

Solution for Life



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Special gifts often are wrapped in beautiful paper and tied up in a perfect bow. Attached is a card to express our love and best wishes. The greatest gift ever given was not wrapped elaborately, rather a small little ball of flesh and blood laid in a pile of hay alongside dirty animals. This baby boy brought many gifts to anyone who wanted Him. What gifts have you received because of the humble arrival of our Savior?

Blessings, Dan and Jessie

Gift of God | by Daniel Westlund

The season is in transition. For those of us who live in a northern climate, we have had our first frost, freeze and snow. One of the promises of God, our creator and sustainer of life, is found in Genesis 8:22. "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." This promise was given to Noah after he came out of the ark and had built an altar to worship God. What a wonderful gift of God that has continued for thousands of years. I thank the Lord for each season and enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

Another gift that each one of us has been given is the gift of life. In Acts 17:16-33 we find the story about the Apostle Paul in Athens, Greece. He is preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. The philosophers took Paul to the Areopagus to find out more about this teaching about Jesus. At this meeting, Paul said he found an altar in Athens, an object of worship "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." Then Paul went on to say, "now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men

life and breath and everything else. From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being." I thank the Lord for my life and breath each day.

With the gift of life, God wants to give us an even greater gift. One of the great stories in the Bible is found in John 4:1-42. When Jesus, tired from His journey, sat down at Jacob's well around noon to rest a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus asked her to give Him some water to drink. She was shocked, for Jews did not associate with Samaritans. "The Samaritan woman said to Him, 'You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.'" The Gift of God Jesus spoke to her about was eternal life. It is an amazing story. Jesus goes on to tell her about her life, her five husbands and says that the man who she is now living with is not her husband. He speaks to her about the kind

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Solution for growth

What Is Most Important? | by Stephen Westlund

My kids are Noblesville Marching Millers, meaning they were, or still are, members of the Noblesville High School Marching Band. Every fall, our family enjoys Band-Tober, because every fall is non-stop marching band, as the Marching Millers work to achieve their goals of reaching the finals of the Bands of America (BOA) Indy Super Regional, and the Indiana State School Music Association (ISSMA) Marching Band State Finals. This past Band-Tober, I was at the ISSMA Semi-State Marching Band Competition with my family, and as we watched bands perform, my mom leaned over and said, “How do the judges decide?” I said, “What do you mean?” To which Mom responded, “They all look and sound so good, how do the judges decide?”

Now if you follow marching bands in Indiana at all, you know that two of the best marching bands in the country are from Indiana: Carmel and Avon. Every band parent at every state, regional, or national event knows Carmel and Avon are probably going to finish the competition in first and second place. Had my mom asked me that question two years ago, I would have said, “I don’t know. If your name is Carmel or Avon, you get to win. Everybody else is competing for third.” Pretty cynical, huh? But last year, I was taking an applied analytics course and I decided to do my final project on high school marching bands to prove once and for all, through data, that there is unfair bias in high school marching bands. And I did just that! The bands in 3rd through 25th place every year receive unfair bias, and Carmel and Avon are held to a higher standard, statistically speaking... sigh.

So, when Mom asked me how the judge decides who is best, I sighed a little sigh and said, “The bands who focus on the most important parts of the performance, the music, and the marching, receive the highest scores.” While bands from all over the state of Indiana are spending countless hours building fancy props and telling compelling stories through their marching band shows, Carmel and Avon go out and play their music the best and they move as one band in every step and every motion of the marching show. And year after year, they finish first and second. It is a simple formula for success: focus time and energy on what is most important.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote: “Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

In this life and in the life to come, the most important thing is not a thing, but a person, and His name is Jesus. Jesus is the solution for life. I don’t care what trials you have, what struggles you are going through, what you have done, about your success, or your failures. You need Jesus.

This is the Good News... Jesus made you! He Loves you! He died for you! He rose again for you! If you will believe in Jesus, that He is Who He said He is. He died and rose again for your sin. “If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9) I have nothing to add to this. Believe and be saved, then continue to focus time and energy on what is most important, and you win! You will have a full life now and you will live forever with Jesus.

In Band-Tober 2023, our Marching Millers advanced to the ISSMA state finals for the 2nd time in school history, and the Millers made their first-ever BOA super regional finals, finishing 14th of 66 bands from 7 states. At the BOA super regional finals, I watched 14 bands and the best shows of the night, in my opinion, were from the bands who took 11th, 14th, 9th, 7th, and 3rd (in that order). The shows were entertaining, fun to watch, full of beautiful artistic imagery, and they just made you feel good. Oh, and they had good music and marching, too. But they didn’t win. The judges who judged the marching bands that night said the winner was the band who most of all displayed the most important thing, the best music, and the best marching. Guess what? Avon took second, and Carmel won... again... sigh.

When all of life is over, each of us will stand before two judges, God the Father, and His Son Jesus. I don’t know exactly how that moment will unfold, but when I piece all the scriptures together regarding judgment day, I imagine it this way. I will stand alone. No one will be with me. Not my family, not my friends, and not a lawyer. Just me, before my Creator and my Savior. God the Father will say to me, “Why should I allow you into my glory forever?” And with boldness and confidence I plan to say one thing and one thing only, “Because I believed in Your Son Jesus.” Based on my belief and hope in Jesus alone, I believe Jesus will then walk to me, stand by me, and say to His Father, “This is true. This one is mine.” Then Jesus will say to me, “Well done, My good and faithful servant,” and walk with me into His glory.

Is this how the judgment unfolds? I don’t know. But I know I have not done all things well in my life. There are far too many moments when I spent too much time and energy to put on a good show. Still, I am confident that the one thing I do well is the most important, I believe in Jesus. If you are reading this, and you don’t believe in Jesus, please, believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord.” And give your life to Him. This is the most important thing you will ever do. ■

The Gift of Peace | by Debbie Bellevue

Have you ever stopped to consider that peace is a gift? Until more recently I hadn't really considered that peace is offered to me as a gift that I can either embrace or reject. I wonder how you would define peace. What does peace look and feel like in your life? Perhaps you have never really thought much about it. You are just ticking off the days, doing the best that you can in our scary, chaotic world, filling your life with busyness and activity, some good, maybe even religious. But what would having peace look like for you? Jesus says: "I leave the gift of peace with you—my peace. Not the kind of fragile peace given by the world, but my perfect peace. Don't yield to fear or be troubled in your hearts—instead, be courageous."

John 14:27 (TPT) For me, the gift of peace is having a "sense of internal well being." I'm not sure that I can define it exactly, except to say that it has been elusive to me for a good portion of my life.

"A great many people are trying to make peace, but that has already been done. God has not left it for us to do; all we must do is to enter into it."

-Dwight L. Moody

I'm so grateful for my heritage. For generations I have been taught who Jesus is and what He has done for me. That God comes to us as a Father who is always good and faithful. I learned early on that the Holy Spirit comes as our comforter and guide. Jesus said that He came to set the captive free. Freedom for me sounds an awful lot like an inner "sense of well being," not based on our earthly circumstances, but living with a supernatural understanding that God is compassionate, always trustworthy, and always good. But still I have struggled with fear and anxiety. Scripture tells us that: "God the searcher of the heart, knows fully our longings, yet He also understand the desires of the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit passionately pleads before God for us, his holy ones, in perfect harmony with God's plan and our destiny. So, we are convinced that every detail of our lives is continually woven together for our good, for we are His lovers who have been called to fulfill His designed purpose." Romans 8:27-28 (TPT)

This is a promise, God's covenant with us and the greater our awareness is of the reality of this passage, the greater

our ability to receive the gift of peace that is offered to us. Ignorance in that one area of God's Sovereignty causes us to trust ourselves over Him and when we do that, we refuse the gift of His peace that is offered to us.

So, what might hinder us from receiving and accessing God's gift of peace?

God has revealed to me that I live more in the future than I do in the present. God has promised to give just what is needed for each day. I call it the "Manna Principle." When the Israelites were in the wilderness, God would provide just what they needed for each day, but they had a scarcity mentality that caused them to gather more than they needed, trying to save up for the future. But the manna would spoil overnight, even getting full of maggots. Scripture says that they would not enter God's Sabbath rest because of their unbelief. They were not

able to live with a sense of rest and peace, an inner sense of well-being, because they could not live each day assured of God's provision for every need that they had.

Jesus tells us to: (Matthew 6:33-34) "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all these things will be given to you too. So do not worry about tomorrow. Let tomorrow worry about itself. Living faithfully is a large enough task for today." God has showed me that I live always "vigilant," or alert, watchful especially to avoid danger. Even sometimes religiously in pursuit of Him more out of fear than from the gift of the "peace that passes all understanding." But we are told in Isaiah 30 that, "In quietness and confidence is our strength."

God's invitation is to fix our eyes on Jesus and His kingdom, living one day at a time with kingdom eyesight, knowing that whatever comes our way He has promised to use for our benefit and His Glory. In this way, we can receive and open the gift of peace that is offered to us each day. ■

Gift of God continued from page 1

of true worshippers God seeks. What is remarkable about this conversation is the woman's response and Christ's answer. "The woman said, 'I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, He will explain everything to us.' Then Jesus declared, 'I who speak to you am He.'"

This Samaritan woman received many gifts that day: acceptance, forgiveness, and eternal life. Because of her testimony and encounter with Jesus we are told many Samaritans believed and knew that Jesus was the Savior of the World, and that message has echoed down through history all the way to today. "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son (Jesus) and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40) I thank the Lord for the gift of God, eternal life, His love, His forgiveness, His indwelling in my life.

The season to give thanks and celebrate the birth of Christ is upon us. Give careful thought to the many gifts God has given you. And if you do not know Christ as your Savior, receive this greatest gift of all today. ■

Telling Stories | by Jessie Westlund

“So we, your people . . . will show forth Your praise to all generations.” Psalm 79:13 (NKJV)

Psalm 145:4 (NLT) says, “Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power.”

Every generation is to tell its children about the mighty things God has done.

Teacher, Jeff Minick of history, literature, Latin and author said, “The longer I teach the more convinced I become of the power of story to instill truth and inspire wonder in a way that nothing else can, not least of all because stories are indissolubly linked with the human experience and human nature. They tap into our psyche, touching us in a unique way.”

This is profound, but nothing new for Jesus, who was the greatest storyteller ever. The Word challenges us to tell great stories about all the Lord is and what He has done personally and in others. It is important we read God’s Word; enjoy how He weaves the most unlikely things into a loving outcome. Lazarus, Mary, and Marth, turning death into victory. Joseph and his brothers, hate and dissension into love and provide help for his once resentful brothers. The most important story is the life of Christ.

In 2023 we have felt lead to focus on sharing Christ’s wonderful love and works from generation to generation. Dan and I love to sit with our kids and grandkids and tell stories of the works and miracles we have experienced in life. It was a gift given to me by my grandparents and parents growing up. We share the heritage on my father’s side going back to my great grandfather, Wesley Welbourn. I was told he was a Godly man and assisted Willam Booth in establishing the Salvation Army in England. The stories demonstrated how He loved people and when people observed His face it glowed like an angel. This love for people carried on to my Grandpa Welbourn who was a driven, successful, and visionary Christian businessman in Hamilton Ontario, Canada. He loved the Lord deeply and he taught dad to be faithful in service to the Lord. One of the stories my dad told me about him was how he built a church and gave it to the people for a dollar. While building the church dad was a teen and as he worked with grandpa a little girl kept walking by saying “No one will ever come.” over and over. Dad asked his dad, “Don’t you get tired of this?” Grandpa’s reply was, “I get tired in it, but not of it.” This made an impression on Dad and here I am telling the story because it has been something I say to myself sometimes. My gentle grandmother taught me to memorize Psalm 91 and to love and honor people. These stories and others like them have impacted my life greatly and even now Solution for Life has allowed me to be a part of a ministry that cares for others less fortunate than us.

Dan and I were blessed with godly parents who taught us to trust in the Lord and use our gifts for His Kingdom. Dan often tells of his mother teaching children in the back yard Bible Clubs. She led Dan to the Lord sitting on the steps in their house when he was a young boy. She lived a kind and gracious life. His dad, a successful businessman was often quietly giving and humbly caring for people. They stressed to us the importance of teaching our children and grandchildren to love God and one another.

Now we are blessed with 3 wonderful sons. They have been blessed by this rich heritage. Together with their wives they, “proclaim the power and mighty things God has done”, with their children. I have heard them say, in a difficult situation “pray about it”. When the difficulty is resolved, they rejoice with the family. In addition, they are leaders in their companies, where they work and represent Christ.

We have grown to 18 in our family and when we all gather around the table, we love to tell stories of God’s works from the past and present. Our grandchildren are maturing, and they are beginning to share how God is working in their lives. Recently Hannah, a freshman at Michigan State, was assigned to write a paper on something of value in her life that impacts her culture. Butterflies are special to her and her mother Mimi. She discussed her content for the paper with her mom. Mimi told her to contact me about a story I taught several years ago about butterflies. The message of the story is that God will make something beautiful of our struggles just as a butterfly has to struggle to get out of its cocoon to be able to fly. So it is with us, sometimes in life we have struggles that God uses to create beauty and strength in our lives. Hannah wrote the paper as a testimony to God’s goodness in hard times. (To see her paper go to my blog on this SFL website.) Two other granddaughters, Mikaela, and Katie, have inherited a love for the book of Revelation from their grandfather Dan. They love his stories and recently, in a discussion with their grandfather, asked him to give them his notes on Revelation so they could learn how to connect current day events with prophecy found in the Book of Revelation.

One last story, when we were sick with Covid in 2021, all eight grandchildren prayed for our healing and recovery. Dani, our youngest slept with a picture of us as she prayed. Others sent notes to tell us they were praying. Our kids are growing up in a world very different than I did or my kids did. Telling the stories of Christ’s love and power to the next generation is vital, in fact it is a command. What this younger generation wants and needs is true love and acceptance. Seeing them as valuable gifts from God and to sincerely telling them stories about the love and power of Jesus. I assure you they are watching and listening.

Solution for the future

On October 6th the world's attention turned to the Middle East and Israel, as war broke out between Hamas and Israel. To understand what is taking place, I ask myself one simple question; What is God's timing in this event? I know we are in the end of the last days with the rebirth of Israel in 1947. I also know from prophecy in the Bible that Israel will be the focus of end time events involving every nation of the world.

"This is the word of the Lord concerning Israel. The Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: 'I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding people reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations on the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves...On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.'" (Zechariah 12: 1-3,9)

As I am watching world events, I see prophecy unfolding at an accelerated pace. Nations are taking sides against or for Israel. Russia, China, and Arab nations are siding with Hamas. United States with Israel. Sides are being drawn. Jeremiah 30:7 tells us about an awful day. "None will like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob (Israel)." "An awful day" or "on that day" represent a period of time. Ezekiel

38 tells us the details of a last day war involving the very nations now taking sides against Israel and their defeat, Ezekiel 39:9 of a seven-year period following that war, Daniel 9:24-27 reveals God's timing in world events up to the time of Christ, then a break (known as the time of Gentiles - Luke 21:24), then the final 7-year period before the millennial reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years.

Matthew 24: 35-37 says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. But about the day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man, Jesus." The question is when you are looking around and see all that is taking place contrary to God's Word, are we like the days of Noah?

The gift God has given us is insight to His plan for the return of Jesus. He says, "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift your heads, because your redemption is drawing near...Be always on watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:28,36) ■

Message from Dan and Jessie

Jesus is our greatest gift, and He is the giver of life. We have enjoyed reflecting on Him and the gifts we have because He came as a baby and took the cross for us. In the last year we have been gifted by Him to reach out to many with the gift of His Word and to share His promise and the joy He provides. We are expanding this letter with an insert to update you on how the Lord is blessing the ministry. We trust this will be a blessing to you.

Lord bless you and keep you,

Dan and Jessie

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2023 Solution for Life Update

This year has been a wonderful year of ministry. We have had opportunities to minister to many people of all ages. Solution For Life has key areas of ministry, plus the areas that continue to be on our hearts. Here are just a few:

- Return of Christ: Connecting prophecy, historical, and current events in the world in relationship to the Second Coming of Christ. Dan sends out updates separate from the newsletter. These can be requested at dan@soltionforlife.org
- Women's ministry: Growth with Journaling with Christ Workshops and Retreats.
- Women's Neighborhood Friendship Gatherings: to share the love of Christ Generation to Generation.
- Coaching and Prayer Ministry: Equipping people who are facing the challenges of life with Christ as the solution for life.
- Newsletters and publishing
- Tangible supplies and funds are being requested as more and more people are facing challenges with the economy in many areas. This part of the ministry is growing and we are thankful for funds to support the needs.
- Supporting Pastors: Dan has been meeting with pastors to train, encourage and pray for them.
- Teaching ministry has grown, and request are coming in for more opportunities to share Jesus, "The Solution for Life".

Thank you for your support financially, volunteering and praying for these important avenues to reach people for the Kingdom of God. In addition, if you feel lead to send financial support it will allow the ministry to continue to grow in meeting the needs for outreach with the truth, Jesus is the Solution for Life. You can give it to the ministry online at www.solutionforlife.org or there is an enclosed envelope for your convenience as well.

Have a Blessed Christmas,

Dan and Jessie Westlund

