

The Faith of Dolly Parton

There was a good show to watch on television last week. That in itself is news!

NBC released Dolly Parton's *Coat of Many Colors* last Thursday and delivered an audience of over 13 million viewers. It was the most watched film on broadcast television in almost five years. The movie is the first in a series of movies based on Dolly's songs.

Alyvia Alyn Lind was cast as the young, 9-year-old ball of fire, Dolly. We watched a 2015 rendition of *Little House on the Prairie* and cheered for the squirt as she fought, spat, kicked and sang her way through her struggles. She connected.

This movie brought a discussion of faith and family values back into the living rooms of a hurting America. We are desperate for an end to killings and the bad news that flows like a flooded river from our television sets.

To step back into a simpler time and place was therapeutic and encouraging.

The movie spoke often of faith. The message was soft but clearly spoken. I thought about it as a morning devotional. It reminded me of how I want to represent my faith to others. Dolly as a 9-year-old was already a leader in her family and in the classroom. She took stands even if it meant a trip to the woodshed with her father. She was a model of love and acceptance.

The faith of a leader is shown as much by what we won't do as it shows in what we will do.

We need more faith-based movies. More *War Rooms* and movies like *God's Not Dead*. The large viewing audience made it clear that we want Christian values in our homes.

The *Coat of Many Colors* is a welcome nudge into the reason for the season.

Today's Scripture

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1).

Platform Tip No. 28

Compound interest is an investor's best friend.

Daily delivery of your message compounds the interest you demonstrate in your audience.

Every deposit will multiply over time.

Do you want to learn more about developing your personal platform?

Send for my free series of lessons titled, "The Fundamentals of Creating, Curating and Developing Content for Multiple Platforms." Send your request to: platform@

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My Gut Says Yes, but the Holy Spirit Says NO

If I seek to be a spirit-led leader, I must expect to hear the Holy Spirit say “no.”

“They went throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they came near Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not allow them” (Acts 16:6-7).

Imagine the work of Paul and his missionary team in preparation to enter into Phrygia. Surely they had a strategy. The region was not unknown to them and the culture was probably one they understood well. The region seemed like a perfect opportunity for a church plant. We read later in Acts 19 verse 10 that the region was indeed a fertile ground for ministry.

“All who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus.”

It's not always easy to understand a “no.” But we do have insight into the direction of the Holy Spirit in this case. Perhaps the Holy Spirit knew the time was critical for Paul to

meet Dr. Luke. Perhaps the ministry in Macedonia was more important in a timing sense.

I wonder how many ministers and leaders miss a “no” from the Holy Spirit. World history would have been impacted had Paul not been obedient in this one seemingly simple decision to “obey” a “no.” Many leaders are challenged when they hear the word “no.” Some see “no” as an invitation to press on and find a way. For some, “no” is simply a suggestion.

The difference is that Paul heard a spiritual “no.” We don’t know how Paul heard from God, we only know that he did. We also know Paul moved with instant obedience to the Holy Spirit.

As we lead our organizations, we must develop confidence in our knowledge that we hear God. We must stay open and willing to hear the word “no.”

We must sharpen our eyes and ears and soften our hearts to become willing to hear that our big idea isn’t of the Lord. He protects us from ourselves. If we truly expect to receive the favor of God, we must be ready to hear Him say, “No, my son. Not at this time. Check back with me in another season.”

Help us, Lord, to receive the favor of a “no.”

NOODLING

Here’s something I’m trying or thinking about today ...

This is not an endorsement or recommendation. It’s just noodling.

I read *Content Inc.* by Joe Pulizzi a few months ago. I reviewed it again this past weekend.

The book could have been titled, *The Missing Puzzle Piece to*

Platform Development.

“Build your audience first, then create your product.” My favorite section of the book addresses “content tilting.” There is always a niche for your message.

We only need to find the intersection between our heart and a unique message arc.

PLATFORM TIP No. 13

To help you develop content, stay focused on your “why.” Pray over your personal why. Ask the Lord for more depth of understanding.

Why do you do what you do?

Your platform message is waiting in the answer to your why.

If you lose your why, you’ll lose your way.

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Does Prayer Precede All?

“We can’t do more than pray before we have prayed, but we can do more than pray after we have prayed.” –A.J. Gordon.

Prayer must precede all of the actions of a leader. After prayer, action becomes our mandate.

Prayer is necessary but not sufficient.

Action is necessary but not sufficient.

We see a powerful demonstration of prayer, then action, in Nehemiah.

In Chapter 1, Nehemiah prays the leader’s prayer:

“... hear the prayer of your servant, which I now pray before You, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against you” (verse 6).

After offering a prayer from his heart as a leader, we know that Nehemiah set out to rebuild the wall. Prayers for the wall to be rebuilt were surely offered by others who didn’t build. But Nehemiah prayed and then took action.

In 2 Thessalonians, we read that Paul first asked the brothers to pray for him and pray that the Word would “spread quickly and be glorified” (3:1). After prayer, he told them all to get to work.

For when we were with you, we commanded you that if any will not work, neither shall he eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). Prayer wasn’t going to fill their bellies.

It almost seems facile to exhort a leader to pray before

taking action. Yet, I'm often reminded to pray a specific prayer prior to engaging in a very specific effort.

Without prayer, I act on my own. I tacitly declare my independence.

I dare not lead from a position of independence.

“He told them a parable to illustrate that it is necessary always to pray and not lose heart. He said: ‘In a city there was a judge who did not fear God or regard man. And a widow was in that city. She came to him, saying, “Avenge me against my adversary.” He would not for a while. Yet afterward he said to himself, “Though I do not fear God or respect man, yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she will weary me.”’ And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unjust judge says. And shall not God avenge His own elect and be patient with them, who cry day and night to Him? I tell you, He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?’” (Luke 18:1-8).

PLATFORM Tip No. 3

Content rarely travels well across platforms. Context matters.

Your Twitter message is not as effective on Facebook, and vice versa.

Instagram is a platform for images rather than words.

Radio messages do not translate to television.

Modify your messages to capitalize on the strength of each medium.

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Do You Give This Book Away?

Christ followers have many opportunities to influence the reading habits of those around them.

I've given away hundreds of books. Books such as *Fearless* by Max Lucado and John Bevere's *Honor Reward* and *Bait of Satan* are some favorites I've given away over the years.

I've given away books about sales, marketing, advertising, management, and entrepreneurship to leaders.

And I've given away many Bibles.

I remember the impact my first Bible had on my life. I received it from my maternal grandmother. Her name was Opal. She was my Lois. I minister today because of her unceasing prayers.

My first Bible directed my life on a course to seek and understand Jesus. A foundation was poured into my heart. When I think about my first Bible, I wonder what I would be doing today had I never been given a Bible. When I remember this gift, I can only think about being intentional about giving

away more Bibles.

I remember giving away a Bible to a student at Oral Roberts University. He came to my office to receive a textbook I promised to buy him because he couldn't afford to buy his own. The Holy Spirit led me to also give him a Bible that was on my desk. It was his first Bible.

I watched him change over his four years of college. His textbooks had an impact, but the Bible showed him a new way of living. The Word came alive in this young man, and he continues to grow and mature in Christ.

I think I could tell a few hundred stories about the impact I've seen from the change that occurs in someone who reads a Bible. Christians know the power of God's Word.

What would happen if we all became more intentional about giving away Bibles?

Charisma Media and, specifically, Steve and Joy Strang have set a goal to give away one million Bibles. We have initiated a project we call "Give Away The Word," the mission of which is to make the Bible available to every person in need and experience its life-changing message. For a gift of 10 dollars to the campaign, we can give away four Modern English Version Bibles. A 100 dollar gift would allow four hundred Bibles to be given away. Click here to learn more: .

Please help us give away the book that changes lives and eternity.

Please respond generously with a tax-deductible gift. Mail your check to Give Away the Word, 600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, FL 32746. To donate online visit .

"For the word of God is alive, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts

and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). {eoa}

‘War Room’: ‘Raise ‘Em Up, Lord!’

When an opportunity presents itself, leaders take action.

Last Friday, I was privileged to join Pastor Shaddy Solomon and about 100 members of Lake Mary Church to see the movie, *War Room*.

The movie shocked Hollywood with opening weekend sales of \$11 million and it only played on about one-third of the screens as other weekend favorites. This Kendrick brothers’ hit had a budget of \$3 million and is on pace to surpass sales of two of their other movies, *Courageous* and *Fireproof*, both of which had sales of over \$33 million.

Secular reviews of the film are predictably negative but the impact on the kingdom of God will be highly positive. The movie tells a common story of a marriage on the rocks. The couple is caught in the trap of chasing careers and money, and finds a very uncommonly applied solution to their troubles.

Prayer changes lives.

But today’s leadership thought comes from what I was thrilled to witness at the end of the movie. First, the crowd cheered and clapped. It was the ending prayer of Miss Clara (Karen Abercrombie) that brought a powerful response from the crowd as she cries out “Raise ‘em up Lord.”

Then, as the movie credits began to roll, Pastor Shaddy jumped from his seat, kicked over my popcorn bag (I had thoughts of

a midnight snack) and rushed, arms flailing ...

“Wait, Wait everyone, let’s take a moment now and pray for America!”

I didn’t see anyone move. People began to pray with lifted arms for our country. I’ve never seen such a benediction to a movie. Yet, it was powerful, meaningful and instructive. Pastor Shaddy yelled over the closing music for healing to come to America and people yelled back, “Yes! Heal our country!”

The leadership of Pastor Shaddy was further exemplified by his actions outside of the theater. I watched as he bought tickets for people to see *War Room*. Many of the people he bought tickets for had intended to see one of those escape movies from Hollywood.

War Room is not an escape movie. It is an entrance movie to a new way of living. Pastor Shaddy and I spoke in the car about how many people would go home and begin to build their own war room. He thought Home Depot would be packed!

Of course, it’s not the room, it’s the prayers.

Leaders see opportunity and take action.

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

Charisma Media Launches

Podcast Network

Charisma Media has added a new distribution source to further spread Christian content. Within the past few weeks, the Charisma Podcast Network has launched several faith-based shows with content attractive to people of all walks of life.

“We are thrilled to offer our audience a new way to consume our content,” says Steve Strang, founder and chief executive officer of Charisma Media. “For the last 40 years we have remained on the cutting edge of distribution methods for Christian news and feature stories. We realize that our readers are highly mobile and look forward to receiving our content on their smartphones.”

In addition to *Charisma* magazine, the company publishes *Ministry Today* and *Christian Retailing*. Several years ago, Charisma Media began distributing their content through websites and electronically delivered newsletters. In any given month more than 3.1 million unique visitors view our websites to find the latest news, ministry encouragement and inspiring testimonies. Our 51 newsletters reach more than 530,000 people with stories about what God is doing in the world and in the lives of His people.

Our journey in remaining cutting edge with our online presence has led us to consider the vast potential in podcasting. The podcasting industry is enjoying a revitalization on the heels of recent successes with podcasts produced by NPR and specifically WBEZ’s “This American Life.” One podcast in particular, “Serial,” was the fastest podcast to reach the 5 million download milestone.

According to the Pew Research Center, podcast listening doubled between 2008 and 2015. The research indicated that those who have “listened to a podcast within the past month” currently exceed 17 percent of Americans aged 17 and older.

The Charisma Podcast Network (CPN) will produce many different programs to supply quality Christian content to the company's loyal following. The first podcast to launch will be the "Charisma News." The news product will be fueled by *Charisma News* content available online. Online content will be reformatted for podcast through the use of storytelling. The Charisma Podcast News segment will consist of one news story, well told, on a daily basis.

A second podcast titled "Charisma Connection" will feature an in-depth interview with a newsmaker or book author. Our publisher, Steve Strang, will join the network with his popular "The Strang Report" on a weekly basis.

Popular writer and *Charisma News* Editor Jennifer LeClaire will host her own podcast entitled "Walking in the Spirit." I will be hosting a leadership podcast, "Greenelines," which is based on my blog.

Other podcasts scheduled to be released this summer include "Javelin," a faith-based sports talk show, "SpiritLed Woman" and "Charisma Life Stories." Podcasts from pastors and ministries are planned for future release.

Dr. Steve Greene is the executive vice president of the media group at Charisma Media.

Do You Hire for Character or for Competency?

Leaders are known by the company they keep—particularly their

company of hires.

Careers are made and lost as a result of hiring decisions. The problem is that most leaders receive very little training in the selection of employees. Most leaders learn to hire based upon past mistakes.

I believe leaders should select a new employee on the basis of two primary criteria: competency and character. Competency is fairly simple to measure. A candidate either can or cannot. Competency is difficult to fake in the face of an experienced leader. We have learned how to spot a competent producer.

For those of us tasked with a hiring decision, perhaps the most difficult task is to assess is the character of a prospect. I pray often for "all things hidden to be revealed." I've learned to pray a bit more specifically ... "Please God, reveal the hidden stuff before we hire this person."

It is difficult to interview for character. Reference checks are important but not that revealing. Most references are leery of revealing character issues.

As with most things, I recommend the development of a system to intentionally assess character. Please consider the following interview system:

- **Add more interviews.** Most of our hiring problems occur when we rush to judgment. We need someone fast and sometimes we just move too fast. I recommend a minimum of three interviews with the primary hiring official. Perhaps there are others in your organization that should conduct an interview as well. But I encourage the decision maker to see a candidate three times. You will have a different purpose for each interview. We don't need all 3 interviews if we are ready to eliminate a person from consideration.
- **Find standardized testing appropriate for your specific**

hire. The cost of the test is much less than the costs incurred from a poor hire. I like to review test results between the first and second interview. The first interview helps me to decide if I want to pay for testing.

- **Look for fire.** We know that character is formed in the midst of fire. I recommend you spend at least one full-length interview on fire detection. Young recruits without a list of fire walks probably haven't been tested and nurtured from tough experiences. I'm leery of silver-spooned candidates. I don't know how the hire will react under the pressure of a true character test in the job. I want to know ... in most ministries ... I must know.
- **Scenarios.** Develop written scenarios of difficult situations. Prepare three to five cases common to the position. Discuss the problem with the candidate and watch for non-verbal cues as the prospect squirms through the resolution. I don't expect them to be comfortable. Fires aren't comfortable. I become leery when I hear fast, pat answers. Silver-tongue responses could be a sign of trouble.
- **Ask more questions.** I'm often surprised when a hiring officer does most of the talking in an interview. I understand the passion of a leader to tell the story of the organization. I just don't understand it during the hiring phase. Interviews have a specific purpose. I remind myself ... less of me and more of them. I want to ask open-ended questions. "Tell me your definition of character and tell me about how you have developed character throughout your life." Listen for specific examples. Probe! Use phrases such as "Tell me more," "Really?" and "How did you feel about that?"

Keep digging to determine depth of character.

The benefit of deep character interviews is that competency is

usually revealed along the way. We have many ways to determine core competency. But doesn't character matter more to you than any other factor?

Now go a step further...

If you read this article and identified that you may not have the right staff in key positions, you are not alone. It happens, but you can do something about it. I highly recommend joining the National Institute of Christian Leadership (NICL) by Dr. Mark Rutland. Here's a few key points you'll learn in the Staff and Volunteer sessions starting in April:

- Identify your key leaders' personality types and how to bring balance to your team
- How to put the right staff in key positions. This is critical to your success
- How to organize and maximize volunteers to meet your objectives
- Walk away with the confidence needed to recruit, manage and keep volunteers in the key positions to help your organization grow

The NICL is a year-long intensive leadership training designed to take your ministry and personal leadership to the next level. It is a leadership institute designed for church, ministry, and business leaders. The year is composed of 4 separate sessions consisting of 2½ days of intensive training. In four sessions you'll be walked through dealing with management issues, budgeting, staff and volunteers, turnarounds and much more.

CLICK HERE for more information on Dr. Mark Rutland's NICL.

As always, if I can help you or your organization to develop this system, please email me at @charismamedia.com.

Dr. Steve Greene is the executive vice president—Media Group, Charisma Media. Here's a link to where you can sign up for Dr.

Greene's leadership e-newsletter.