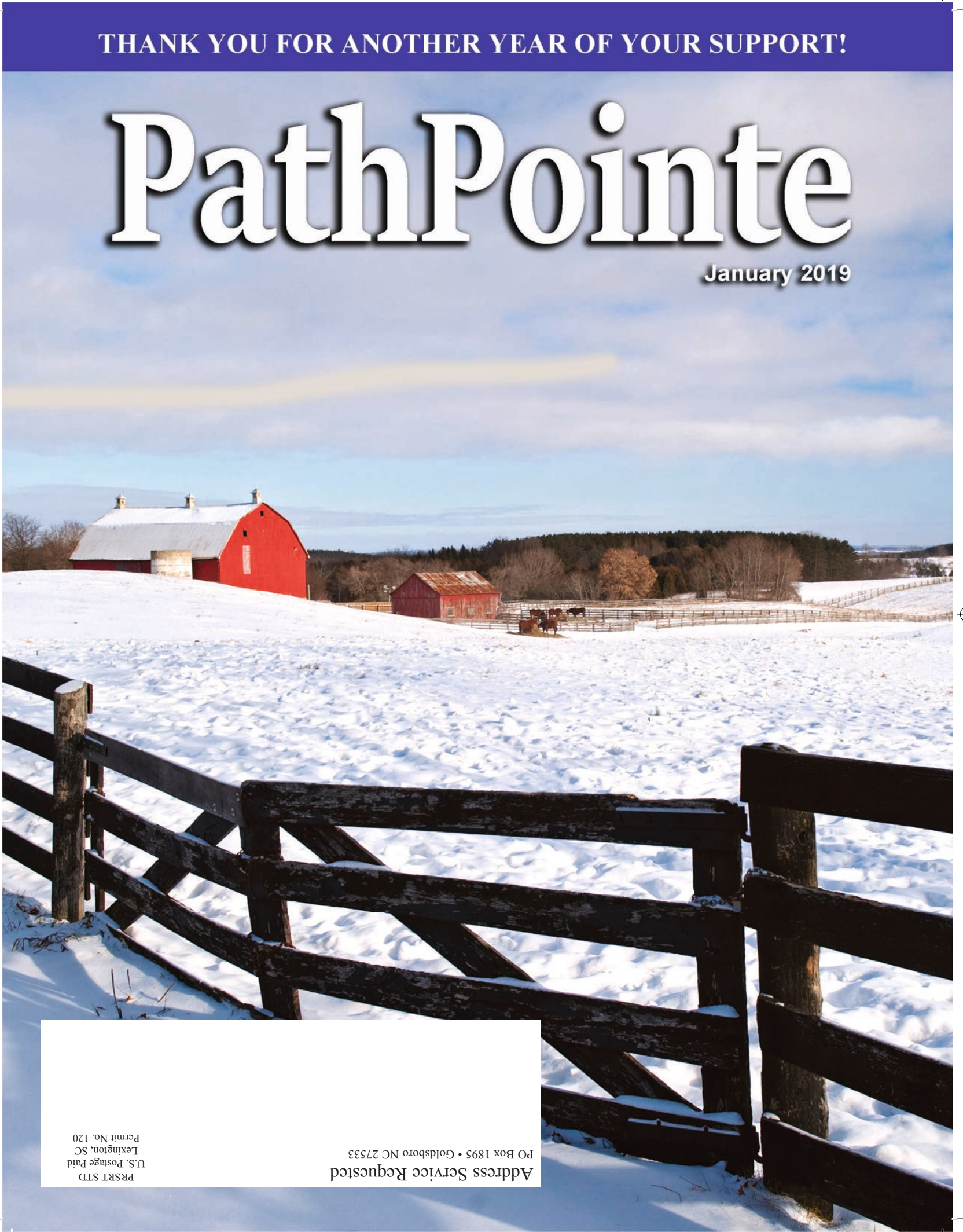


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contents

PathPointe Magazine

Volume 20, Issue 1

January, 2019

- Page 2 **Discovering Your Future Self**
Dr. T. D. Worthington
- Page 6 **Radio Bits**
Your Christian Superstations!
- Page 8 **A New Year To Shine**
Mrs. Sherry Worthington
- Page 10 **Life 101**
Dr. Glenn Mills
- Page 12 **And Finally...**
God's Blessings...

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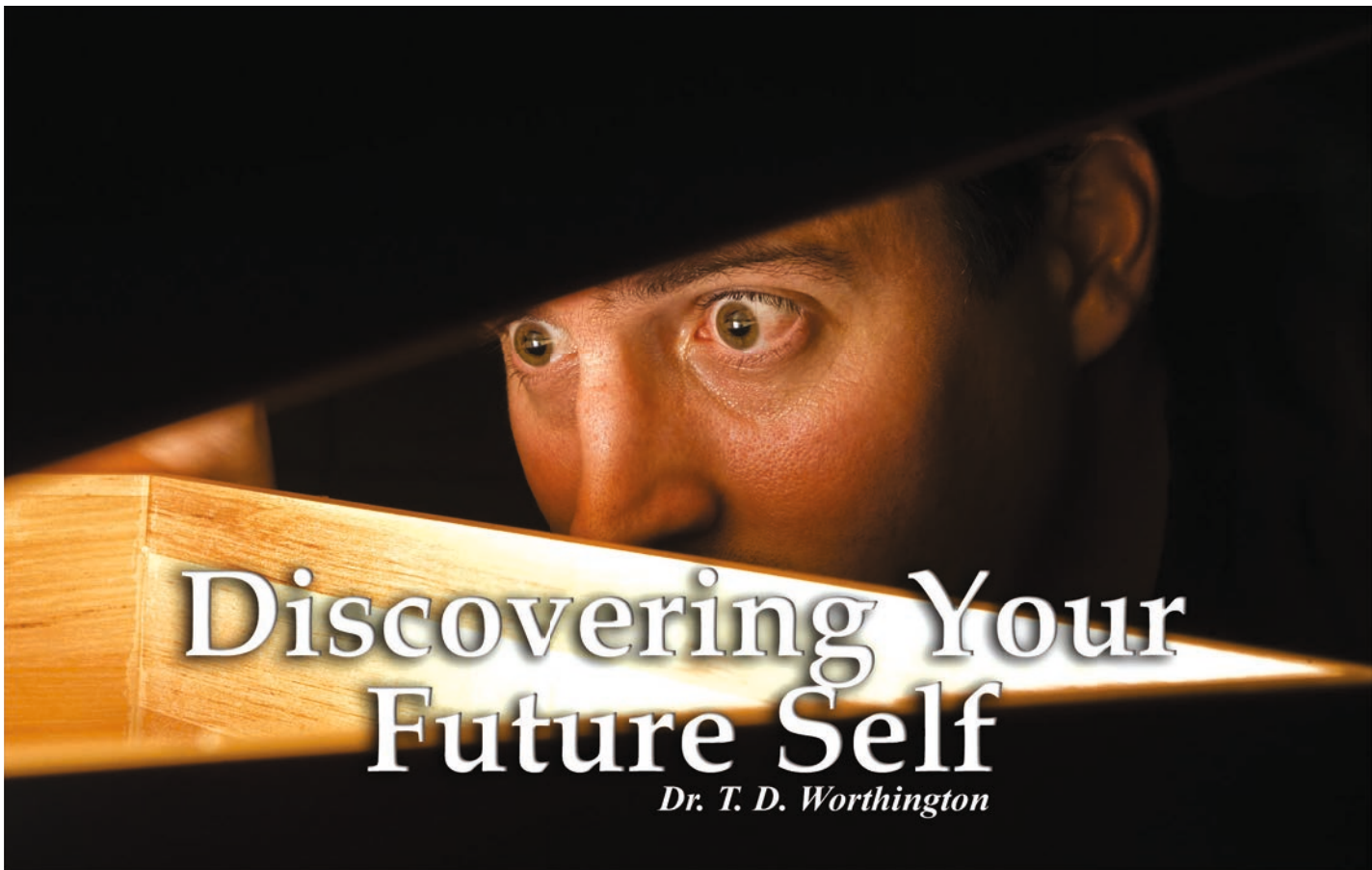
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“Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.”

Job 32:7

Elihu spoke these words to Job many years ago. He was one of Job’s friends, but not one of the three who came at the beginning of the book. Elihu arrived later, and although he was younger than the others, he actually rebukes both Job and his other friends. Later, the Lord condemns Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but not Elihu. I think there is great truth to consider in his words. Actually, this verse is similar to another:

“With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.”

Job 12:12

As we begin this New Year, there is someone we might wish to give a little more consideration. I am referring to our future selves. That’s

the person we will be tomorrow, or next week, or even a thousand years from now. Actually, we have a pretty big responsibility to that person. I suppose we might divide the timeline into **your future self on earth** and then **your future self in eternity**.

First, let’s consider your future earthly self. That’s a person you had better treat right. Actually, it’s pretty important to live your life today with your future self in mind. Your *future self* is the person you imagine when you wonder whether you should clean the garage today or leave it to your *future self*. After all, your *future self* will be overjoyed with the prospects of cleaning the garage. The person you are today really does not want to do yard work, but you are quite sure your *future self* will have no problem completing the task. Your *future self* is the person who will be much more enthusiastic about losing a few pounds.

Your *future self* will prefer salads to doughnuts and he will always have the time to do things that you just can’t get around to today. Your *future self* will probably read the Bible more, spend more time in prayer, and maybe be more faithful to church.

Fact is your *future self*...the person you are going to be real soon, is almost perfect. Your *future self* will always have more time, more energy, and more willpower than your present self, or will he? We tend to think about our future selves like different people. We often idealize them, expecting our future selves to do what our present selves cannot seem to manage. Sometimes we mistreat them. We burden them with the consequences of our foolish decisions. Sometimes we simply misunderstand them, failing to realize that they will have many, if not most, of the same thoughts and feelings as our present



selves. However we think of our future selves, rarely do we see them as fully us. It might be interesting to write your *future self* a letter...date it for 5 or 10 years in the future and open it at the appropriate time. ***“Dear Future Self, I hope by now you’ve gotten victory over...”*** Of course, maybe it’s easier to just consider what we would have written 5 or 10 years ago to the person we are now.

Of course, when we are young it is even harder to relate to our future selves. That’s why most young people wait so long to start saving money for retirement. When you are younger it is hard to relate to that eighty year old geezer that you are going to be. To the young, saving is like a choice between spending money today or saving it to give to some strange old codger later in life. But the truth is, if you want to be happy, you better make some provision to make your future self happy. Our future selves are built today, at this very moment. Thinking in that way will help us put our choices, actions, and habits in the right perspective.

Feeling too lazy to wash the dishes? Think about your future self. She would probably be happy to walk into the clean kitchen the next morning. The seed you are planting today will germinate into your future self. Don’t want to deal with some email correspondence? Then your future self will have to. Don’t want to wash clothes? Then your future self will be sporting dirty underwear. Who’s got time to floss their teeth? Actually, your future self would probably prefer not to be toothless at 40. The mess you make today, your future self will have to clean up, probably with interest. Everything you do now is an investment in the life and happiness, or

the death and sadness, of your future self.

So, what do you want for your future self? Maybe it’s time to recognize the little ways we subconsciously build our future self every day. In the past week, think of the tasks you’ve tackled to set yourself up for success in the future. Then consider what you did that will be a detriment to your future self. Recognize how you’re already creating your future self, and then build the ***highest possible version*** of yourself that you can. This could be similar to an updated version of software. Learn this: one of the easiest ways of radically changing your life is to get in touch with your future self. Countless studies have shown that the more you connect to your future self, the better decisions you will make today.

Second, let’s consider your future eternal self. Just as sure as we should be willing to live for our *future self*, we should even more live for our future *eternal self*. In our modern society, most that cross over into eternity are completely unprepared for what happens to them. Many will open their

eyes in hell and be totally bewildered and surprised. The eternal self must be prepared since everyone is heading to hell unless they make plans not to go. Just like the rich man in the days of Lazarus, many have left unfinished business behind on the Earth because of our attitude of denial about death. Many are uncomfortable with talking about death, and they simply don’t want to deal with it.

People need to prepare for death well before the time they experience it. Death is only a doorway into the next phase of our existence. It should be talked about openly and frankly. For the prepared, death can be a time of wonderful reunions and leaving behind pain and suffering. But for the unprepared, it will be a time of suffering and agony. Either way, it will be a new beginning, with new experiences, either good or bad.

The Bible gives us some facts about death that should encourage all of us to make sure we are prepared.

“And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”
Hebrews 9:27





In this text I learn some important reasons why it is foolish not to prepare my eternal self for eternity.

“It is appointed...” In the phrase “It is appointed for men once to die...” we find our first fact. Death is unavoidable. Of course, this might be stating the obvious, yet most people live as if death is unlikely! Unless our Lord returns in our lifetime, all of us, sooner or later, must keep a personal, unavoidable, appointment with death.

“Unto men...” Next, we find that barring the return of Christ for His church, none are excluded. When the Scripture says “it is appointed unto men once to die...”, it does so generically, with no sense of gender. In other words “men” here stands for all of us whether male or female. You could replace the word “men” with your own name, because the Scripture applies to you individually as well as to mankind in general. Nevertheless, as we said before, most people live their lives as if they were exceptions to the rule of death.

“...once to die...” In the words “it is appointed unto men *once to die...*” we have our third fact, that you only

die once. You don’t get a second chance at life and death. Since we live and die but once, we should make the most of our life. Surely, we should not waste our one life. These verses speak of physical life and physical death. The Scripture does speak of new life in Christ, just as it speaks of a second death for the lost, but these are spiritual in nature.

“...but after this...” In the words “... but *after this* the judgment” we have our fourth fact; that death is not the end. There is something after death. Again, we can see the importance of your eternal self being ready.

“...the Judgment” The Word of God now tells us precisely what there is after death, it is “*the judgment.*” A Day of Judgment is coming, for the saints at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and for the lost at the Great White Throne. But those “*in Christ*” need not fear because there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Those who refuse and neglect the welfare of their future eternal self are counted as ungodly and unprepared, and they have good reason to fear. For those who do not receive Jesus Christ as Savior, death means everlasting punishment.

So as we enter this New Year, might I entreat you to seek and embrace God’s forgiveness. Your future self and your eternal self will be glad you did. Avoid burdening your future with years of guilt, bitterness, regret, and heavy consequences because you were not willing to prepare for your future.

As a Christian I am in the process of becoming more like Jesus. Every day, is another exciting day on an amazing journey toward my true identity as a child of God. I was once in darkness, but now I can walk as a child of light. I can walk in wisdom. I can have the mind of Christ. Therefore, just as I have made positive plans for my eternal self in glory, I also have the wisdom and power to make positive plans for my future self here on earth. May each of us do so, our future selves, both on earth and in eternity will thank us for our decision.



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry over forty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries.

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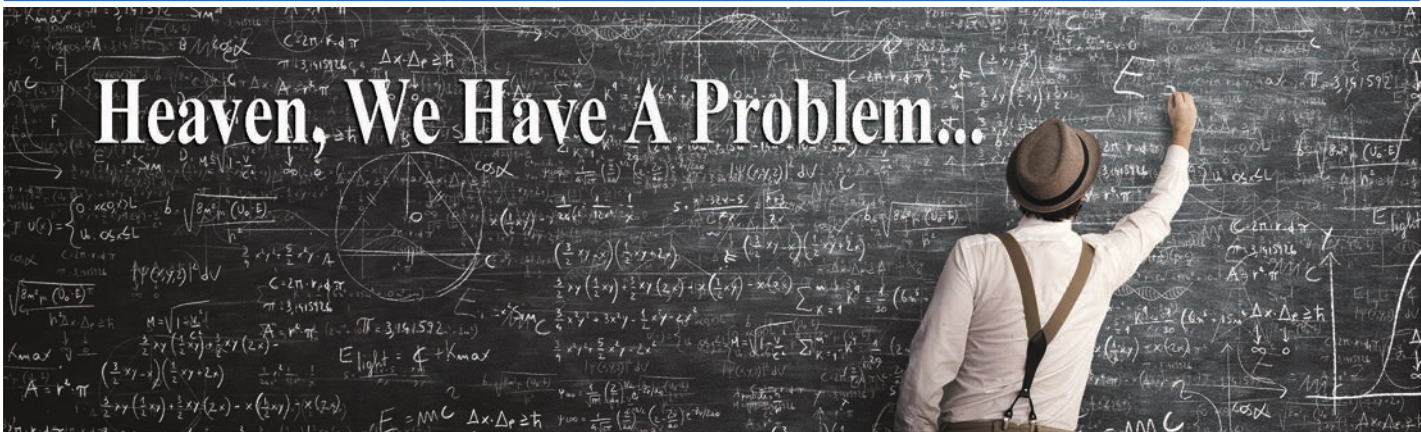
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Heaven, We Have A Problem...

“When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.”

John 6:5-6

Jesus took Philip aside, put his arm around him, and said, “Philip, we have thousands of people here. They’re all hungry. Tell me, where are we going to buy enough bread to feed them? Do you have any idea what we should do?”

Of course, Jesus knew all along what He was going to do. The verse above tells us so. Yet the Lord was trying to teach Philip something, and the lesson He was imparting to him applies to each of us as we enter this New Year. How many sleepless nights will we face over the coming year trying to solve our problems?

I picture Philip scratching his head, and saying, “Lord, I’ve been talking to some of the other disciples, and I also checked our treasury, and we only have two hundred pennies. Lord that is not nearly enough to feed this multitude. Lord we’ve got a serious bread problem.”

We all tend to look at our problems as single dimensional problems; I’ve got a money problem, or I’ve got a relationship problem. Actually, Philip only saw a small part of the problem. Yes, they had a bread problem, but they also had a bakery problem... and a money problem... and a distribution problem... and a transportation problem... and a time problem. Add it all up, and they had problems they couldn’t even imagine, just like you and I. Their situation wasn’t just difficult, it was totally impossible.

You may think you know your problem. However, you most likely don’t understand how the dominos have to be arranged to set it back in order. But Jesus knows all along exactly what He is going to do. He has a plan for our troubles and difficulties. Jesus knows every small detail about the entire situation.

There are times during our trials when we ask the Lord for help, and He might respond by asking, “Well, what do you think we should do?”

That’s what He did with Phillip. Should that happen a good answer might be something like this: “Jesus, you are God. Nothing is impossible with You. So, I’m giving this problem over to You. It’s no longer mine, but Yours. Lord, if there is something You need me to do, I will be obedient, but Lord, You are the miracle worker. I’m going to surrender all my doubts and fears to You. I know You won’t allow me to faint. In fact, You already know what You’re going to do about my problem. I will rest in Your love and power.”

Regardless of what comes our way, it is never unwise to place our trust in the Lord.



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Artist Spotlight - The Ambassadors

The Ambassadors have been spreading God's word in song for over 45 years. However, as of November 2018, the group has retired from traveling and singing. The decision was made after much prayer and consideration, with the agreement of the entire group. The Bible tells us in **Ephesians** that to everything there is a season, and although this season for the group is coming to an end, the love for God and people will remain!

"In 2017, after my dad, Blake Stallings, passed away, I was unsure that I could continue leading the ministry that he and I shared in for so many years. I remember deciding to come off the road at the end of 2017, only to find myself continually questioning that decision. God wasn't done with the ministry yet. Over the course of the last year, we have seen souls saved, lives changed, and many encouraged through our ministry. We have recorded a new CD, learned new songs, traveled to several new locations, and have experienced some of the most spirit-filled services in the group's history.

So why decide to retire now? When this ministry was formed 45 years ago, it was formed with ministry and worship as its mission. When my dad and I stepped in

to manage the group six years ago, we made that same commitment. The Lord speaks in a still, small voice, and I believe that sometimes we are so busy talking to Him, that we forget He is talking to us as well. His voice has been impressing on our hearts that our new season is to be a season of family and personal growth. In the last two years, this group has seen a new marriage, a death, a new baby born, and a new job opportunity provided. It is time for us to invest in those areas of our lives, knowing that God will lead and provide for us there, just as he has for this group.

We are so thankful to all of you, our friends and family, for supporting us and coming to hear a group of ordinary people sing for the One who is extraordinary. We love each of you and pray that you will continue to support all of the ministries that we are blessed with here in Eastern NC. Continue to pray for us as well as we try to faithfully follow God's will for our lives during this time of transition.

*In Christ,
Tyler Stallings for **The Ambassadors**"*



A New Year To Shine

Mrs. Sherry Worthington

Have you noticed people seem different at Christmas? Many seem to be sweeter and more giving than any other time of year. Statistics show that during the Christmas season more people volunteer, and the month of December brings more donations than any other season. I realize many people give for a tax deduction, but for others I think the need just seems more obvious. The thought of someone going without at Christmas just touches our hearts.

I know in my life, I see the needs more. I don't know why, but I just do. As I often do, I try to figure out why this is so. It should not be. People need food and clothes all year round. Charities

need support with their causes. The nursing home is there twelve months of the year. Ministries always need our support. How well I know!

I think one of the few businesses that thrive after Christmas is the fitness industry. We all know why that is—just a few too many helpings of stuffing and candy. Many others are in a lull. Activity picks back up around March or April, but not with the vitality it did at Christmas.

Of course there are exceptions! Many grouches show themselves at Christmas, but they are usually grumpy at other times of the year, too. It is just a bit more obvious.

They were annoyed that they had to buy gifts. I don't know why they bothered. They don't like the music or the decorations. They are rude to the cashiers, and you don't want to be in front of them on the road. Nothing suits them. But come to think of it, nothing suits them the other eleven months of the year either. Why are they so annoyed at Christmas?

Perhaps it annoys them to see other people so pleasant. Do you think it is because they feel guilty? It is more obvious that they are cold and heartless at this time of year. They don't want to be bothered that people are hungry or need clothes. Maybe they feel guilty because they left a

loved one in the nursing home and no one to care about them at Christmas or any other time of the year. It could be they suffered great loss around the holidays. Maybe they are resentful that we are celebrating the birth of the Christ child, our Savior. Whatever the reason, it is a heart problem for sure.

There are also the jewels on the earth, God's arms and hands that are kind and loving all year round. These people don't have to have a holiday to be pleasant and warm. They are the ones that have a kind word to say to the cashier when there are others fussing in the line. Their gentleness shines through at Christmas, but their hearts are soft and tender throughout the year. They are the kind of people that feed the hungry at the soup kitchen in May and visit the nursing home in February. They give 12 months of the year, not just one month of the year. Their question is not do we give, but in what way and to whom.

It is the beginning of a new year. The Christmas season is a joyous season. It is filled with laughter and love for all that will receive it. Why does it have to stop? There are people that prove to us every day that it doesn't. They are shining lights for all to see. I sure would like for people to think of me that way. How do you want people to think of you?

Proverbs 22:1 says, ***"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."***

What is in a good name? I guess it depends on what is important to you. Some men would say being successful in business is most important. Others might think that to have plenty of money is their claim to fame. What

do I want? How do I want to be remembered? *I want people to say that I was a kind, gentle spirit who loved all people, and always put others before myself. Christ's love always shined through my life.* Yes, sad to say, I am still working on that one. More appropriately, God is still working on me. I have not arrived. I doubt I will arrive on this side of glory, but I must not give up.

2 Peter 3:18 says, ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever."***

The Bible teaches that we are to continually grow in grace and knowledge. We must seek to be mature in the faith. **II Peter 1:5-7** teaches us how we are to grow. We must grow in these areas in our Christian walk. We are to have faith and to our faith, add virtue; and to our virtue, add knowledge; and to

our knowledge, add self-control; and to our self-control, add patience, and to our patience, add godliness; and to our godliness, add kindness; and to kindness, add love.

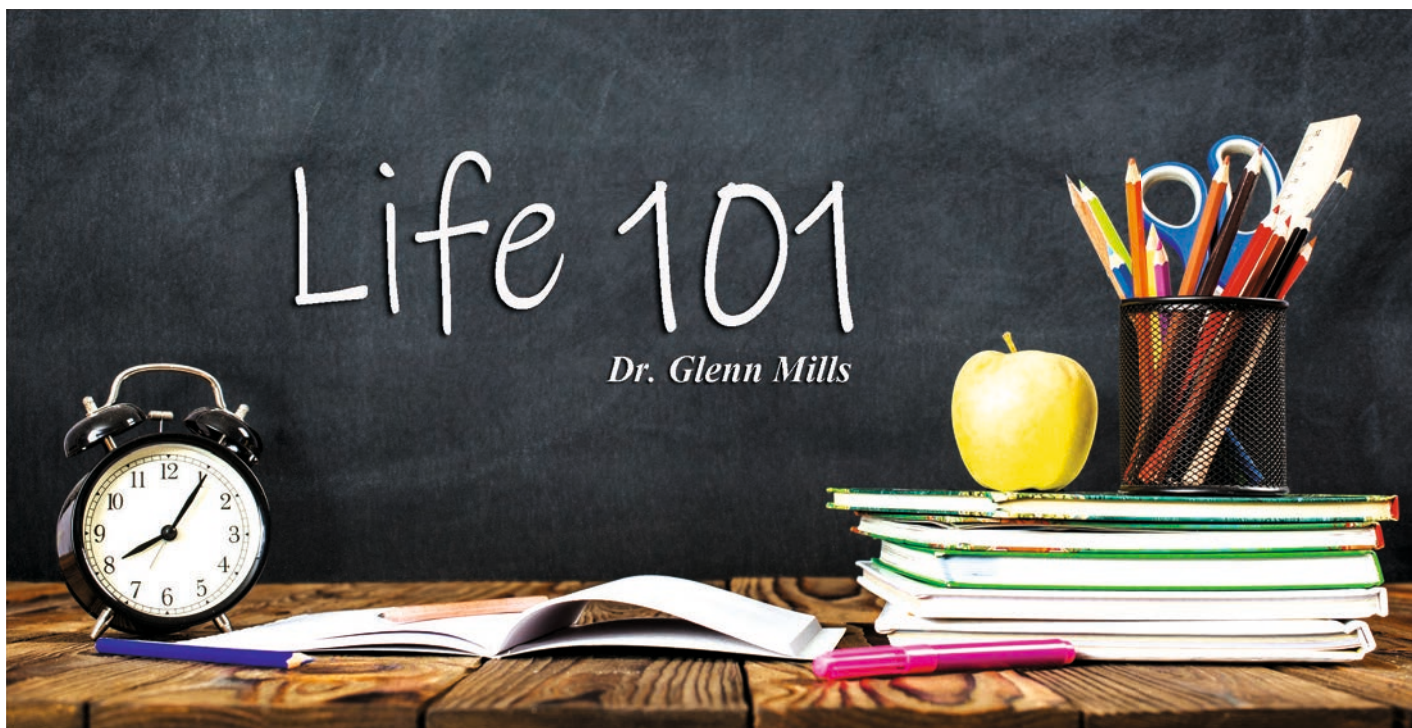
If we continuously seek to grow in all aspects of our walk with the Lord, we cannot help but be remembered and revered as kind gentle souls who loved the Lord with all of our hearts. Make this your commitment for the future. Not just a New Year's resolution, but a new commitment. Let others see the reason they should come to Jesus through your life. May we be His shining light. Let others see Jesus in us.

Happy New Year!



Mrs. Worthington has five children and eleven grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.





Our wonderful and loving God is progressive in His desires for us. God loves to see his children grow and mature.

Even when God saves us from our sins, He receives us as we are but immediately starts moving us forward in our new life in Christ. He knew we would not do this on our own, so He gives us His precious Holy Spirit to help lead, guide, and empower us.

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher and Comforter. God invites us into the classroom of His presence so we can learn about Him and His plans for us. The course is LIFE 101 and the text book is the Word of God. Everything we need to grow is available to us, but we must show up for class.

We don't get an education just because we wish it would happen or we think we deserve it. We can check on any course at the local community college we want or desire, but until we register, pay for, and actually attend the class, it is just wishful thinking and will profit us nothing.

However, it is not enough to just show up. While it may look good on the attendance sheet, it will not give you a good grade. There are churches filled with people who just show up every week. They don't get involved with ministry or read their Bibles at home. Likewise, they only pray when they have a need. The

Bible says they are hearers of the Word only and not doers.

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

James 1:22

To pass LIFE 101 we must listen intently to the Teacher/Professor, read and study the materials He has given us, complete the hands-on projects He gives us, and pass the test.

2019 is a new course for each one of us. God has a plan for you that will move you forward to accomplish greater things to honor Him and bless you. Hopefully we have all learned some really valuable lessons in 2018. Things that will help us continue moving on to greater things for the Kingdom of our God.

But 2018 is behind us, as are any opportunities we may have had in that year. Do you feel you spiritually made the most of 2018? Do you feel you accomplished all God wanted you to do? If we will all be honest, the answer is probably “no”.

However, this is a new year and a new opportunity. God never asked us to do what we are not able to do with His help. No matter what our task, the Trinity is fully available to help us accomplish it. Jesus promises He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Will 2019 be just another year of television or a year of God's Vision? Are we going to show up so we can grow up in the things of God? God's plans, as He says, will not bring you disaster but only good.

I pray you will commit everything to the Father this New Year and allow the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and teach you.

Every area of your life can be transformed by God's Word and His presence. The Word has instruction for our relationships, health, occupations, finances, and spiritual life.

Praise God for His blessing of 2018 and praise Him all the more for what 2019 has in store for those willing to be led by the Spirit.



Dr. Glenn Mills is a full-time Evangelist with the Open Arms Evangelistic Ministry. He can be heard each weekday morning on GoMix Christian Radio.

*I stand at the door of a brand new year,
As I watch the yesterdays all disappear.
What might this year bring as it rolls in?
Things have ended and new things begin.*

*New opportunities will arise and appear,
But what might I do with this brand new year?
Will I make more money and have more things,
Might I find peace in what material things bring?*

*A better job would be nice, more pay for sure,
The pleasures of life are numerous to endure.
A new car, a new house, a pair of shoes or two,
There so many things in a new year to pursue.*

*But my new year will be wasted if only for me,
If I neglect the Master's call and reject His plea.
That I live my life so others might plainly see,
That Jesus died so that we could all be free.*

*This New Year is a chance to further His call,
That He died not for one, but He died for all.
I will give God this New Year for His love I have tasted,
Each day will be special, not one moment will be wasted.*

Dr. Glenn Mills

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And Finally...



God's Blessings...

I thank God for allowing me to participate in His plan and using me, despite my being so undeserving, to impact His Kingdom in small ways. I'm humbled that He uses me, and I'm beyond thankful each time He does.
N. C.

I am thankful I'm alive and healthy and my family members are all still here with me for the New Year. I have amazing friends. I have Jesus as my best friend! I thank God I have an education that I've worked hard for and the belief that I will be blessed with a job soon enough. I also know that one day the Lord will bless me with a husband and a family of my own. I count my future blessings too, because I know they're coming!
E. M.

In 2018, God blessed me with the gift of motherhood, although I had always thought my past sin would prevent me having the opportunity to give birth to my own child. I'm also thankful for my wonderful, godly husband God designed perfectly for me. Although I've had many ups and downs in the past, I am so very thankful the Lord never gave up on me and thankful for the gift of grace He gives to me every day.
T. T.

My husband and I discovered last year that termites had caused significant damage to the ground floor of our house. We asked several professionals to check it out and to give us a quote on fixing the problem. Unfortunately, the quotes were very high. Over time I started to get more and more worried. One day at church, we were singing, "Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms; Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms..." from an old hymn. I began

to sing this throughout the next few weeks as I prayed for God's wisdom and provision for the situation. By simply singing and praising the Lord, He helped me conquer my fear and worries. I gained complete peace over the difficult situation with the termites, not looking at the situation, but rather trusting in the Lord. Within a matter of another week or so, a friend gave us a recommendation of a contractor that was able to fix our problem for less than half the price of the other quotes we received. Thank You, Lord, for Your provision!
S. B.

My family was in a pretty bad car wreck in 2018. We all were able to walk away with just a few bruises and sore muscles. I am grateful for the blessing of our Lord's protection. Things could have turned out a lot worse than what they did.
L. H.

"Incredible Kids"

We'd like your help for an upcoming edition of "And Finally..."

March 21st is Absolutely Incredible Kid Day! Write to us in 150 words or less and tell us about an incredible kid in your life.

The deadline for submission is January 30th, 2019.

You can send an email to: Attn: PathPointe
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Or write to: Pathway Ministries
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