

Take a Risk!

A monthly publication from Risk Takers for Christ

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Snakes and Their Deadly Bites!

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

"We spend most of our time treating snake bites when we should be spending our time killing snakes."

- Mike Huckabee

As many of our readers know, I have spent the vast majority of my adult life ministering to prisoners and at-risk youth. In fact, over the course of 35 years, I was able to share the gospel with an estimated 500,000 inmates in hundreds of different correctional institutions across North America and Africa. These days I spend much of my time caring for mostly minority young men from broken homes and dysfunctional families.



And guess what? Those two people groups - prisoners and at-risk youth - have a lot in common. In fact, I am convinced that the #1 cause of people going to prison or teens joining gangs, dropping out of school, taking drugs, or engaging in other criminal behavior is this: the lack of a loving and stable dad or any positive male role model in their lives.

Studies continue to show that out-of-wedlock birth (and the resulting fatherless homes) is the leading predictor of future incarceration and lifelong poverty. That is why I am tired of putting a Band-Aid on society's problems when the solution is so clear.

Sure, racism is real and the justice system isn't always fair. But that isn't why minori-

ties, especially black males, are overly represented in America's jails and prisons. Simply put, it is because black males, while comprising only 6% of the general population, commit 63% of all violent crimes in America. And why does such a small percentage commit so many violent crimes? Because the out-of-wedlock birth rate in the black community has risen from 25 percent in 1965 to 72 percent today.

Not having a loving dad in the home too often leads to criminal behavior which, in turn, leads to jail. Sadly, the dots almost connect themselves.

Like Mike Huckabee said in today's quote, treating symptoms instead of their cause is a waste of time, energy, and resources. It would be far better if we emphasized the importance of the family in our society and stressed waiting until marriage to have sex (and children).

In the same way, treating someone's physical and emotional needs without addressing their spiritual ones is only helpful to a point. Unless you want them to regress - and to spend eternity in hell - they need to be introduced to Jesus Christ, the Great Physician. Only He can completely heal them from the inside out.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, so that the outside may become clean as well."

- Matthew 23:25-26 (BSB)

Is Your Church a Spiritual Superpower?

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

“More is expected of a church than of an ordinary household.”

- C.H. Spurgeon

I was one of six children born to William and June Glading. As such, there was always someone to play with - or fight with - when we were growing up. For the most part, the six siblings got along very well and could always be counted on in a time of need.

However, two parents and six kids can only accomplish so much. Just imagine if our family had been twice as large... or ten times bigger? Instead of having two teachers in the family, we may have had 12. And instead of one minister and one professional entertainer, we might have had a half dozen of each.

That is one of the beauties - and hidden strengths - of the local church. According to the Hartford Institute for Religious Research and the National Congregations Study, the median church in America has 75 members. The average church size is much higher at 186 attendees, a figure that is somewhat skewed by mega churches. For instance, 50 percent of all churchgoers attend a congregation of 350 or more, whereas small churches account for just 11 percent of overall membership.

Whether we take the median number (75) or the average

number (186), just imagine the skills and resources that even the smallest church in America possesses. The talents and even the spiritual gifts of Noreen, Scott, Gary, Chery, Dale, and Diane Glading would pale in comparison.

There are two keys to a church's success in this regard: everyone pitching in and everyone pulling in the same direction. It doesn't do any good for a church to have a bounty of blessings at its disposal if only a handful of parishioners are willing to actively participate. Rolling into the church parking lot on a Sunday morning is one thing, but rolling up your sleeves and getting involved is another.

Likewise, an “all for one and one for all” mentality can make even the tiniest church a spiritual superpower. I guess that's why in His high priestly prayer on the night He was betrayed, Jesus's #1 priority for His disciples was unity.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one - I in them and You in Me - so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.”

- John 17:20-23 (NIV)

Listening to the Father's Heart

by Os Hillman

Son, one of the great strategies the enemy of your soul uses is to deceive people into thinking he does not exist (1 Pet 5:8,9). He suggests that all things have a logical reason for existence and there is no higher power. Remember two things: I give enough evidence of my existence to reveal myself and I also create enough doubt to require faith to believe in me. In the end, belief is never a result of proof, but only of faith. There is an idol in the land called the Greek spirit that makes humans believe they can rationalize all human behavior. Making the most of this, the enemy is busy deceiving many, bringing them into the great abyss. Pray for the removal of the veil of deception that keeps some of my children from seeing what other devoted sons and daughters

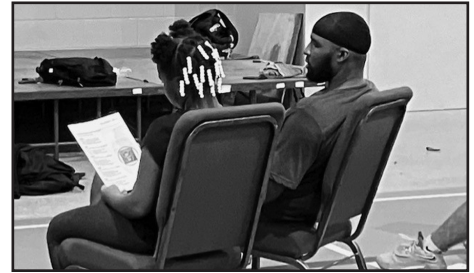
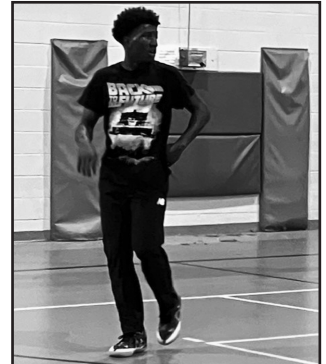
already see. They recognize the spirit world and they recognize the signs of the times (1 Chron 12:22). You are doing well, my son, to see these schemes. Stand in the marketplace and warn all who will hear.

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

- 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

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Living H2O Initiative Photos



Ponder the Things of God

by Alistair Begg

"I will meditate on your precepts."

- Psalm 119:15

There are times when solitude is better than company, and silence is wiser than speech. We would be better Christians if we were alone more often, waiting on God and gathering through meditation on His Word spiritual strength for service in His kingdom. We ought to ponder the things of God, because that is how we get the real nutriment out of them.

Truth is something like the cluster of the vine: In order to have wine from it, we must bruise it; we must press and squeeze it many times. The bruiser's feet must come down joyfully on the bunches or else the juice will not flow; and the grapes must be properly tread or else much of the precious liquid will be wasted. So we must, by meditation, tread the clusters of truth if we desire the wine of consolation from them.

Our bodies are not supported by merely taking food into the mouth, but the process that really supplies the muscle and the nerve and the sinew and the bone is the process

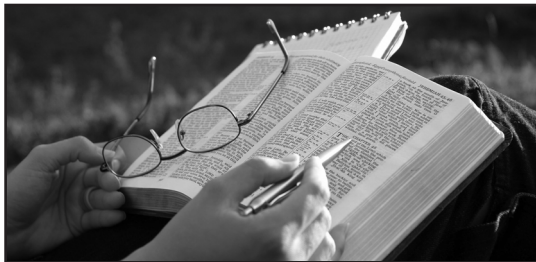
of digestion. It is by digestion that the outward food becomes assimilated with the inner life. Our souls are not nourished merely by listening for a while to this and then to that and then to the other part of divine truth. Hearing, reading, marking, and learning all require inward digesting to complete their usefulness, and the inward digesting of the truth lies mainly in meditating upon it.

Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make only slow advances in the Christian life?

Because they neglect their closets and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they want the corn, but they will not go out into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs on the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it.

Deliver us, O Lord, from such folly, and may this be our resolve this morning: "I will meditate on your precepts."

Devotional material is taken from "Morning and Evening," written by C.H. Spurgeon, revised and updated by Alistair Begg. Copyright © 2003, Good News Publishers



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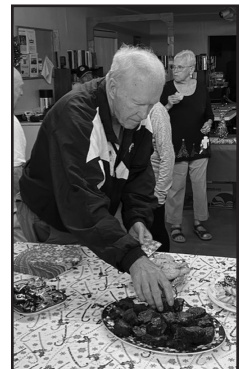
We Have a QR Code

Everyone can use a spiritual lift in the morning, especially on weekdays when work, school, and other demands vie for our time and attention... and sap our strength. Risk Takers for Christ wants to help by offering a free weekday devotional message that will challenge and encourage you in your daily walk.



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