victims don't succeed and they don't win. Engage life, work to find your way, and never stop struggling to reach your dreams.

DEVLIN DONALDSON

Sr. Vice President for External Relations
Judson University



THIS IS YOUR LIFE

It is hard in school to know what you want to do or strive to become, so my advice is to try lots of things until you find the right one for you. Don't be afraid to try something new or different. Keep exploring, experimenting, and following your passions.

During your journey try to surround yourself with mentors and other smart people whom you can learn from and emulate. You should try to build a reputation as a great listener, a team player, a quick learner, a hard worker, and a person who gets things done. If you can do these things you will be building the best "you."

Remember that it is okay to ask questions, be adventurous, and make mistakes. Failure can be a great teacher as long as you learn from it and try not to repeat the same mistakes. Follow your instincts, inner voice, and judgment to recognize



your ability to change your own behavior, environment, and experiences.

Lastly, be creative, determined, have a positive attitude, be polite, and remember to always have fun! This is your life—now go start living it your way and be the best you can be.

HOWARD S. BROWN

Founder
Advocasee



LIVE TO LEARN

When I graduated from college the best advice I received was from a professor I admired. She told me to never stop learning. As simple as that might sound, it is the advice that I find myself passing on to my students now that I am the professor. Never stop learning.

I encourage you to view your schooling as the foundation for all of the learning yet to take place in your life. You have laid a foundation for yourself and now you can build on it. In other words, the house still has not been built. That is what you do during the rest of your life. I encourage you to continue to read and expand your mind. Stay knowledgeable on the latest advances in your field. You should not only keep learning about your field, but you should also stay abreast of the events going on in the world around you.



Another piece of advice: Get involved in your community. It is vital that your voice is heard in your community and the world. The voices of young people in our communities are important, and your opinions matter. We need your new, innovative ideas to tackle the social issues facing us today. Do not hesitate because you are young. God used Josiah when he was just a child to bring honor back to his nation (2 Chron. 34—35). God can use you in the same manner to influence your world, community, industry, workplace, etc. He wants you to seek after Him and become an influential person to change your world.

JENIFER L. LEWIS, PHD
Associate Professor and Director of
Degree Programs
Nazarbayev University



THE POWER OF THE PEN

I love going to the movies. I love everything about them. I love the anticipation during the day. I love knowing that tonight my wife and I have a babysitter coming over to chase Shine and Free around for a few hours so we can act like we're back in high school. I love long lines and overpriced popcorn. I love getting to the theater early, grabbing good seats and watching the previews. But I do not love that loudmouth sitting right in front of us acting like he's in his living room.

Note: I will say something to him and my wife will be upset with me.

Once I get him quiet it's time to settle in and let the magic happen -- or not. Even if the movie is not great, I still love the process. It's totally worth the risk of seeing a bad movie for the chance to experience a great one. Those that touch our



lives in profound ways and take us on a journey that can only happen when we are sitting in a theater.

Here's the thing, none of that would even be possible unless someone had taken a pen and touched the page. All the moving parts of making a film cannot happen without the words on the page. The actors have no words to say, the director cannot call for action and the producers cannot yell at anyone until the words are on the page.

So writers, use your pen wisely. The words that flow from it have power. Real power. Therefore, real responsibility. Proverbs tells us it has the power of life and death.

Think about this: when the lights go down and the curtains draw back and those words from that pen in your hand come alive... What will they say?

MICHAEL CARNEY

Writer & Director of the movie
Same Kind of Different as Me



BE A GOOD STEWARD

I believe that each of us is called for special purposes. Maybe it is a special job or a special relationship or a special service project or whatever. But whether you come at this subject from faith or not, we are all stewards of what has been given to us: this earth, our capabilities and resources, the community in which we live and work, and our professions.

Today more than ever our actions and decisions must consider the impact on the earth, its environs, its communities, and many people we do not know. Globally we are more connected today than ever before and that will only increase. We are dependent on each other, both in what we buy and consume, but also in what we make and how we process things . . . and of course the waste we produce.

I urge you to take up the mantle of efficient and responsible



choices for the future. It will take the intelligence and passion of good stewards to both provide for our growing world and leave the environment in better shape than before. You are the beneficiaries of those who went before you, and now it is your turn to accept some responsibility for the future. You will determine how our quality of life will be shaped and how it will be passed on to the next generation.

I encourage you to think as a steward.

JOE C. COOK JR.

Principal and Cofounder of Mountain Group Capital
Chairman of the Board of Directors of Amylin
Pharmaceuticals, Inc.



**May the LORD show you his favor
and give you his peace.**

Numbers 6:26 NLT



PRAY FOR FAVOR

The greatest insight to discovering God's will for my life has been "finding favor." The biblical inspiration is found in the story of Joseph (Gen. 39:4). When I began to reflect on my life, I realized that my success or failure was almost always directly tied to someone else opening or closing a door for me. It became clear that the way others perceived me, often beyond my control, led directly to their taking action on my behalf.

Several years ago I began praying specifically for favor, that God would guide my path through the favor of others. My prayer is open-ended rather than specific, thus leaving everything to God's pleasure—not my attempt at manipulation. Finding favor requires faith, action through prayer, trust, and relinquishing control. Make note of your prayers and watch for ways that God works through the lives of others to guide your path.

JOHN MANNING HORTON

Business Development Director
Walt Disney Parks and Resorts



FIND YOUR PASSION

At the end of college, I became obsessed with the question, “What is the Good Life?”. After hundreds of interviews with people of all walks of life and a degree in philosophy from a school of theology, I concluded that one of secrets to making the most of life is finding a passion you can give yourself to throughout your life.

The phrase finding your passion has become trite from all of its references in inspirational speeches and self-help books. However, the act of finding something you love and putting in the time and energy into this object of affection is something all seem to agree upon as what constitutes a life worth living.

Most of us encounter the conundrum of how our society tells us that life success is about career achievement and making money. Nearly all of us get caught up in the “rat race,” by



focusing too much on earthly success and accomplishments. However, those who seem to be enjoying life the most have learned to balance their career aspirations and family duties with sufficient time in doing what they love.

Finding a unique hobby, playing a sport you love, finding a romantic interests - all these things have been described as a passion that leaves intrinsic rewards. For those of us from a faith tradition, we know we can devote ourselves to another passion that leads to an internal reward that is greater than our life alone. When one's passions becomes loving God and loving our neighbor, the answer to the question of the good life is easily found.

NICK SHELTON

Author and Account Executive
at Google



REMEMBER THE THREE Ms

When the 3M Company created the sticky note, people were given the ability to leave short notes anywhere they wanted to remind themselves of things they didn't want to forget. No more paper clips, pins, tape, magnets, or staples. Here are three Ms that I hope will stick with you over the course of the next several years:

Marry Smart: You will marry only someone you have dated, so date smart. Date only those individuals who share the same passion you do for Christ and His calling. Nothing will have a greater impact on your ability and willingness to follow God's call on your life than your choice of a mate. Make sure that you agree on all the big things: faith, mission, kids, and money.

Money: Manage it or it will manage you. Next to your choice of a mate, the factor that will most impact your ability to follow God's



call on your life will be your ability, or inability, to handle money. Gain basic knowledge related to credit, debt, and budgeting—and the earlier the better. Learn how to use and balance your checking account. Use cash for just about everything.

Monitor the Monitor: Screens come in all shapes and sizes now, whether on cell phones, computers, televisions or tablets. With all of these gadgets comes a corresponding increase in screen time. Set limits on how much time each day you will spend in front of a screen. Manage your monitor time by adding other things to your life like face-to-face conversation, exercising, reading, hiking, going to plays, concerts, or museums. This will make you a well-rounded person who has the capacity and skill to deal with life and people.

Finally, it might be a good idea to write these three Ms on a sticky note and put them somewhere you will see them fairly often.

JON KULAGA

President
Ohio Christian University



FALL BUT DON'T QUIT

If you don't fall down, you're not trying hard enough...

While studying dance at the University of Texas, I had an instructor who used to reiterate this phrase as we tried to do triple or quadruple turns with our bodies. Those who got bruises from the effort exerted ended up being the stars on stage. This same principle applies throughout life ... both professionally and personally.

While creating what is now the most popular radio entity for kids, my husband and I experienced several miscarriages. I was fit and under forty ... so God and I had some very heated discussions during that time; I couldn't understand why He kept letting me fall down. After I had three more failed attempts to become pregnant, He convinced me we were "turning" the wrong way. We finally heeded the advice of a friend who had encouraged



us to contact an international adoption agency. Within one year our youngest daughter from Vietnam joined our family. Had I not fallen down because of my physical “limitations” or given up and not tried a different way, her glorious belly laugh and incredibly independent spirit would not be with us today.

Whatever you do, put your whole self into it. Jump in with every arm and leg you can find! When you fall down, move beyond the pain and feel grateful when you earn your bruises and scars; they will give you strength, knowledge, and character. Persevere, follow up with a new angle, and eventually you’ll find success you never dreamed possible.

ROBIN JONES

Former VP of Programming for Radio Disney
CEO / Founder of Tattered Suit



DREAM AND PLAN

When I was eighteen, I went to college but I also started a band. Which one was more important? At the time, I had no idea so I did both.

During the next four years of my life, I reached several forks in the road when I could have chosen one direction over the other. At one point I almost quit the band so I could focus on college. Another time, I almost dropped out of school because of the band. But at each juncture, I continued to pursue both. It wasn't until the band signed a recording contract and our touring schedule made attending school impossible that I chose the band.

My band is called Third Day, and we've done pretty well. We've sold some records and toured all over the world. We've even raked in a few awards and other accolades. By just about any standard, the band has been a success.



But I do not regret the time I spent in college. College equipped me with a writing ability that I have used to write songs, blogs, and magazine articles. The rigorous nature of school gave me a level of confidence to meet challenging deadlines. And I learned a whole lot about a lot of things.

If things had gone the other way, I am quite confident that I would be writing this same article, albeit from a slightly different perspective. I might be a college professor or lawyer or politician, and I would be looking back fondly at my years of being in a rock band and how that gave me a set of skills and experiences that I would not have otherwise.

Right now, you're standing on a precipice. Before you is a wide chasm filled with possibilities. It is exciting, but it can also be dizzying, even paralyzing. You probably have grand dreams as well as practical plans. My advice: Pursue both.

MARK LEE

Third Day Guitarist



EVERY LITTLE JOB MATTERS

I have had the privilege of working with DreamWorks Animation for over 20 years, and had my start in the toy industry before that. But as a fresh college grad, I wish someone had bluntly told me that I knew...absolutely nothing. I was full of energy, full of ideas, full of pride. In my first job, I would pick and choose my assignments based on what I thought was worthwhile, and I made quiet judgments about my bosses, feeling they were too old-school. I had no idea how smart and sharp they were, or that they saw right through my rookie hubris. They hired me because I had raw potential and showed promise, but fired me in two years because I was too big-headed. That was the jarring wake-up call I needed. I had little to give and much to learn.

One of the most important lessons? Every little job matters. Your new boss asking you to get coffee? Do it with joy, serve them like you would serve your grandma.



Learn to love doing it. Colossians 3:23 requires that we go all-in when it comes to work. Nothing held back. Be grateful and humble, work hard and long for experienced leaders and learn from them. Bosses will quickly trust you with more. Doors will open in places you could not expect. When they do, be 100% ready to boldly step in.

“Whatever you do, work at it with your whole being, for the Lord and not for men.” Colossians 3:23

RICK REKEDAL
Chief Creative
Global Franchise Development
DreamWorks Animation



CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33). This verse is an important promise to me. It implies that it is my choice to give my highest priority to following and obeying God.

The daily choices you make will determine your future. Make reading and studying God’s Word a daily priority - even if it’s only for a few minutes. The temptation may be to think that next month or next year there will be more time to pray and study the Bible. But now is the time to establish this important habit.

Seek God’s will in determining a career and using the gifts and abilities He has given you. Each job is an opportunity to display integrity and diligence, thereby honoring God and showing Him to unbelieving and skeptical fellow workers.

Another critical choice is selecting true, godly friends who share



your values. These friendships will be a source of encouragement during difficult seasons and celebration in happy times. But be sure to develop acquaintances with unbelieving neighbors and friends. As you share your life with them, they will see Jesus in your responses to both good and adverse circumstances.

After choosing to follow God, the most important choice will be your husband or wife. Make this decision without haste and with much prayer. Discuss your dreams and goals thoroughly, making sure that you share the same interests and aims.

The future is before you. It is an unknown - frightening in many aspects but also hopeful and exciting. Live life expectantly and joyfully because God is your guide who loves and protects you. Cultivate an attitude of thankfulness, looking for the good in every situation.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life”
(Prov. 4:23).

MARTY BRINER

Wife of the late Bob Briner,
Author of *Roaring Lambs*



SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE LOST

When I was much younger and just starting out in business, someone said to me, “Always tell the truth the first time and you’ll never have to remember what you said.” Those words hit me hard and became a lesson I’ve tried to take with me throughout my life.

James 5:12 (esv) instructs us to *“Let your ‘yes’ be yes and your ‘no’ be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.”* And Mark Twain once said, “Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.”

Living your life in this manner leads to a life of integrity, and I believe that God is looking for people of integrity. Proverbs 10:9 (esv) tells us that *“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.”* King David prayed in Psalm 25:21 (esv), *“May integrity and uprightness*



preserve me” and said again in Psalm 41:12 (esv), “You have upheld me because of my integrity.” Job, in the midst of all his testing, responded, “*Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity!*” (Job 31:6 esv).

Integrity must be lived out every minute of every day. It is borne out in the difficult times, not just when we’re looking our best or when everything is going our way. It is refined in crisis. It matters in our relationships and when we’re alone.

The good news is that our integrity is one thing that cannot be taken from us ... it can only be given away by our own choices and actions. May we daily choose to walk the path of integrity.

NEAL JOSEPH

Lead Associate / Non-Profit Leadership
The Slingshot Group



NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS

In Hollywood, the most common advice for success is, “It’s all about who you know.” This is really a statement about developing relationships, and it is a crucial key to making your vocational dream a reality. The ability to genuinely be interested in people in your field and to actively work at nurturing relationships will make you stand out above the crowd. When people are looking for a person to fill a position, they will remember you.

At the beginning of your job search, connect with successful people in your field by offering to take them to coffee and asking about their experience or advice to a beginner. You will be surprised how many people wish to impart their wisdom to you.

During the interview process, building rapport with the employer is critical. Bring a list of good questions. It will show that you are



include: What are three things you value most in an employee? What is most frustrating? Where would you like your organization to be in three years? Also, listen carefully for a point of mutual interest to share briefly on a personal level. People want to work with someone they will enjoy and who is fun.

Once you are hired, foster relationships at every level. Offer a helping hand. Affirm others. Take initiative to create a better work environment. Build relationships with coworkers beyond work. Join professional organizations and work on their committees. Connect people. Instead of Christmas cards send Thanksgiving cards, expressing how thankful you are that these people are in your life.

Hollywood knows that building and nurturing relationship is the key to success, but it is also a goal congruent with a life of faith at its deepest level. This message is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4–5 (nirv), *“Love ... does not look out for its own interests.”*

REBECCA VER STRATEN-MCSPARRAN

Owner RVM Consulting Firm

Former Director of L.A. Film Studies Center



If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities..

Luke 16:10 NLT



BLOOM

I have a hard time being patient waiting for the next thing. I'm not a sustainer. I'm an entrepreneur, a builder, a pioneer. I don't wait well. My eyes wander for more and bigger crowd what's next. I continually fight my brokenness and insecurities inside that want to be recognized for achievements and accolades and accomplishments. To stay focused on today seems like a waste.

This simple phrase has become one of my life mantras:

Bloom where you're planted.

I find myself uneasy about my current situation. I think about what's next at the expense of today. I don't focus my energy and passion in the present, and I think that's a mistake. Here's why:



You are here TODAY

Remember back to when you got the job. It was so vivid, you were so full of vision, anticipation and excitement. They were going to PAY you to do this? What!?! But that was then – now there's frustration with the leadership, the tension with your supervisor and your audience seems impossible to please. Why not start thinking about what's next? Because God has called you TODAY to THIS place. Serve like you're going to be there the rest of your life. So love like it, lead like it and refuse to let circumstances distract you from the high calling you've been given.

Your TOMORROW depends on this moment

Is it time to leave? Maybe so. Is it possible God is removing some of the comforts and passion to help you see His guidance for your next steps? Sure. But know that God has tomorrow taken care of and pray for wisdom and guidance on where



you go from here. Trust in Him, don't manipulate your future or convince yourself you must manage your career and occupation. If you're unfaithful or fizzle out here it will affect your next step forward, too.

So regardless of what is next ... bloom where you're planted today! Throw yourself into your mission like it was your first day. Try something new. Break something that is good to fight for it to be made great. Serve with reckless abandon. Run toward that conflict and work to resolve it. Forget about speaking in front of thousands, writing a New York Times best-seller and being the Next Big Thing™. Serve your people. Just bloom.

JOSH GRIFFIN
Co-Founder Download Youth Ministry



Get along among yourselves, each of you doing your part.... Gently encourage the stragglers, and reach out for the exhausted, pulling them to their feet.

1 Thessalonians 5:13 MSG



WHAT SONG WILL YOU SING?

In the 2005 movie *Walk the Line*, the famous singer Johnny Cash and his band are trying to cut their first record. The producer stops them midsong and informs them that their work won't sell. To paraphrase, he asks them, "If you were hit by a truck and you could only sing one song before you died, what would that song be?" Cash then sings a song that he wrote from his heart, which became a smash hit and solidified his career.

So I ask you: If you could sing one song what would it be? What is your heart cry?

I believe God places a "heart cry" in each of us. It has been said that our calling is "that place where our deep delights meet the deep hungers of the world." Your calling and mission are how you want to be remembered. It is the song that you *have* to



sing. It is how you use your individual gifts, strengths, and abilities, in specific places, in specific ways, with specific people, for specific ends.

The Greek philosopher Plato told us that we should live a life that pursues beauty, truth, and goodness. I believe that was God-given insight. The busyness of life and the stresses you face can cause you to miss the joy of beauty, the power of truth, and the rewards of goodness. Regularly take a deep breath and feast your eyes on the beauty around you. Make every moment count. Observe the beauty of creation, the creativity of others, and the beauty and creativity that is found within you and wishes to express itself.

There are those who will tell you that there is no such thing as truth. Don't believe them. Pursue truth with all your heart and as Jesus said, it will set you free. There is no greater truth than Jesus Himself. God intends for us to ask questions and be filled



with curiosity, to pursue wisdom and never stop learning.

An Asian proverb says, “Suffering is the one promise that life keeps.” We all wander in the wilderness at times. We all suffer. The suffering of those around us can sometimes be absolutely overwhelming, leaving us feeling hopeless and helpless. But God does walk with us all the way. People who embrace fearlessness despite the difficulties of life have hope.

I believe the individual-oriented, self-focused culture we live in prevents us from understanding the power and significance of community. We are not intended to go it alone. Friends and family will help you understand your calling and mission. They will help you pursue goodness, truth, and beauty. They will encourage you to seek wisdom, continue learning, and remain curious. They will challenge you to never give up hope.

DR. RICHARD GATHRO
Hodos Institute



Do good instead of evil and try to live at peace. If you obey the Lord, he will watch over you and answer your prayers.

Psalm 34:14-15 CEV



DO GOOD

My dad would often say, “Be good to everyone because everyone is hurting.” You often don’t really know what people are going through. So be careful in your relationships. Having the ability to give people the benefit of the doubt (without being a pushover) is a great gift to cultivate. It saves you from the tyranny of being constantly offended. To be truly free to love others unselfishly frees God to use you and bless you in great ways.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Gal. 6:9–10).

SCOTT HARRIS

Missions Minister
Brentwood Baptist Church



WHAT DO YOU VALUE?

Einstein once wrote, “Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.” One of the important lessons in life is to make sure you define success for yourself or else your culture, peer group, or employer will define it for you.

Brandon Tartikoff, the legendary television executive, was a key mentor in my life. He once told me to determine the one job I most wanted to have and put myself on a path to get it. I thought that was wise advice but led to a narrow road because the job I envisioned only existed in a handful of places. What I learned, though, was that if I could come to grips with what I was good at and what suited my personality, the road to get there would be as fulfilling as the specific job itself.

I think God has uniquely gifted each of us. We also have distinct personality traits. If a person can discover his or her giftedness



and be in the right environment for his or her personality, there are numerous occupations that will be satisfying. Being true to how you are wired is a key to being fulfilled in your work.

Ask yourself the tough questions. Work hard for that which you value. Don't let other people's values dictate what you should value. Spend your only irreplaceable commodity, your time, on that which you value. In the end the return on that investment is success.

TERRY BOTWICK
Founding Partner
Lightbridge Entertainment



IT IS GOD WHO GIVES THE INCREASE

I was greatly influenced by Bob Briner, who wrote seven books before he died, but is perhaps most known for his work, *Roaring Lambs*. I remember thinking I had THE strategy to “Roar”. I was so excited to share my idea with him one day and when I did, he responded, “well, that’s ONE way to do it”. I thought- what are you talking about? That is THE ONLY way to Roar. Silly me: I thought there was only one way.

I was watching the television program, *American Idol* one night and heard ‘Shout To The Lord’ on national television. As I heard the lines, “My Jesus, My Savior, Lord there is none like You” . . . I began to cry. There, right in front of me, was the biggest Roar I had ever heard—the Name of Jesus being proclaimed to 30 million people on one of the most popular television shows in America. I could never have planned that moment—nor would I have ever thought it possible.



But it happened. And God got the Glory.

I was reminded all over again, God is God and I am not. God doesn't need me to "work" for Him. He doesn't need me to build a plan for Him that will "save the world". What He needs for me to do is listen and obey. As a graduate, you want to go out into the world and change things for Christ. Keep your enthusiasm—but remember: Don't get your plans mixed up with God's plans. Live like everything depends on you—trust like everything depends on God. God has a multitude of ways to bring people to Himself.

BARRY LANDIS

Chairman & Co-Founder, Ribbow Media Group
Executive Director, The Briner Institute



HELPING HANDS

Open your hands and look at them. You will use these marvelous gifts for the honor and glory of God or you will use them for yourself. With them, you will serve God or you will serve money, but you cannot do both. Your hands will make idols you will worship, or they will create altars in praise of Him. By them, you will extend great kindness and comfort to others, even your enemies, or you will employ them in empty and destructive pursuits.

Open your hands and give thanks for them. Pray each day that the Father will place in your hands what He wants in them. Ask Him to remove from them anything that is not pleasing to Him. If you do this, you will be among a remarkably small percentage of Christians willing to trust Him with every detail of their lives. You will discover what He chooses for you is always better than what you choose for yourself. Make this your daily prayer, and I



assure you, it will be impossible to miss His will for your life or what He has designed you to accomplish. I dare you to join this joyful adventure of love.

WES YODER

President of Ambassador Speakers
Bureau & Literary Agency



WORKING FOR THE LORD

Having worked for IBM for over thirty years, I observed many church friends and acquaintances make life-changing decisions to enter either the pastoral or missions disciplines. Missionary visits to our church always brought that twinge of doubt about whether being with IBM was as important to God as being knee-deep in alligators, translating the Scriptures for some far-off, indigenous race. Was I missing God's direction in my life? Or, more importantly, was I missing out on some special blessing that was reserved for others?

When God took man and put him in the garden of Eden to work and to take care of it, He set in motion the continuum of the work theme that permeates Scripture. The biblical theme of work demonstrates that there is balance between all things done to glorify the Lord. God wanted man to work because of the value He had demonstrated in the six-day creation process.



“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.” (Gen. 2:2). It also appears that He wanted us to follow His example by appreciating appropriate rest after working sufficiently hard enough to require it!

We also have the mandate to “subdue the earth,” partnering with our Creator to improve the culture and the plight of humanity (after the fall) and to effectively use the earth’s resources in a responsible way. That mandate is a divine imperative to use our God-given interests, skills, and occupations in the grand scheme of work. Do we appropriately view our contributions and our occupations as a life ministry, being equally pleasing in the sight of God with every other calling?

We are responsible before our sovereign God to be the best at whatever He has designed us to do because that is the way we fulfill His plan for doing kingdom things—His plan for being Christlike. Furthermore, performing our jobs effectively is not



only about putting food on our family's table or ultimately about sharing the gospel of Christ. Often the most engaging parts of our performance in our work is about working with *Christ as the reason* for working. It is about our relationship with Him, our obeying His calling, and that the calling is only effective when we recognize His hand in it. It is about having fellow workers observe our dedication to detail, our joy in occupation, and our passion for people, such that we may actually have more opportunities to share the gospel than if we had planned an evangelistic campaign.

If Christ is our reason for working, it could be argued that we should make decisions about work based on His design and not upon how much we can acquire and how quickly we can acquire it. God's call upon our created lives is made manifest in the gifts He has given each of us. We should exemplify the manifest image of God, a God who took pleasure in His work, seeing "*that it was very good*" (Gen. 1:31). Our mutual gifts,



skills, interests, personality, and values—our work—are all needed as a contribution to one another in community, and all are our gift of worship to our Savior. Therefore *“whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men”* (Col. 3:23).

LEW GIBBS
CNO
Networking-Fishers, IN



LEARN FROM NOAH

All I ever needed to know in life or business can be learned from the Bible's account of Noah's ark:

1. Don't miss the boat. You must decide right now to be a lifelong learner. While this may appear to be about academic excellence alone, it is also about pursuing your dreams with passion. Discovering your purpose in life and dedicating your talent and abilities to pursuing your God-given desires is the key to success.
2. We are all in the same boat. It is wise to remember that you can accomplish nothing by yourself. Unity is the heart of any productive organization.
3. Plan ahead. Remember, it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark. We need to have a plan for accomplishing our goals



and dreams. In the business world, resource allocation is at the heart of strategic planning.

4. Stay fit. You never know, someone may ask you to do something really big when you are six hundred years old. This is not just about physical fitness but mental, physical, and spiritual fitness. If you want to lead and achieve, you must be strong in all of these areas.
5. Don't listen to the critics. Sometimes the people closest to you will be your biggest critics and try to steal your dreams in the process. You cannot please everybody, nor should you try. As Polonius said to Laertes, "Above all else you must be true to yourself."
6. Build your future on high ground. If you aspire to greatness, that will not be at the bottom of the mountain. You must embrace the vision and share it with others, always keeping hope alive without denying the difficulties in the quest. Your



goal is onward and upward to high ground that will put you above the flood.

7. Travel in pairs. We need the support and counsel of like-minded individuals. We need to surround ourselves with visionaries and dreamers and pragmatists who believe in the dream.
8. Two heads are better than one. You can always find wisdom in counsel and you must pursue the best advice that you can find.
9. Speed is not always an advantage. Both snails and cheetahs were on board the ark, and they were both there for a reason. Everyone's skills and talents are valuable in the right setting and in the right place.
10. When you are stressed out, float awhile. There is always time to fight another day. You must take time for renewal—mentally, physically, and spiritually.



11. Amateurs build the ark, and professionals built the Titanic. Be sure you have selected the right carpenters to assist you in building your dream. Life is about much more than just the numbers.
12. Threats sometimes come from within. When you face obstacles and crises in pursuit of your dream remember that the woodpeckers or the termites inside are sometimes a larger threat than the storm outside. You must be vigilant for both.
13. There is a rainbow at the end. Sometimes things can seem overwhelming. Remember this: No matter what the storm, a rainbow is waiting. That is God's promise for the believer and pursuer of worthwhile dreams.

JIM AMOS

Chairman & Principal, Eagle Alliance Investments
Award-Winning Author and Speaker
Franchising Hall of Fame Inductee



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**“The beginning of wisdom is this:
Get wisdom. Though it cost all
you have, get understanding.”**

PROVERBS 4:7 NIV

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