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President and Publisher: Dr. T. D. Worthington
Editor: Tiffany W. Johnson
Advertising Director: Ashley W. Lovett
Contributors: Tiffany Johnson,
Amber Sherman, and Sherry Worthington
PathPointe Magazine
PO Box 1895
Goldsboro, NC 27533-1895

PathPointe Magazine

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POSTMASTER: Please send address corrections to: Pathway Ministries Group, PO Box 1895, Goldsboro, NC 27533-1895.

PathPointe Magazine is written for the Faith Partners, Business Underwriters, and friends of Pathway Ministries Group.

Subscriptions: PathPointe is provided free of charge to interested parties within the USA, as our Lord provides. All other subscriptions are \$30.00 per year.

Address Changes: Please either send us a photocopy of your mailing label with your partner number or use the provided insert to carefully print your name, new address, and partner number and send it to: Pathway Ministries Group, Subscription Services, PO Box 1895, Goldsboro, NC 27533-1895. Please allow 6-8 weeks for address change information to be activated.

Back Issues: A limited quantity of back issues are available. If needed by churches, businesses, or other groups, bulk quantity information will be available upon request.

Reprints: Call 252-747-8887 for reprint information and reproduction rights for select articles.

Letters And Press Releases: There are four ways to send us material. 1. Fax to 866-537-8189. 2. By courier to 1302 South George Street, Goldsboro, NC 27530. 3. Through the mail. 4. Through our web site at GoMixRadio.org. These are in order of preference. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned.

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“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”

Psalms 33:12

What do I love about America? I love the land. America is beautiful. *“O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, for purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plains.”* I love our many diverse cultures; I love their music, their food, their art, and their particular stories and histories.

I especially love our best national values: freedom, opportunity, community, justice, human rights, and equality under the law for all our citizens of every race, creed, culture, and gender, not just for the rich and powerful. In particular, I love our tradition and history of being a constitutional republic. I take legitimate pride in seeing how our founding documents, when followed, have protected our freedom over the years. And despite all the negative influences America

has been to the world, I also love the exceptional contributions my country has made for the benefit of mankind.

What I don't love is when my country violates its values and ideals and behaves badly, as when we support many dictatorships around the world. I don't love it when my country acts out of greed and only for power, or with blatant hypocrisy, or like an empire. The gospel has never lived easily with empire. Christians have a prophetic vocation, in whatever nation they live, to lift up the values of the kingdom of God and call nations to honor their best values in light of those principles.

The eroding American culture is having a negative effect upon our faith. Someone once said, *“As go the churches...so goes the nation.”* However, with the compromising position many churches are in, a better assessment today might be *“as goes the nation, so go the churches.”* There are a few things

that concern me about Christianity in America.

We Practice Christianity Through Groups and Institutions

Most believers only worship or practice their Christianity at church, at their schools, associations, organizations, and institutions. In fact, we hardly worship, fellowship, learn, or minister outside of an officially sponsored function. Without structured, regulated, and organized religious affiliations, our faith would be radically different. Many people didn't know how to worship during Covid because we only do religious stuff at church. Without a program to guide us, or a worship leader to direct us, our worship seems to fall apart.

Our Theology Is Usually Borrowed

Instead of studying out our own theology, we usually espouse someone else's. Often it will be a Christian celebrity such as Charles Stanley, David Jeremiah, Chuck Swindoll, and others. Now, these are good men, but you also need to

study the Word of God for yourself. That's why I always encourage folks to bring their Bibles to church. Like the noble Bereans, make sure your preacher is teaching you the truth. Borrowed theology is also proven by the number of modern versions of the Bible that are in use. Few people still use translations, like the original King James, that allow you, through the Holy Spirit to interpret the Scriptures; we prefer to allow others to interpret them for us.

Sometimes we even borrow our faith from politicians. Although it may violate their faith, many Christians have embraced things like abortion, homosexuality, and other forms of immorality because some politician gave a convincing speech that was appealing to them.

Our Online Faith Seldom Reflects Reality

We post Bible verses on Twitter, claim "*Christianity*" as our religion on Facebook, and we proudly put inspiring quotes about God and faith on our social media accounts. But in reality, we seldom pray, read the Bible, or practically live out our beliefs. If everyone's faith was as strong as it appears on social media, we could shake the world for Christ. Apparently, it is easier to boast about your faith on-line, than it is to live it out in person.

We Love Labels

When we meet a fellow Christian, we immediately classify them. Are they a Liberal, Conservative, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, Premillennial, Postmillennial, Lutheran, Charismatic, Catholic, Dispensationalist, Literalist, Universalist, or Annihilationist?

What version of the Bible do they read? What style of worship do they prefer? Certainly, no one can pastor our church if he doesn't have a doctorate or didn't attend our preferred seminary. Do they support our form of morality in government? I am not saying that some of these things are not important. I am just saying that instead of seeing Christians as part of a worldwide corporate community, we compartmentalize people based on their beliefs, practices, and preferences. All Christians make up the body of Christ and are a part of the true church.

We Crave Efficiency Over Spirituality

Ministries, missions, and outreach programs are only successful if they are quick, streamlined, financially strong, and usually big. Success is gauged by size, growth, and numbers. If someone isn't converted or reformed within the first few weeks, it's time to abandon them and focus on someone else.

We believe solutions should be fast and easy. Our faith is analyzed by business standards instead of spiritual fruits. We think big ministries and big churches are the most spiritual because their size proves it. Charismatic preachers are more godly because they appeal to the masses.

We Need Entertainment

"*Christianity*" to many means summer camps, pizza parties, conferences, exciting guest speakers, mission trips to exotic destinations, concerts, music festivals, and high-energy church services. Entertainment, tranquility, and consumerism reign supreme. And if we experience any sort of dissatisfaction or discomfort we'll leave and go somewhere else. Christian education, worship, ministry, missions, and fellowship centers around the quest for entertainment. What can we get from it? The greatest benefactor of Christianity is ourselves, not others. The worst enemy of American Christianity is flesh pleasing and world pleasing worship.





We Lack Integrity

“There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was perfect (blameless) and upright, one who feared God and eschewed evil.”

The first significant thing the writer tells us is about Job’s character. He was a man of complete integrity. This does not mean he was perfectly sinless; it simply means he was not hypocritical. In many ways, **Job 1:1** would be an excellent epitaph for a Christian leader’s headstone.

When I first got saved, I decided to hire Christians whenever I could in my secular work. I was sure that any follower of Christ would be dependable, loyal, honest, and hard-working. Unfortunately, that decision didn’t work out very well. In many cases, Christians were worse employees than non-Christians. This simply ought not be.

Integrity is a major component of faith. Our word needs to be our bond. When people sense a lack of integrity in a child of God, the work of God suffers. When you lack integrity, you inwardly lose a sense of moral authority. Relationships always suffer when integrity wanes. Trust erodes and the unity is not what it could and should be. It is difficult to be close to someone who is prone to

let you down. Regarding a lack of integrity, Charles Spurgeon said, *“If a man’s life at home is unworthy, he should go several miles away before he stands up to preach, and then, when he stands up, he should say nothing.”*

When you live a life of integrity, you will gain trust, respect, honor and influence. If you want great children, be a parent of integrity. If you want to be a great leader of your family, be a husband and a man of integrity. If you want influence in the business community, be a person of your word. When you have integrity, people will often follow you, they will honor you, they will listen to you, they will seek your wisdom and advice because you are a person of integrity.

We are Selfish

We have become self-centered. Maybe you wouldn’t call yourself self-centered, but would others? A person who is self-centered is lacking in compassion toward others and often falls into a victim mentality; seeing problems as everyone else’s fault.

Selfishness deserves to die, but it is hard to spot and even harder to kill. It is a slippery sin because it is a shape-shifter. Jonathan Edwards said pride is *“the most hidden, secret, and deceitful of all sins.”* C.S. Lewis said that the

important thing is *“not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less.”* We can spend a lot of time thinking less of ourselves but we only end up thinking a lot about ourselves. The problem of selfishness does not boil down to whether we think high thoughts or low thoughts about ourselves but that we think lots of thoughts about ourselves.

Obviously, many Christians are more complex and inspiring than the attributes listed above, but we need to start realizing the influence American culture is having on our faith. So many of the world’s values have seeped into the church and it has weakened us from within. So many American Christians have strayed away from Christ’s example of sacrificial love and are using religion to serve their own misguided agendas.

Nobody is perfect, but we need to start emulating Christ instead of subtly allowing the social surroundings of an immoral and backslidden nation to dictate our spiritual priorities. God’s blessings are upon the nation that honors and worships Him. God’s blessings are also on the individual that follows this same principle, so I encourage you in your personal walk with God. It is important for you and for our nation.

You Can Listen To An Audio Version Of This Article On The PathLight Podcast. Look For Program Number 53.



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry for over forty five years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College.

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Fruitful

It's Summertime! Many of our fruit trees are already beginning to yield their harvest. Have you ever considered that fruit trees don't question the purpose of seasons? They just wholly surrender to the rhythms established for them. In the same way, we flourish when we give ourselves completely to His ways, His rhythms, and His work, trusting Him to use our productivity to cultivate fruitfulness in every kind of season.

Of course, it is important to remember that no tree bears fruit year-round, and the seasons without visible fruit can be valuable to

the harvest. After all, those dormant seasons are where the deep, behind-the-scenes work of rest and growth and maturity occur. An appearance of lack now might produce an abundance when it's time.

Here's the hard part about a fruitful life. It only comes when you first accept the responsibility to be productive - not for the recognition, not for the promotion, or the money - but, you seek to be productive for the sole purpose of bringing forth fruit for the glory of God. Fruit comes as we partner with God in His process, following His lead. Fruitfulness is God-focused.

At *GoMix Christian Radio*, our constant desire is to bear fruit for our Lord. We want our service to matter. We want it to have meaning. We want to give ourselves to what is worthwhile. We want to make a difference. We want to give priority to people and relationships.

We want to be deeply connected with the needs of others. We want to blossom and grow. We want to flourish and do exactly what we were placed here to do. We want to *"be fruitful and multiply."*

The little jobs we do are full of purpose. All of our days matter, not because of what we can accomplish with them, but because of what our Lord accomplishes in us through them. *Thank you for helping us be fruitful.*



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Looking Back on 24 Years

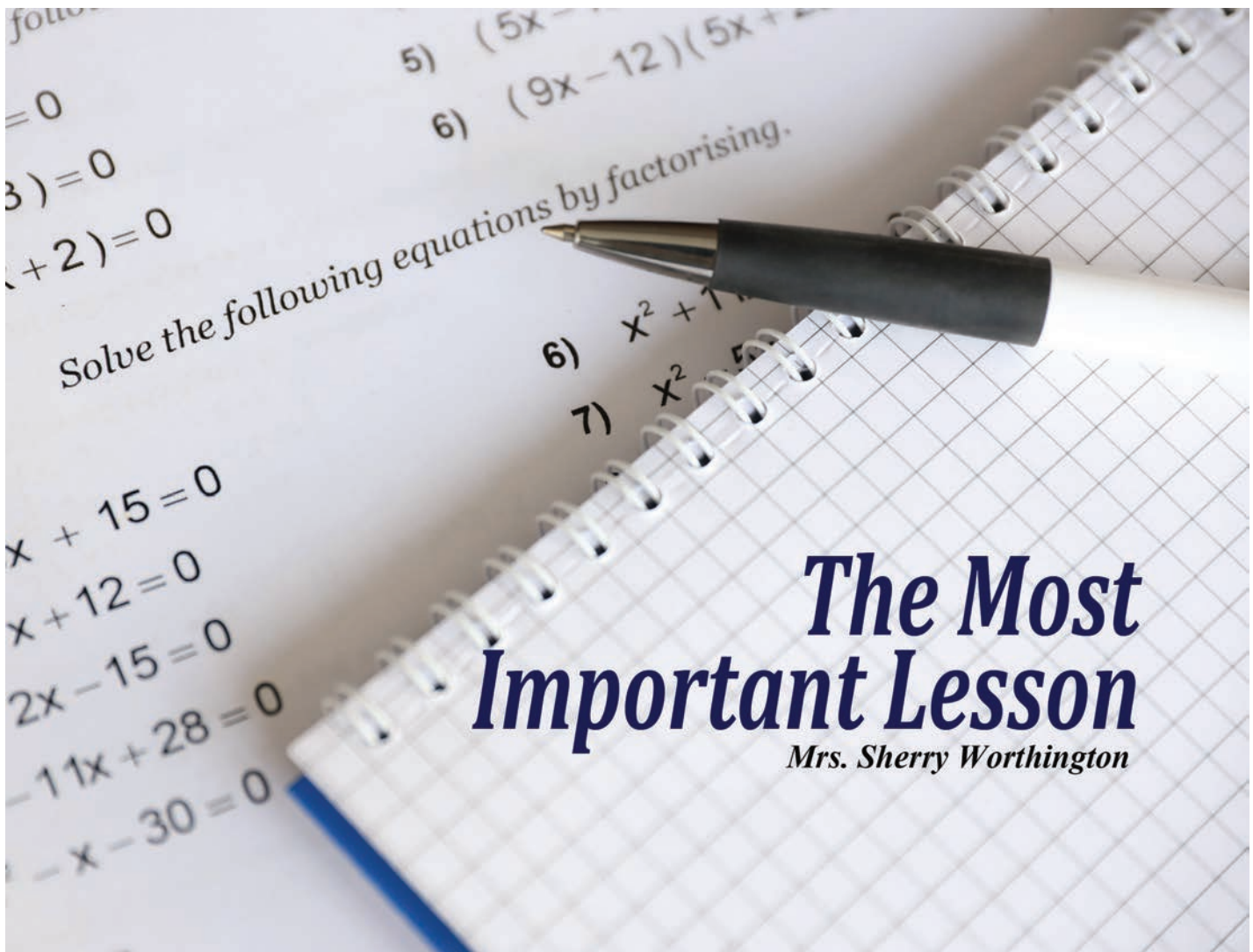
Can you believe it? **GoMix Christian Radio** is celebrating 24 years of being on the air! Although planning, fundraising, and seeking approval from the FCC began years before, our flagship frequency, **WAGO** in Snow Hill finally came on the air on July 1, 1998. This 17,000-watt signal would reach 13 counties to the glory of God.

Since that time, we've grown... *boy, have we grown!* We have been blessed beyond measure, and we're currently able to spread the Gospel over the air waves to over 40 counties on 10 different frequencies. We are also broadcasting throughout the world on www.gomixradio.org, with our regular programming as well as **GoMix**

Gold (your favorite Gospel oldies) and **Serene** (instrumental).

Over the years, **Faith Partners**, **Business Underwriters**, and even friends and staff members have come and gone. One thing is for certain. Every single one of them had a special part to play in helping us start, grow, and continue our work for the Lord. As we plan for the future, we are proud to have you standing with us. We thank you for your continued prayer and financial support.

We've said many times, and it still rings true... *We have the best listeners in the world!*



The Most Important Lesson

Mrs. Sherry Worthington

As I look back over my life, it seems the years have passed by so fast. I cannot express how grateful I am for the opportunities God has given me. As a young child, God gave me the most wonderful parents. They introduced me to God's Son and exemplified the love of Christ in our home. As I grew older, I learned from my other family members, my pastor, and other church leaders. My Sunday School teacher encouraged me to learn the books of the Bible. She gave several incentives and rewards, and it did the trick. The Bible drills and practice she did with my class solidified our comfort with turning in the Scriptures. I am still able to find the verses in my Bible because of "Mema."

My teenage years were very challenging. I learned what not to do and entered the school of hard knocks. I had relationships that were not healthy and those that were honoring to God. Through these failures, I learned how to forgive and accept forgiveness. When you reach 18, you think you know everything, but you soon learn how little you know and how much you need to learn. My parents became so much wiser with each new responsibility that I had to add to my life.

As you know, I am married and have beautiful children and grandchildren. My husband and children have taught me so much about life. The lessons I learned

from the mistakes and the blessings of raising them and growing with my husband could fill volumes.

I have learned many things from just observing the world around me. Whether it be a beautiful tree, a strong wind, or the paint peeling on the wall, God is in it. We can learn many lessons throughout our daily lives if we will pay attention and look around us.

As I have gotten older, I realize I still have so much to learn. I also know that if I am given the gift of life, I will learn many more things over the coming years. The lessons throughout my life have helped me to grow in my Christian walk. If I had to choose the most important

lesson in my life, it would be never to play church. The cost is far too great. Playing church could have cost me my soul.

I do not remember my very early years, but I do remember being in church from a very young age. My parents said that I was in church a week after I was born. We were in a small country church. My dad was a charter member, and he was very active in church. I know that he was a deacon, and he led the singing in our church on occasion. My father was active in the nursing home ministry and served everywhere he had the chance. My mother was the church secretary. I don't remember when she was anything else.

When I was seven years old, our pastor gave an altar call. My friend was sitting next to me and poked me in the side. She said, "Let's go down front and get baptized." I said, "Okay," and we went down to the altar. My pastor spoke to me about salvation and asked me several questions. I had been in church, so I knew all the right answers. I was baptized, more accurately dunked, and everyone thought I was saved.

I was very active when I became a teenager. I was a leader in the youth department. I worked in the bus and puppet ministry, and I sang in the youth choir. I gave up my Saturday mornings to go knock on doors to try to get children to ride the bus on Sunday. Everyone thought I was a strong Christian but me. I went to a youth retreat, and we had a great time. We broke into small groups, and we had a

questionnaire to fill out. There were several questions, but the last one was, "If you died today, would you go to Heaven or Hell?" The question hit me like a ton of bricks. I knew I had been playing church. In **Jude 1:22-23**, the Scripture says you win some by love and some by fear. The Lord got my attention by fear.

I began to cry uncontrollably and told our youth leader that I had been playing church. I had been afraid to admit it to anyone, and I felt I would embarrass my father.



The fear of dying without Christ and going to hell got my attention. I accepted Christ that night and so did my brother. I called my dad and told him what I had done. He was surprised and thrilled. I shared in church on Sunday about my salvation experience and warned others who might be playing church. I shared the verses in **Matthew 7:21-23**. The Bible teaches that people may pretend to be saved, but God doesn't know them.

"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them. I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

I learned a valuable lesson that day. I had to say no to my pride and yes to the wooing of the Holy Spirit. The devil will try to deceive us and tell us lies to keep us from giving our hearts to God. I have had many battles with my pride and listening to the lies of this world. I am thankful that I did not let my pride take away the joys I have had since that moment.

How about you? Are you sure of your salvation? Are you letting your pride get in the way of knowing that you are saved? I am so thankful that I made things right when I did. I no longer am afraid of dying. I am not wanting to hop on the next train, but I know my destination. Do you know where you are headed? I hope so. Come to Christ today!



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

Because of Him

Mrs. Amber Sherman



Over the last few weeks, I have come into contact and then discussion with three down, discouraged, and hurting women. My heart hurts for them. I have known discouragement myself and struggled at times to see clearly how to proceed. I have faced the temptation of giving up, just as they were.

As I began fixing breakfast on Saturday morning, the melody and words of “Because He Lives” were on my heart. So I turned on some music and listened to it as I continued to cook. As the words began to wash over me, and the melody soothed my soul, I began to worship my Lord as I cooked. I played the song over and over, not seeming to be able to get enough of the hope that was sung forth in those words.

*“God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus;
He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Saviour lives!”*

Comfort washed over my soul, for myself and for those for whom I was hurting.

*“Because He lives, I can face tomorrow...
“And life is worth the living, just because He lives!”*

Yes, yes! That was the answer! Do not give up! Do not despair! He is worth it all! He is all! No matter the trouble, no matter the cost, He is worthy! He is our reason for persisting, for pursuing, for refusing to give up or give in to despair. “Because of Him...I can and I will!”

*“How sweet to hold a newborn baby...
But greater still the calm assurance:
This child can face uncertain days because He
lives!”*

As I looked and listened to my children playing, I had hope for them in a world that is crumbling. As persecution rises and uncertainties multiply, I can have comfort for them and for me...because He lives!

*“And then one day, I’ll cross that river,
I’ll fight life’s final war with pain:
And then, as death gives way to victory,
I’ll see the lights of glory and I’ll know He lives!”*

My battle is not over yet; my victory is not won. I must fight and maintain my rock-solid assurance. The Scriptures use the word “hope” to translate this confidence we can have in Christ. One day... one day, my battle will be over, and I will see my Lord face to face. Because He lives, I cannot give up now, for a much better future awaits me in eternity. He rewards those who place their hope in Him.

I saw a stark contrast between these hurting women God had brought across my path. In one of them, I saw a woman who had lost hope. She was giving up on her Lord, not trusting Him to bring her through her trouble. She was closing herself off from Him, turning away from her Bible and from prayer. She was miserable. The second woman was stuck on questioning God about “why” she was going through her troubles. The third woman...was moving forward, hurting, yet holding her Saviour’s hand. She was determined to place and keep her trust in her Lord. She saw that without Him her hope was gone, and she must not lose her faith in Him.

My heart groaned for all three women, aching for the hurt they were going through, and for the pain I could still see yet to come for some. As I listened to “Because He Lives,” I was reminded no matter how bleak our trials, it is because of Him we can persevere. It is Him Who makes it all worthwhile. It is Him who makes it all possible.



Really and truly, our hope and our assurance, for eternity and for today, is because of Him.

“...our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;”

I Timothy 1:1

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...”

Hebrews 6:19

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”

I Peter 1:13

Our Lord Jesus Christ gives hope and eternal life. Those around us desperately need to hear about it. Tell others they can hope...all “because Jesus lives!”

“Because He Lives” was written by Bill and Gloria Gaither and was first released in 1971. This hymn has such a powerful message that even secular artists are drawn to its message.



Mrs. Amber Sherman is the mother of four and serves as a teacher at Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro, N.C.

And Finally...



Answered Prayers...

In 1992, I was a freshman in college. I was with a group of guys who had travelled to a state park in the mountains. An unusually sizable amount of snow had fallen, which made the mountains beautiful and enchanting. On a Saturday afternoon, we decided to take a short hike to the top of a nearby ridge. Although the trails were well marked and we left in plenty of sunlight, it began to get dark as we were descending the mountain. None of us were appropriately dressed for extremely cold winter nights. We didn't really have heavy coats on and several guys began getting cold. At first, nobody was that concerned because we felt confident we could find the way down to our cabins. However, as darkness set in, we became completely lost on a frozen mountainside. We couldn't even find the trail. One of the guys we were with even began getting frost bite. As the hours slowly crept by, hopelessness began to set in. We continued to walk and stumbled across a dirt roadway that we felt was probably not being used. The leader of our group had us all stop for prayer. He prayed very simply, "God we know that even now You could have a park ranger come and pick us up." But, none of us really believed that was going to ever happen... Within about 10 ten minutes after this very simple prayer, headlights approached our freezing group. A park ranger pulled up and had us all pile in his jeep. I was amazed! This was a great lesson to me, and all of us, on God's ability to answer prayer for His children in times of great need. It strengthened my faith in a powerful way. Looking back, I think God orchestrated the whole thing to show our little group that He was very real and totally capable of meeting our every need.

K. C.

Back in 2011, I contracted a flesh-eating bacteria that put me in a coma. Doctors gave me a zero chance of recovery. However, my family prayed. My husband prayed, our kids prayed, our church family prayed, our friends and neighbors prayed, and people we didn't even know prayed. God was listening and watching. Many operations took place that would remove the bacteria. As the virus spread, I lost the blood flow to my limbs and my kidneys started to shut down. My hands and feet were amputated, but God heard all of those prayers. At the 3 week mark of being in a coma, I woke up. The doctors were amazed at my progress. My family and friends gave God the glory and the healing began. Through my recovery, I prayed. Proverbs 3:5-6 gave me the strength and courage I needed to rebuild my life as a quadruple amputee. It was a long, hard road, but I refused to give up. My husband needed me. My kids needed me. God needed me. I still had work to do.

W. W.

"Hobbies"

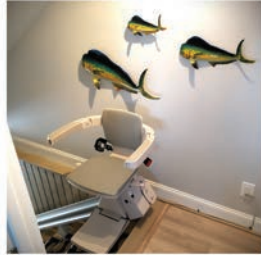
We'd like your help for an upcoming edition of "And Finally..."

Write to us in 150 words or less and tell us about your favorite hobby. The deadline for submission is July 31, 2022.

You can send an email to:
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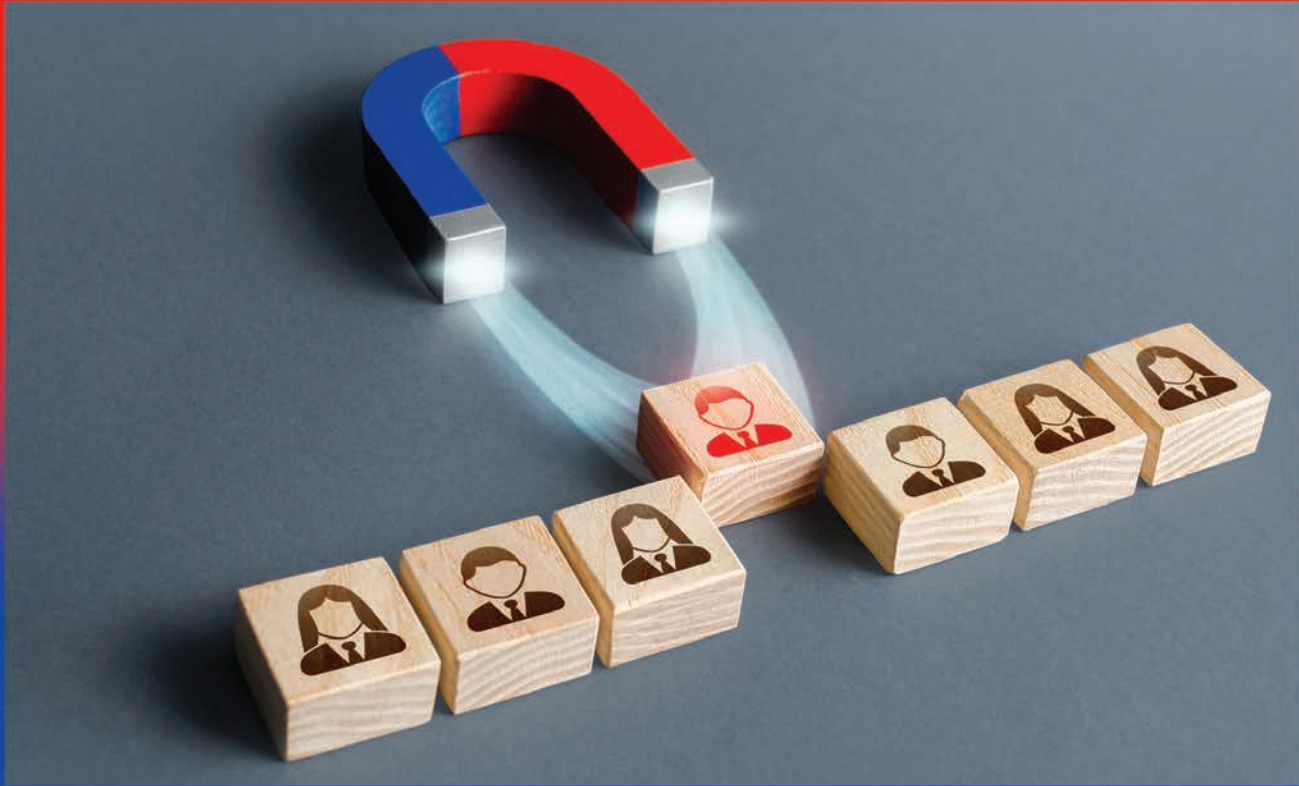
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