

Inspired

Faith at Work

Masterpiece Designs
by grace

Changing Futures
Joshua Christian Academy

Reaching Educators & Youth
Welcoming Dr. Joe Stowell
Iowa Prayer Breakfast



Greatness in All Kids
Will Keeps & Police Chief Dana Wingert

A close-up photograph of a lion yawning, showing its mouth wide open with its pink tongue and teeth. The lion is resting on a sandy, reddish-brown savanna. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The entire image is framed by a dark blue border.

COURAGE

doesn't always roar.

Sometimes courage is the
QUIET VOICE
at the end of the day saying,

I WILL TRY AGAIN
T O M O R R O W

-Mary Anne Radmacher



Greatness requires...

Courage

Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.

–C. S. Lewis

Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.

–T. S. Eliot

The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.

–Nelson Mandela

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.

–Mark Twain

Courage is found in unlikely places.

–J. R. R. Tolkien

Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened.

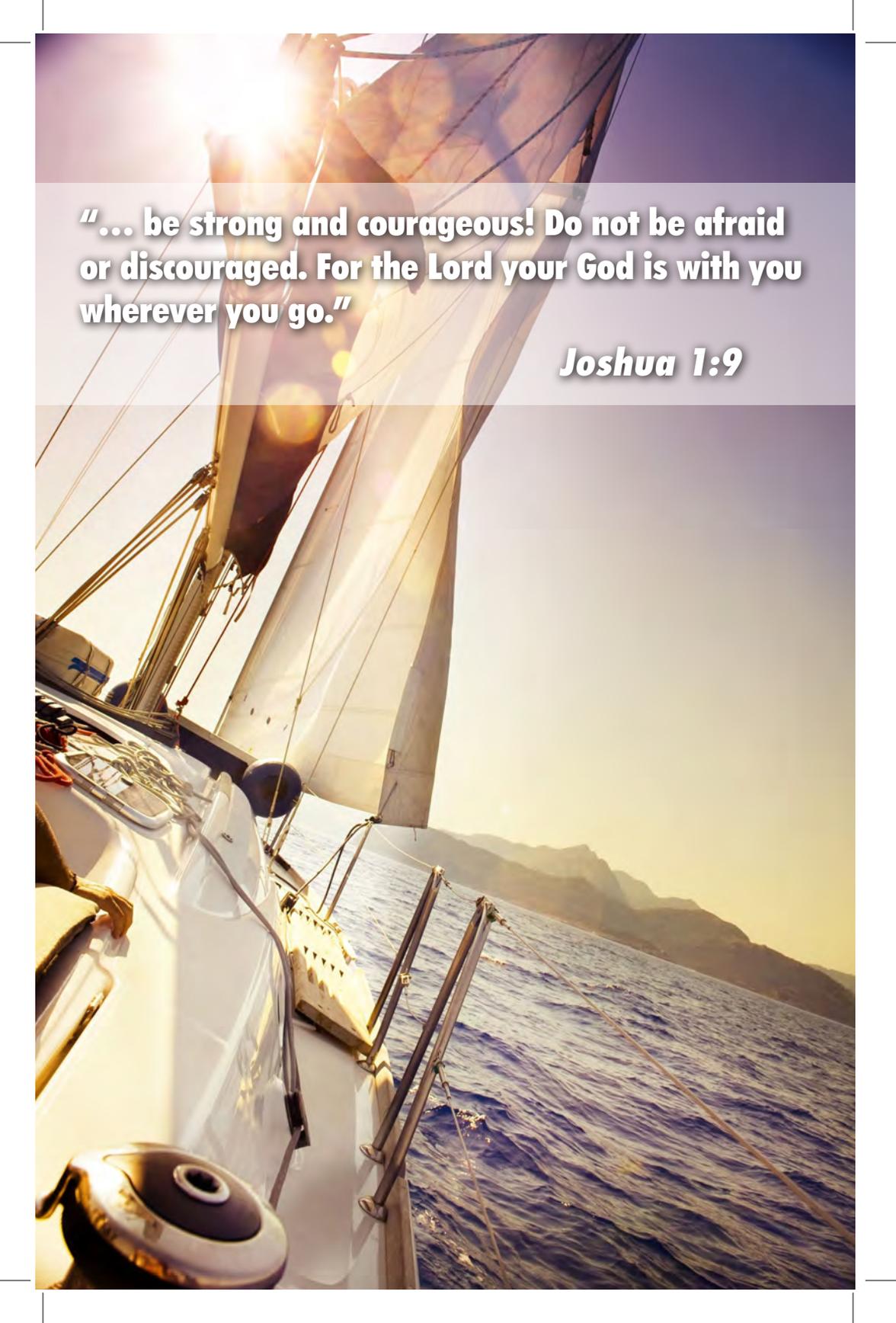
–Billy Graham

Courage is being scared to death... and saddling up anyway.

–John Wayne

Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous...

–Psalm 27:14

A photograph of a sailboat on the ocean during sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare effects. The sailboat's white sails are partially visible, and the blue water of the sea stretches towards the horizon. In the background, there are silhouettes of mountains or hills. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing a quote and a reference.

"... be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9



Inspired is a Christ-centered magazine sharing uplifting stories and encouraging faith in God and living a life of integrity every day at home, work and in the community.

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Honor people with...

Great Courage

Often courage is connected rightfully so with heroism-- firefighters entering a burning building, soldiers preparing for battle, police facing dangerous situations as they protect and serve.

Or we think of extreme sports like bungee jumping or activities that involve great risk to one's health. Courage is something extraordinary or unusual, something people are called upon to show only in dangerous, life-threatening situations.

Many of us may not even think we have or even need courage because our life seems to be defined by simple qualities, like hard-work, honesty, integrity and faithfulness. We just don't see "courage" coming into play very often.

Yet the opposite is true. Courage is not just for extreme situations, it is the foundation of every other virtue or quality... like how can you be honest or a person of integrity without courage to tell the truth?

Firefighters, soldiers and police officers are to be honored for courage in risking their life to protect and serve our communities and great country. In addition, acknowledge the courage of parents facing the uncertainty of tomorrow in providing for their family; immigrants new to our country; someone fighting an addiction, job loss or facing life after losing a loved one.

Whether it was Daniel in the den of a lion, Jonah in the belly of the whale or three children standing in the fiery furnace... the list in the Bible is filled with people whose faith in God gave them great courage to do extraordinary things.

See the courage in others and in yourself, and thank God for always being present in your life every step of the way.



Will Keeps & Chief Wingert...

A Dynamic Duo

An unlikely duo at first glance... even Chief Wingert said, “Look, we are polar opposite.” Although that may appear to be the case on the outside, Will Keeps and Des Moines Police Chief Dana Wingert are more like brothers and have much in common on the inside... love for kids and families, the city of Des Moines and each other.

Their friendship started when their daughters played on the same AAU basketball team. Whether games were in Des Moines or on the road, one thing each noticed... as parents, they were always there.

Now this unlikely duo is working together to bring a message of hope to youth city-wide. Will, a hip-hop artist originally from the southside of Chicago, is going into the schools and the streets to end violence and encourage education to change the direction of kids’ lives.

It was after the death of a 16-year-old athlete in June of 2015, Will produced “Wake-up Iowa,” a hip-hop video that pleads with Des Moines families to not be like bigger cities and allow their children to fall into the traps of drug users and street gangs. His inspiring video led to a second, “We Fight,” that with the help of Chief Wingert tells the story of a police officer shooting a young black man during a convenience store robbery, only to twist



the ending and portray Chief Wingert as the one being shot. The message was simple and powerful, to stop the violence and become united.

Youth looking for role models, today's superheroes, don't have to look any further than Will Keeps and Chief Wingert--two people working together finding ways to bring positive change.

And although they may appear to be indestructible, as Chief Wingert reminds us, "The heart and mind that are so fragile also is what makes us as humans good."



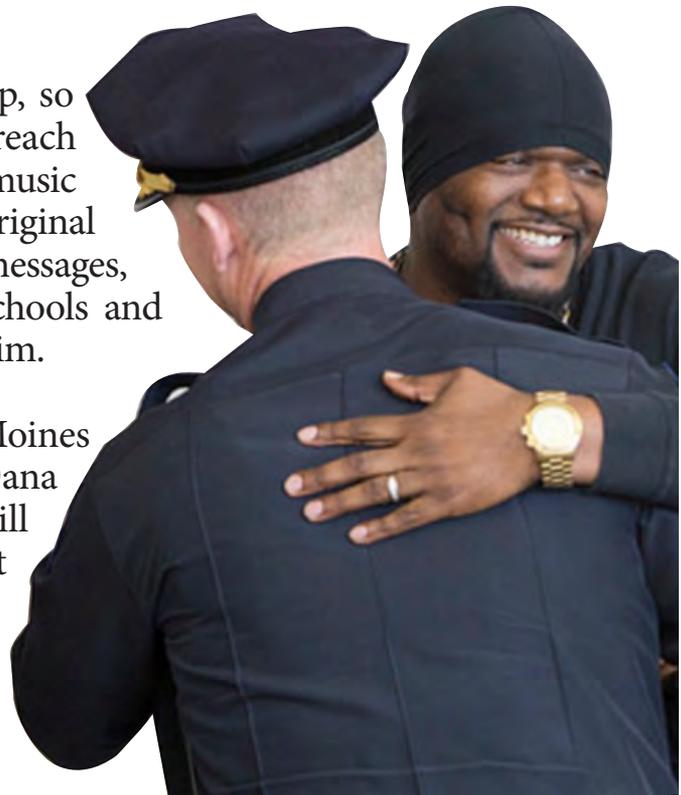
A Doer Making a Difference...

Will Keeps

Will Keeps is a rapper and R&B artist out of Des Moines. Raised on Chicago's southside, he uses his heart and talent to reach and empower youth, and promote anti-violence. From personal experiences, Will knows why he does it. He was molested at seven; he was beat and stabbed at 15, and the offenders tried to shoot him, but the gun jammed; and he saw his friend killed in front of him. Will has had eight surgeries on his face and head, with scars that he keeps covered requiring shots every three months. Will loves God, his family and kids...

Kids are into hip-hop, so Will is working to reach them through music videos. With his original rap and inspiring messages, he has the streets, schools and community behind him.

Friend and Des Moines Police Chief Dana Wingert admires Will because "He is out there doing it! Every measure of success Will has helps both





the department and the community. Who are the talkers, and who are the doers? Will is a doer!”



Gentle Will simply says, “Kids get upset with me because I am trying to change their mindset. I’ve been there and know..”

Find Will on Facebook with positive comments and messages from supporters. Also, a video with Will and a room packed with kids noting, “What we do on Wednesday nights at Zion Lutheran Church!! We feed and mentor 500 kids... we talk about GOD! A lot of beautiful people come out and volunteer their time to give these kids HOPE, something to look forward to in life.”

Will also has a commitment to the students at Harding Middle School, whom he asked to help him make his recent video, “Greatness.” Located on Des Moines’ northside, staff at Harding love and care for all kids and teach being collaborative, professional and respectful. With 800 students who come from dozens of countries and languages, theirs is a challenge and help is appreciated. Will works to reach kids this age before it’s too late and teach them to make good choices.



continued on page 12...

continued from page 11...

The lyrics of “Greatness” support his mission, with “It’s on me... on me to think above me... on me to show love for me... on me to go about it the right way.”



Will is donating a portion of sales from his song “Greatness” to a college fund set-up with the “I Have a Dream Foundation” to benefit six students from Harding who played a big part in the video.

He has written a new song “Droppin” about the community working as one unit to understand the death of young black men and innocent bystanders. Chief Wingert and other community leaders have already signed-up to be a part of this music video and its goal to stop violence and come together as a community.

This movement called “Starts Right Here” has been self-funded by Will to date, but he hopes more will join him. To learn how you can contribute, find Will Keeps on Facebook, visit www.willkeeps.com, or write to Will at 3825 1st Street, Des Moines, IA 50313.

Youth are looking for an inspiring champion, which Will defines. As he says, “I’m not afraid to speak... to tell kids ‘I’ve got you!’ ”



More Than Crime Fighters...

DSM Police Dept.

The Des Moines Police Department (DMPD) is the largest law enforcement agency in Iowa. With nearly 500 officers and civilian staff members, they protect and serve our capitol city 24 hours a day.



The 74th DMPD Recruit Class with 16 recruits.

The 74th DMPD recruit class started January 3 with sixteen members who took the first step in a long and challenging journey to become DMPD officers.

Police Chief Dana Wingert says times have changed, “Thirty years ago, a police department was judged by response time and solving crime. Although still important, today equally it is, ‘What does the community think of you?’”

Now in his third year many highly regard Chief Wingert and his officers and staff. Over the past year, hearts were broken at the DMPD and across the community over the tragic loss of officers’ lives in separate events. During those times that would rock anyone’s world, many looked to Chief Wingert for leadership and comfort.

Chief Wingert believes “in controlling the things you can, and faith will take care of the rest.” But then asks, “What are you thankful for? Do we thank God for our blessings?”

Paul Harvey...

The Rest of the Story

I listened to Paul Harvey for years... first in eastern Iowa where I grew up; and as an adult on Newsradio 1040 WHO. From the 1950s through the 1990s, Harvey's programs reached as many as 24 million people every week.

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1918 as Paul Harvey Aurandt, he became known to all as Paul Harvey for his unmistakable voice that, no matter what the topic, was calming every day to millions of Americans. His "Paul Harvey News and Comment" was broadcast weekday mornings and mid-days on more than 1,200 radio stations, 400 Armed Forces Network stations and published in 300 newspapers... and I can still hear the start of his broadcast of " 'Hello, Americans, this is Paul Harvey! Stand by for news!' "



Harvey was a close friend of Billy Graham, and he championed love of God and country. His no-nonsense common sense resonated with listeners. In 2005 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' most prestigious civilian award, by President George W. Bush.



He passed away in 2009 at the age of 90.

BUT HERE IS THE “REST OF HIS STORY”...

Harvey was the son of a policeman who was killed by robbers in 1921 when he was just three years old. His father and a friend (a Tulsa police detective) were hunting while off-duty when approached by four armed men who attempted to rob them. His father was shot and died two days later. The four robbers were identified by the surviving detective and arrested the day after. All four were tried, convicted, and received life terms.

In a style similar to his famous “So God Made a Farmer,” he wrote and read “Policeman” in 1970 as a tribute to his father and the many police officers who risk their lives daily. And it is as relevant today as ever...

continued on page 16...

"Policeman..."

A policeman is a composite of what all men are, I guess, a mingling saint and sinner, dust and deity. What that really means is that they are exceptional, they are unusual, they are not commonplace. Buried under the froth is the fact: and the fact is, less than one-half of one percent of policemen misfit that uniform. And that is a better average than you would find among clergymen!

What is a policeman? He, of all men, is at once the most needed and the most wanted. A strangely nameless creature who is "sir" to his face and "pig" or worse behind his back.

He must be such a diplomat that he can settle differences between individuals so that each will think he won.

But...if the policeman is neat, he is conceited; If he's careless, he's a bum. If he's pleasant, he's a flirt; If he's not, he's a grouch.

He must make instant decisions which would require months for a lawyer.

But...if he hurries, he's careless; if he's deliberate, he's lazy. He must be first to an accident, infallible with a diagnosis. He must be able to start

breathing, stop bleeding, tie splints and above all, be sure the victim goes home without a limp.

The police officer must know every gun, draw on the run, and hit where it doesn't hurt. He must be able to whip two men twice his size and half his age without damaging his uniform and without being "brutal." If you hit him...he's a coward. If he hits you...he's a bully.

The policeman, from a single human hair, must be able to describe the crime, the weapon, the criminal and tell you where the criminal is hiding. But...if he catches the criminal, he's lucky; if he doesn't, he is a dunce.

He runs files and writes reports until his eyes ache, to build a case against some felon who will get "dealed out" by a shameless shamus.

The policeman must be a minister, a social worker, a diplomat, a tough guy and a gentleman.

And of course, he'll have to be a genius...because he will have to feed a family on a policeman's salary.

Paul Harvey, 1970



Please join us in attending the Iowa Prayer Breakfast, an honored tradition of over 50 years of gathering in prayer and fellowship.

featuring author and speaker

Dr. Joe Stowell

president,

Cornerstone University



Kings and Kingdoms **Thursday, April 13 | 7:15 - 8:45 a.m.**

Doors open at 6:45 a.m.

**Veterans Memorial Community Choice
Credit Union Convention Center**

883 5th Avenue | Des Moines

Adults \$25 | Students \$10

An internationally recognized conference speaker and well-known author, President Stowell has written numerous books, including *The Trouble with Jesus*, *Following Christ*, *Simply Jesus and You*, *The Upside of Down*, and *Redefining Leadership: Character-Driven Habits of Effective Leaders*.

Dr. Stowell's life is marked by a deep love for Jesus which is reflected in his desire to value people; to aid the poor; to build a strong and vibrant community where the presence of Christ is evident, and; to govern and lead in ways that creates mutual confidence and trust.

Although he may be best known for serving as president of Moody Bible Institute, Dr. Stowell has a long distinguished career in higher education and church leadership. He served as senior pastor of Southgate Baptist Church in Ohio, the Bible Baptist Church in Kokomo, Indiana, and Highland Park Baptist Church in Michigan prior to leading Moody Bible Institute. From 1987- 2005, he served as Moody's president, where he directed the undergraduate and graduate schools, Moody Publishers, and the Moody Broadcasting Network. Dr. Stowell currently serves as president of Cornerstone University, and says "Cornerstone is not first and foremost about building a great university. Rather, we exist to build great people..."

The Iowa Prayer Breakfast

...A long-standing tradition where Iowa's governor, legislators and community and faith leaders ask God's direction and blessing upon our state

...Reading the Bible, music from local musicians, hearing an inspiring message from Dr. Joe Stowell and taking part in a prayer for our state

...Breakfast, the company of friends and a beginning of the Easter weekend celebration

**Tickets available now through April 5
at www.IowaPrayerBreakfast.com**

The Iowa Prayer Breakfast is a nonprofit organization and tax-deductible support from sponsors makes this event possible. For information on sponsorship, contact questions@iowaprayerbreakfast.com.

Dr. Stowell will also be speaking at the following events:

EDUCATORS

April 12 | 5:30 p.m.

Area educators... you are invited!
An evening to honor
and thank you!
No cost to attend
dinner and speaker.

Please RSVP at
Iowaprayerbreakfast.com

STUDENTS

April 12 | 7:00 p.m.

Students, come join us for...
"The Gathering,"
A night of fun and worship
with message by Dr. Stowell.

No RSVP - just show up and
bring your friends!

**Cornerstone Family Church
3114 SW 61st Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50321**



LET US LAY ASIDE
EVERY WEIGHT

and the sin that so easily ensnares us,

AND LET US RUN WITH
ENDURANCE

THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US

Finding Great...
ENCOURAGEMENT

“Encourage” is a positive word that we probably can never use too often... either in conversation or through actions. Webster’s defines the word, in part, “to inspire with courage, spirit or hope.” And who doesn’t need or want that in their life?

Many have encouraged me... including my wife, Karen, parents, family and friends. Also, many who I may not know personally, provide encouragement through calls or written notes received about this magazine. I am thankful... and hope my list of encouragers is like yours, too long to list.

But where do you find your greatest source of encouragement?

A person in a red shirt and black leggings is running on a path at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow. The person's legs and feet are in motion, captured in a slightly blurred way to suggest movement. The background shows a silhouette of a mountain range under a clear sky.

LOOKING UNTO
J E S U S

THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER
of our faith
WHO FOR THE JOY THAT
WAS SET BEFORE HIM
ENDURED THE CROSS

→ **HEBREWS 12:1-2**

Mine is from knowing Jesus Christ. “Lord, you alone are my hope. I’ve trusted you from childhood.” (Psalm 71:5)

Acknowledging that Jesus is the author and finisher of faith gives courage to run the race with endurance. Knowing that He, with great courage, endured the cross to set us free from every weight that would trap us.

Bill, a friend of mine, thought-provokingly said, “Those who see us, read us.”

Which begs the question, how are we being read?

Are we encouraging and filling someone’s glass or tank that may be running on empty... helping shine God’s light in what may be his or her dark world?

Find the greatest source of encouragement by asking God for help. He will show you ways to inspire others with courage, spirit and hope.

Design with God in Mind...

Gifts with a Purpose

It all started with a school project and the imagination of a 13-year-old named Grace. She had always dreamed of doing something important in the world, and as Grace says, “When two things in my brain collided, it began!”

Grace’s favorite hobby is craft making. She loves to make jewelry, hats, and scarves... and also take pictures because, “they are just so fun to do!”



She was assigned a project for school where students were asked to think of a world problem and an idea to solve it. Grace thought about it for about a week until one day it clicked. She could put her passion and talent to use in creating jewelry and crafts to sell, while donating profits toward buying Bibles!

“Design with God in Mind” is both the purpose and the name of her shop on Etsy. Grace works to raise money to honor God by providing Bibles to needy people at home and abroad. When a purchase is made of anything from Grace’s shop, she donates 50% or more of her profits toward buying Bibles for people in need. As she says, “When you buy one of my items, you help someone who really wants to know more about God. My immediate goal is

to purchase Spanish, French and English New Testament Bibles to donate to Mission Discovery, Telugu Bibles that will go to India through Hope and Helps Ministry and provide Spanish Bibles for a local school's mission trip to Honduras.”

Grace has already been able to sponsor 130 Bibles, with 60 New Testament Bibles being purchased and donated to Mission Discovery, 40 Spanish New Testament Bibles sent with a school's mission trip to Honduras, and 30 Telugu Bibles to India. Telugu is a language native to India, so money was sent to Hope and Helps Ministry where a local evangelist was able to purchase 30 Telugu Bibles and distribute to the poor in Rajahmundry, a city in eastern India.

Grace is quite an amazing 8th grader. Please consider visiting her Etsy shop, “Design with God in Mind,” to see how you can purchase a uniquely made craft from a young lady who has a bigger purpose on her heart... to do her part in sharing the greatest story ever told, the Good News story of Jesus Christ.

(Please note that Grace is a minor, so her Etsy account is managed by Brenda, her mom.)



*For we are God's
workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus
to do good works, which
God prepared in advance
as our way of life.
-Ephesians 2:10*

Following is a letter received from this young lady who inspired me... and hope she might inspire you with her purpose and heart.



Dear Inspired Magazine,

Hi! My name is Grace, and I am thirteen years-old. I am a Christian who loves and follows the Lord Jesus Christ. I noticed you have a Christian magazine called Inspired. I want to encourage you to keep sharing about God to people through your work and articles.

I was presented a school project earlier this year. The project was to think of a world problem and an idea to solve it. Many people chose topics like poverty, donating teddy bears to hospitals, low-fueled cars, etc.

I couldn't think of a topic for about a week, but then it clicked. I could do my hobby, making crafts, to help give Bibles to people. For my topic, I came up with this question: How can we get copies of the Bible to people that want a Bible but can't afford it? That brought me to opening an Etsy shop, which is called "Design with God in Mind." I make and sell earrings, bracelets, necklaces, hats, scarves, and even some photography. I design all of my items with God in mind. I donate at least 50% of my profits toward buying Bibles...



etsy.com/shop/DesignWithGodInMind

GRACE'S PURPOSE FOR CREATING: BUYING BIBLES FOR THOSE IN NEED



HAS ALREADY SPONSORED 130 BIBLES



**DONATED 60 BIBLES TO
MISSION DISCOVERY**
<http://www.missiondiscovery.org>

**40
SPANISH
BIBLES
DONATED
TO
HONDURAS**



**30
TELUGU
BIBLES**

DISTRIBUTED
IN RAJAHMUNDRY
via Hope and Helps Ministry



50%
of profit is donated
to purchasing Bibles
for those in need



Grace's photography is also available through her etsy site, where you can purchase beautiful images of God's creations. The image above, *Purple Tulips*, is available.

Joshua Christian Academy...

Changing a Child's Future

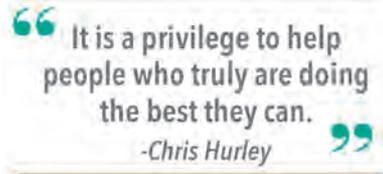
Situations in life are often outside our control, which is especially true for children. And sometimes they and their families need a little help...

Imagine some kids whose fathers have been murdered or are in prison, others are living in a shelter or are being raised by grandparents - or great-grandparents. 50% of the kids being raised in single parent homes... and other children whose parents just want to raise their children in a Christian school. There are no issues; they just love Christian education.

These and many more situations describe the lives of students who attend Joshua Christian Academy (JCA) in Des Moines. They are good kids with good families who are making an effort to change their difficult situation and need a little support.

"It is a privilege to help people who truly are doing the best they can," says Chris Hurley, president of Joshua Christian Academy's Board.

JCA started in 2009 with just nine students in a one-room classroom. Since that modest beginning, they have grown



and been able to purchase a former public elementary school and community center, located just 1.5 miles northeast of the Iowa state capitol. JCA has grown each year to now serving 115 economically disadvantaged urban youth in grades K-9.

Christian education students receive is transformational – altering and changing the direction of their lives.





Amazing results in learning, as JCA students are 72% proficient in reading compared to 35% of the national average and also performed well in math, social studies and science.

JCA follows the basic curriculum (language arts, mathematics, science, history and the arts) while focusing on spiritual and social values, including reconciliation, responsibility, respect, character and hard work. Loving teachers with a passion for God and a heart for helping children succeed are carefully chosen. Class sizes are small - averaging 15 students per class- so all students receive the attention needed to succeed.

Every day starts with all students in chapel. New students learn to recite an entire chapter of the Bible and more than 40 responsive verses in just their first year. Older kids are able to recite the Gettysburg address, a fifth of Martin Luther King Jr’s “I Have a Dream” speech and more.

Students are expected to demonstrate stellar conduct in the classroom that supports a positive learning atmosphere. They attend JCA because their families want them to receive this high-quality,





well-rounded Christian education, and they make a sacrifice, too.

Families give up public school free breakfast, lunch and transportation. All families are required to pay some tuition (min. \$50 per month) and provide transportation to JCA. Kids must wear uniforms and all have jobs to help keep the school clean! Recently while at JCA, two nine-year-old students came late in the afternoon to the room I was in to empty the trash, which was their responsibility daily for two weeks before rotating to a different job.

Rev. Keith Ratliff, Sr., JCA's executive director, says, "The mission of Joshua Christian Academy is to build a

Christ-centered academic foundation within the hearts and minds of urban children, equipping them and their families to serve God and others to their fullest potential through an outstanding Christian education."

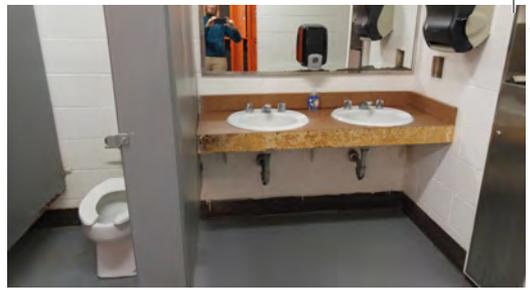
God continues to bless the students and families at Joshua Christian Academy through its teachers, board and volunteers... and also through the churches, businesses and individuals whose hearts are touched and are helping change a child's future.

JCA has a vision with their "Building Our Future" campaign. They hope to expand to a K-12 grade curriculum over the next three years and serve more students.



Five new classrooms to be built in this large open space.

Within its existing building, JCA needs to build five new classrooms to accommodate the additional tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Extensive renovations must occur to improve the facilities: remodel bathrooms and replace mechanical systems (old boiler and rusty pipes). To reach their goal, JCA is praying and sharing their story asking for support from partners, volunteers and the community.



Progress shows God working in the lives of everyone attending and volunteering at JCA. Groups donate food for lunches at school; others have come to replace old windows. Some financially support 87% of the school's operating budget that is received from donations (with families paying 13% of tuition costs).

Henry Blackaby, author of *Experiencing God*, illustrates clearly what is happening at JCA when he said, "Watch to see where God is working, and join Him in His work."

To learn more about Joshua Christian Academy, support their growing vision and learn how you, your church or business can help, please contact:

Chris Hurley
Chris.Hurley@GotJosh.org
515.468.5674 / 515.265.0618.



CROSSROADS APOLOGETICS PRESENTS:

DID HE RISE FROM THE DEAD?

FREE OPEN TO ALL

Presented by Dr. Nathan Noble and
Jeffrey Johnson, CEO, Johnson Machine Works

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THURSDAY | **TUSCANY EVENT CENTER**

7:00PM - 8:30PM
DOORS OPEN AT 6:30PM

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Can we prove that the resurrection took place? Did Jesus really rise from the dead? How do we know it really happened? Come and discover the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Bring your questions. Bring your doubts. Bring your opinions. Come and investigate the reality of this miraculous event.

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LEADING WITH POWER

MEN BALANCING LIFE, CAREER AND FAMILY



UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 16TH



ADRIE GROENEWEG

President and Co-Founder,
Pizza Ranch

THURSDAY, APR. 20TH



TERRY BRANDS

Associate Head Coach,
University of Iowa Wrestling

THURSDAY, MAY 18TH



MIKE WHALEN

CEO & Founder,
Heart of America Restaurant & Inns

THURSDAYS
11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Holiday Inn Downtown
at Mercy Campus
1050 6th Avenue • Des Moines

Lunch & Speaker \$20
\$15 (if pre-registered)

Register online at
www.lwpdsm.org

CONTACT
email info@lwpdsm.org
Mark Riley
515.577.4341
Scott Brunscheen
515.419.1059

Heidi Vermeer-Quist...

Shine Your Light

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 in 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.

- Matthew 5:14-16

I conducted an exercise with a support group several years ago. I encouraged participants to turn to one another and take turns asking the question, "Who are you?" One of the ladies graciously agreed to demonstrate the "Who are you?" dialogue with me. She responded immediately with a laugh and the statement, "I am fat!" She then continued a litany of other things about herself that were wrong. I don't remember any of them because I wanted to stop and redirect her ASAP. I

encouraged her to focus on more simple, factual (less negative and judgmental) self-statements.

Is this woman alone in her automatic perceptions of herself? By no means! I frequently have automatic thoughts that are self-demeaning. I'm pretty sure you have those types of automatic thoughts too. Certainly we all seem to struggle with "I'm not good enough" or "not acceptable" thoughts.

Take note right now, however, that those descriptions are simply not true! They are more likely statements of a negative self-concept or an expression of negative feelings. If I confuse "Who I am" with "How I am feeling," then the "worlds" I create with my words will be very dramatic, unstable and probably dark.

“Who I am” is not a negative perception or judgment. Who I am and who you are is amazing and well designed. We are more unique and capable than anything else in all of God’s creation. Your life is special. It carries a reflection of God to the world around you...if you let it. So let your light shine. No doubt, it can be tough. We are bombarded by “not good enough” thinking, toxic comparisons and fears of failure. In fact, it seems as though we are more comfortable talking about what we hate, what we don’t like, what we stand against and what we will not do. Letting our lights shine, however, looks like talking about what we love, what we like, what we stand for and what we are doing or excited to do.

What does it look like to let your light shine?

Spend a few minutes, with a pen and paper in hand, and answer the following questions:

continued on page 34...



About the Author: Heidi Vermeer-Quist, Psy.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist as well as a wife, mother, musician and family business consultant. In 2002, Heidi helped to establish the Des Moines Clinic for Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services that has grown into a fully-staffed outpatient mental health clinic. In 2012, Heidi teamed up with her husband Chad, who serves as a physician assistant with an earned MBA, to found Vermeer Quist Consulting, now working part time with other family businesses to assess and improve business and ownership processes.

www.vqconsult.com

What do I love? (Identify people, activities or causes)

What do I like? (Keep it simple or shoot for the stars. For example, do you like lattes or iced tea? What was your childhood dream? Honor your own unique “likes.”)

What do I stand for? (What values drive you? For example, “honesty,” “love,” “commitment,” and other good characteristics that benefit you and the world around you.)

What do I enjoying doing? (Hint: When you do these things you lose track of time because you are having such a great time!)

What am I excited to do? (What are you looking forward to doing tomorrow, next week, next year? Allow yourself to dream.)

Okay, now do you think you are an amazing person? I hope so...at least a little more! As I close this article, chew on this powerful quote by Marianne Williamson. We

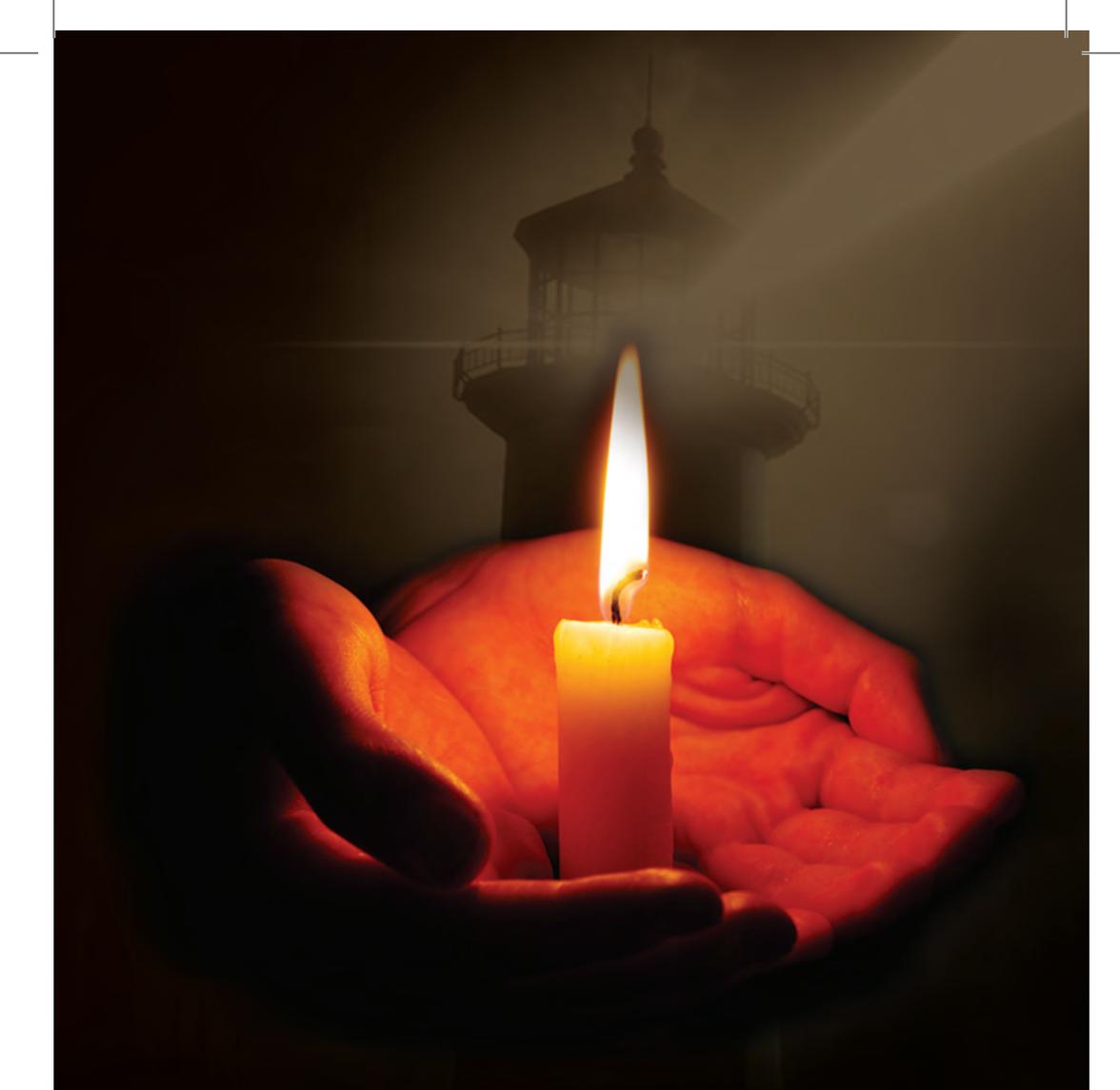
live in an amazing world, a grand creation. And God created you in His very own image. There is no one else like you. As my friends from OneBody3, Jennifer Browne and Jennifer Webster say, “You were made on purpose, for a purpose.”

Let your light shine!

“You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

- Marianne Williamson

Your life is a gift to you. Don’t judge it. Embrace it. Unwrap it. Value it.



LET YOUR LIGHT

SHINE

BEFORE MEN THAT THEY
WILL SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND
GLORIFY YOUR FATHER
WHO IS IN HEAVEN.

Isaiah 40:31
Matthew 5:16

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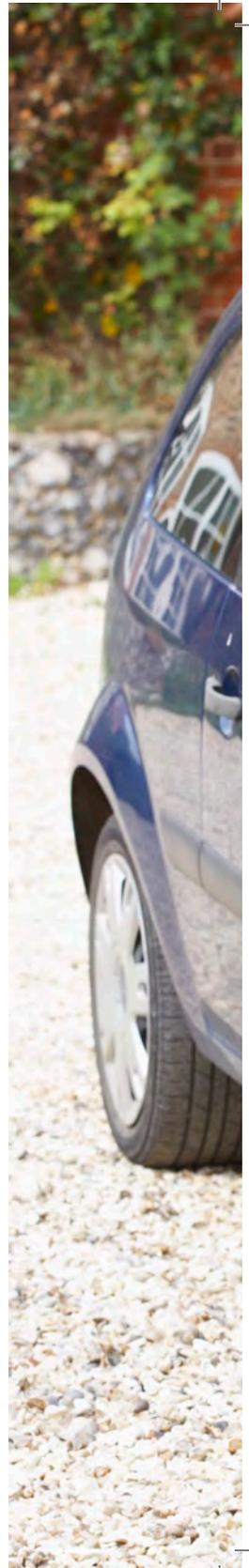
Asking Dad's Permission... to Drive

A young boy had just gotten his driver's permit. He asked his father if they could discuss the use of the car. His father took him to his study and said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your Bible a little and get your hair cut and we'll talk about it."

After about a month, the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss use of the car. They again went to the father's study where his father said, "Son, I've been real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied your Bible diligently... the only thing you didn't do was to get your hair cut."

The young man waited a moment and replied, "You know Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know, Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair and even Jesus had long hair..."

To which his father replied, "Yes, and they walked everywhere they went!"







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