

# What Makes You Mad?

I was listening to an evangelist teach about how to know your calling in life. One of the questions he suggested you ask yourself is, "What grieves or angers you so much that you are moved to do something about it?"

After thinking about it, the thing that makes me most angry is the enemy deceiving God's people into believing they have no power. Because they believe his lies, they don't experience God's best. I was once there. I call it the "Charlie Brown" syndrome.

In the comic strip, Lucy always promises Charlie Brown that she is going to hold the football for him to kick. And every time Charlie Brown runs for the football and rears back for the kick, Lucy pulls the ball away, leaving Charlie Brown tumbling head over heels. Not only that, but she calls him "Blockhead!"

Now, of course, this event always happens because the comic strip creator wants to show you how hapless and naive Charlie Brown acts. But we believers in Christ aren't meant to be Charlie Brown!

We are called to be soldiers. We are not called to play in enemy territory. Instead, we must be fully prepared and ready to fight:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8).

The first call of a soldier is to be sober. *Sober* means to be clear-minded. A soldier cannot think clearly if his mind is muddled with drugs, alcohol or excessive eating. I see gluttony as food drunkenness. When I used to eat too much, I would often get brain-fogged and sleepy. It's hard to make

rational decisions or keep control of your emotions when you are under the influence.

The second call for a soldier is to be vigilant. *Vigilant* means to watch carefully, to be on guard for dangers or difficulties. In the Scripture, it tells you the danger to watch out for—you have an adversary who wants to devour you!

Just imagine: If a lion escaped from the zoo and was spotted in your neighborhood, would you go out and try to pet him? I hope not. Surely you know the difference between a kitten and a powerful beast who could rip you to shreds.

But suppose a loved one was out playing in the yard, a little child who has no clue a lion is loose. You have no time to wait for the authorities, and you have a weapon. Would you just casually stroll outside to get the child? No—you'd be on high alert, walking out with your weapon raised, your mind focused on your end goal and your eyes scanning all around you, looking to see if that lion is around. You'll probably stay on high alert until you and the child are safely back inside.

As a soldier, the prime territory the enemy wants to take over is your mind. And if you have a mental stronghold, such as that driving binge or emotional eating, then he's already there. The deception is that when your feelings overwhelm you, he entices you to go into that stronghold. A stronghold is a place of survival, of refuge.

In my "How to Stop Binge Eating" online course, I've had a couple of students confess that have practiced this habit for so long that they can't even imagine living without it. That is a lie straight from the enemy—he's convinced them that eating is their place of safety, not God.

So whenever I face a similar situation in my own mind, I pull out my sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) and combat that lie with the truth:

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress;

My God, in Him I will trust’” (Ps. 91:1-3).

What is your calling? It’s time to arm yourself and go forward in it, claiming the Victory in the name of Jesus!

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God’s healing power to end binge eating. She is the creator of the new online course “How to Stop Binge Eating.”*

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## How Volunteering Can Take You to the Corner Office

Think of successful people, and the mind usually defaults to areas of personal achievement. A Wall Street CEO, maybe, or a hotshot lawyer, or a billionaire founder of a tech start-up.

But what if we defined success in different terms—say, having touched the most people’s lives in their time of greatest need? By that standard, the people below might be some of the most successful people in the history of the planet.

Since last August, Reuters has been talking to prominent Americans about the first jobs they ever had, and how those experiences shaped the men and women they are today.

Today we chat with the folks heading up a few of the world’s leading nonprofit organizations—and find that their humanitarian impulses often took root at a very early age.

Name: Sophie Delaunay

Title: Executive Director, Doctors Without Borders

First Volunteer Job: Playground building in Egypt

“I was 15 at the time, living in a city called Limoges in the south of France, and with a group of friends decided to travel to Egypt and do some volunteer work at the same time. So we ended up building a playground at a school in Cairo, and also worked in the slums outside the city.

“Egypt was a place I’d always dreamed of, and read about in history books. But we went in August, maybe the worst time possible to go for this kind of assignment. I remember we started collapsing one after another, because everyone was so completely dehydrated. Physically it was extremely difficult, so we weren’t very productive.

“Through hardships like that you learn a lot about yourself and others. It was my first humanitarian experience, and it taught me that you really have to have the skills and the means and the capacity to provide meaningful help. It’s not enough to just be charitable.”

Name: Dr. Helene Gayle

Title: President and CEO, CARE USA

First Volunteer Job: Helping out at Dad’s store

“I worked at my father’s store in Buffalo, (N.Y.), and I guess you could call it a volunteer job, because when I started at age 13 I was too young to be paid. He had a barbershop and beauty-supply store, and after school my siblings and I would come and work the register and stock the shelves.

“Although it was a business, it was also kind of a community service, because it was really in the heart of the African-American community in Buffalo. It was a true meeting place for

people; everybody came in and out of that store.

“That job made me comfortable dealing with a wide range of people, understanding their motivations and learning to judge character. It also taught me about honesty and integrity, because my father trusted us to do everything, including counting the money.

“He died before I finished medical school, but I think he’d be proud of where I am now. Not because of position or status, but because I chose a life that gives back to society. In his own way and with his own business, he was doing the same thing.”

Name: Gail McGovern

Title: President and CEO, American Red Cross

First Volunteer Job: Candy striper

“I was a candy striper at Overlook Hospital in Summit, N.J., when I was 15. They gave us these cute little striped uniforms, and we would do little errands like deliver flowers or wheel carts of books around.

“Once they asked me to bring a patient from one location to another, about the length of five city blocks. He looked about 90, and could only take baby steps, but refused to use a walker or get in a wheelchair. He was so frail, and could barely talk, but was so happy to be moving. It took us all morning.

“I remember getting home that day, and literally crawling into bed and crying. He seemed so alone, and yet comforted me more than I comforted him. That job lit something up in me: A desire to help.

“I still get that feeling at the Red Cross, whenever I look into the eyes of someone who needs help. And after every disaster, it’s the same routine. You have to be resilient and

strong during the day—and then you come home at night and just cry.”

Name: Brian Gallagher

Title: CEO, United Way Worldwide

First Volunteer Job: Basketball coach

“When I graduated from college, I was placed as a management trainee for United Way in Winston-Salem, N.C. I had grown up in northwest Indiana, and had never even been to the South before. But I packed up my '73 Nova and drove to my new home.

“I knew nobody there, but I joined a church and went to Sunday mass. In the pews they had put a note about a volunteer opportunity, asking if anyone wanted to coach a 5th and 6th grade basketball team at a local Catholic school called St. Leo's. I signed up and coached that team for three years.

“We ended up winning a number of regional championships. What I learned from those kids is that fundamentals matter. Be really good at three or four things, practice them over and over again, and you're going to win a lot.

“What I remember most about arriving in Winston-Salem is that I was scared to death, and I was lonely. But that simple act of saying 'Yes, I will coach this team,' connected me to a community forever. We shouldn't take stuff like that for granted. People volunteering to help others is what builds communities, and makes a great society.”

*The writer is a Reuters contributor. The opinions expressed are his own.*

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*Editing by Lauren Young and Andrew Hay*

# How to Keep Your Dream Alive

*Editor's Note: Bo Stern's husband, Steve, has been diagnosed with ALS, an incurable degenerative disease.*

It's been a tough couple of weeks on the ALS front lines, and last night was especially hard, filled with breathing mask difficulties and some scary choking episodes into the wee hours. I'm sure every serious illness comes with problems for which there are no solutions, but ALS seems to specialize in them. I often feel helpless and useless, sitting beside Steve while he chokes and tries to find his way back to regular breathing (and then apologizes for keeping me awake).

This morning, my Facebook news feed is filled with tributes to another friend lost to this battle. We are expecting to say farewell to several more within the next few weeks. And sometimes it seems we're no closer to finding a cure than we are to achieving Lou Gehrig's batting average (.343!).

But the other day I was home from work because it was Martin Luther King Jr. Day. And though I know we still have far to go in achieving true racial reconciliation and equality, I wonder if, in his lifetime, he could ever have imagined that his name would be attached to a national holiday. As he fought on the front lines of racism and segregation, how could he have known how significantly he would help to alter the course of history? He just did the work. And he believed. And I'm guessing sometimes it felt like he was believing his way through quicksand, because he said this:

"If you can't fly, then run; if you can't run, then walk; if

you can't walk, then crawl; but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."

I am working at believing. Believing for a day when breakthroughs will come. When science will crack the mysterious code that keeps so many suffering. I am believing that, even if there's never a national holiday to celebrate the eradication of this relentlessly brutal disease, that my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will gather for dinner somewhere and the same time every year. And they will raise their glasses to their strong, valiant soldier of a granddad who never stopped fighting.

I wonder: What are you believing for today? What seems impossible? I am wishing you the strength to stand in the trenches and the strategy to make inroads that generations will thank you for. I am wishing you life and joy and peace in the battle, though sometimes those things seem impossibly incongruent. I am wishing you the bravery of Abraham Lincoln and Amelia Earhart and Malala Youfsazai. Because we all have a story, and we all have a storm. May we have the faith to believe with Martin Luther King Jr. that "unearned suffering is redemptive."

So, I guess, I am not wishing you a quick way out of your battle, but I am believing for you and for me that every square inch of our battleground will be redeemed. And on that ground, beauty will grow, wild and free.

Let freedom ring.

**Bo Stern** is a blogger and author of *Beautiful Battlegrounds*. She knows the most beautiful things can come out of the hardest times. Her Goliath came in the form of her husband's terminal illness, a battle they are still fighting with the help of their four children, a veritable army of friends, and our extraordinary God. Bo is a teaching pastor at Westside Church in Bend, Ore.

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# Ducking the Issue: The Church and Today's Permissive Culture

When a leading cable network decided to suspend the patriarch of America's top-rated cable program, the resulting firestorm exposed a clear divide on the moral landscape of our country.

In an interview with *GQ* magazine, *Duck Dynasty's* Phil Robertson referenced the Bible's authoritative teaching on immoral behavior: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Robertson's orthodox, biblical view on the sin of homosexuality was immediately met with disdain from the intolerant gay community and its vast network of immoral, liberal allies.

Robertson was suspended and eventually reinstated by the network after several days of intense national debate. An elder in his Louisiana church, Robertson never backed down from his biblical stance.

Many were offended by the Bible's uncompromising teaching on morality. Others were offended by Robertson's frank depiction of the homosexual act, which some called crude but which was really an accurate description of the degradation of sin. I have heard our own vice president use crude, foul language in the president's hearing. His vile remarks were met with

laughter, not indignation. That was crude speech by our country's second-highest elected official, and it resulted in a flippant dismissal by the commander in chief.

But perhaps the real reason people were offended by Robertson was because the Scripture he quoted brought them face to face with their sinful state and the fact that God hates evil. The Bible says that the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be an offense to many. You see, we must face the bad news of our sin and depravity before we can receive the Good News of forgiveness through repentance and faith in Christ. Jesus is a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" (1 Pet. 2:8) to those who walk in the darkness of sin and pride.

As I have reflected on this event and the rising tide of evil and iniquity that threatens to engulf our nation, I have come to several conclusions.

Like the church in Thyatira that tolerated immorality in its midst, the evangelical church today has grown all too accepting of sin. The church is ducking the vital moral issues of our age. Rather than influencing our culture by being gospel salt and light, the church has itself become influenced by the permissive culture in which we live.

The holy, blood-bought church of the Lord Jesus Christ is far more accommodating of sin than ever before. In many churches across America, homosexuals, adulterers and sexually active youth can sit in the church pew and rarely be confronted by the convicting Word of God.

Of course, the grace of God that leads to salvation through genuine faith and repentance should always be declared. It is God's love for sinners that the Bible proclaims, yet that is always in the context of satisfying the wrath and justice of God through the death of His Son. Grace isn't cheap. It cost the Father the death of His beloved Son.

Men and women who habitually and consistently practice sin

should experience the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. There are far too many churches that tolerate members who deliberately pursue a sinful lifestyle in an open and unrepentant manner. Unfortunately, when that occurs—and it does all too often—the purity and holiness of the bride of Christ is sullied, and the witness of the church in a corrupt culture is compromised.

A low view of sin grows when the church loses sight of the majestic holiness of God. Sin brings death. Sin corrupts. Sin destroys. Sin is so evil that the Son of God had to humble Himself and come to die on a Roman cross so that we might be forgiven and justified before a holy God. The more we focus on God's absolute holiness, the less we will tolerate sin of any kind. We will never be sinless on this earth, but we can sin less and less as we reverence and fear our holy Savior who loved us and gave Himself for us.

I do not believe this is simply a culture war or a battle between conservative and liberal elements of our society. It is much more than a drift away from the moral underpinnings that helped found and guide our nation for centuries.

This is a full-scale assault against Christianity and the followers of Christ. When prayer is banned from the public square; when our president fails to defend biblically defined marriage and openly and zealously advocates for gay rights; when legislators rush to overrule existing laws to promote gay marriage; when schools and courts consistently suppress religious freedoms—then we know we are locked in a war against the Christian faith, not culture.

The architect behind this offensive is none other than Satan himself. The Scripture says that the devil, our archenemy, is bent on as much destruction as possible: “But woe to you O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short” (Rev. 12:12).

Satan knows that one day very soon, he will be cast into the lake of fire and sulfur in hell (Rev. 20:10). As that day draws near, his malicious, hellish activity is intensifying. He has already been decisively defeated on the cross by the Lord Jesus Christ, who took away his ultimate weapons of death and condemnation. For now, however, he still has power to work woe on earth.

“The whole world,” the apostle John wrote, “lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). Behind the well-orchestrated attacks on the church is the evil one who hates the name of Christ as well as believers who have been rescued from his sinful grip.

The worldly systems of politics, courts, entertainment and education can be instruments of devilish harm unless they are under the influence of Christian precepts and principles.

This is why we see Christians and the Christian faith under such intense attack today. The enemy of our souls is working his wicked schemes that seek to suppress and oppress believers. We know that in the end, he will miserably fail, for Christ is the victor. The Bible says in 1 John 5:18 that Jesus, who was born of God, protects believers, and Satan cannot touch them. Satan’s power is always restricted by our sovereign God, and the rule and reign of God’s kingdom cannot be stopped. The apostle Paul said, “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Rom. 16:20).

This is a critical hour for the church. We cannot duck the moral issues of our day because the clear aim of our adversary is the church itself. We must take a bold stand for the truth in every arena of our lives, deal ruthlessly with sin in our own heart and be men and women of uncompromising holiness.

I encourage you to examine yourself. If there is ongoing sin in your heart, repent quickly and turn to the Lord, where you will find forgiveness and help in the battle against the power

of sin—a sure and certain help and hope. Be zealous to repent, as Christ exhorted the lukewarm church in Laodicea.

Now is the time to “be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13).

Martin Niemöller was a German church leader who stood with Dietrich Bonhoeffer against Hitler’s control of the church before and during the Second World War. That resistance, which landed Niemöller in the Dachau concentration camp and resulted in Bonhoeffer’s execution two weeks before the end of the war, contrasted with others in the church who cowered before the evil of the Third Reich. Many credit Niemöller with these words:

“First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Socialists and the trade unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out. And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me.”

Live holy. Resist the devil. Be a bold, evangelical witness for the Savior wherever you are. As the great reformer, Martin Luther wrote in his famous hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”:

And though this world,  
with devils filled,  
should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear,  
for God hath willed  
His truth to triumph through us.  
The Prince of Darkness grim,

we tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure,  
for lo, his doom is sure;  
One little word shall fell him.

Click here to read the original article at .

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## 7 Extreme Teachings of the Modern Church

Almost everywhere I go, believers are attempting to apply the kingdom message to influence the cultural mountains, which are described as the major areas we need to influence in order to transform society: politics, economics, education, family, religion, arts/entertainment and science.

Consequently, with every move of God there are always extremes and/or misunderstandings. Of course, I write this in the context of my own local-church-centered lens, in which I advocate for the supremacy of Christ manifest through the centrality of the local church in each city. (Ephesians 1:22-23 calls the church the “fullness of him who fills everything in every way” [NIV].)

The following are some of the extremes used today in the teaching of the kingdom of God:

**1. The marketplace believer is a king while the church leader is merely a priest.** There have been many marketplace believers who have separated the priestly ministry of Christ from His kingly ministry into two halves: The kings are the marketplace

leaders, and the priests are the full-time church leaders (for example, pastors). One of the outcomes of this teaching is to elevate the marketplace leader over the local church pastor since a king has more authority on the earth than a priest. This teaching also causes the focus of each role to be dualistic; the priest should focus on spiritual things and the king on earthly things.

I totally disagree with this bifurcation, since all believers are called priests in 1 Peter 2:9; all are called to be kings and priests according to Revelation 1:6 (or a kingdom of priests); and all are called to reign as kings in the Amplified Version of Romans 5:17. Furthermore, all marketplace leaders should be spiritual and led by the Spirit, and all full-time church leaders should exercise authority on the earth as kings in order to manifest His kingdom on earth.

**2. The true church is in the religion mountain.** I already dealt with this in a previous article, "Four Different Views Regarding the Church and Cultural Mountains." However, in my opinion, the body of Christ is the temple of the mountain of the Lord that is above every other cultural mountain (Is. 2:2; Mic. 4:1) and as the representative of the kingdom of God is called to transform every other cultural mountain as part of the cultural mandate (Gen. 1:28; Matt. 28:19).

Many teach that the church is just one of the seven cultural mountains (part of the religion mountain), which then puts all believers in the same category as the Mormons, Buddhists and Muslims!

**3. The believer only focuses on the marketplace and jettisons the church.** Some leaders have been so turned off by the nuclear church religious straitjacket that they have gone to the other extreme and committed themselves to improving the quality of life of their communities. As "kings," they believe the whole earth is their parish, and their businesses become the center and sole focus that eventually disconnects them

from their local churches.

I have found that many marketplace people who do not have a strong connection to a local church lose their center of gravity and experience huge family problems. Businesspeople need a local-church-based overseer to make sure they stay on track in every area of their lives.

**4. The pastor/church only focuses on the community and jettisons the Great Commission.** In the late 1800s, church leaders like Walter Rauschenbusch focused so much on the marketplace aspect of the kingdom of God that their message devolved into a humanistic social gospel of works.

The clear focus of the New Testament is on inner transformation that eventually leads to systemic transformation. The Old Testament is the primary blueprint for the moral and civic laws needed to disciple a nation, which goes alongside the New Testament teaching that a person needs to be born again in the heart in order to see the kingdom (John 3:1-8). The Gospels and epistles clearly teach that only transformed believers can transform culture. God has to work in us before He can work through us for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13).

Hence, it is a huge mistake whenever we go to an extreme and focus only on systemic political and economic transformation to the exclusion of winning souls, making disciples and true inward spirituality. If we neglect the latter for the sake of the former, our message will eventually devolve into liberal humanistic dribble bereft of the power and presence of God.

**5. The marketplace leader considers their business their local church.** I have heard that several marketplace leaders in the past stopped attending their local churches because, as “kings,” their businesses were their local churches, which also justified their practice of tithing into their own businesses.

There are some extreme situations (for example, China and Iran) in which it is illegal to plant a local church and in which the greatest way to spread the gospel is for a businessperson to have Bible studies and services in the context of their business so they won't get closed down. However, these marketplace leaders have a special grace to have a dual function because of their extraordinary situation; they also have a fully functional church in which they win souls, make disciples and send believers to start other similar businesses and/or house churches.

In the USA, there is presently no reason for a businessperson to call Bible studies in their office a church since most times it is not fully functional and doesn't reflect a family of families from the cradle to the grave like the typical local church should mimic (1 Tim. 5:1-8).

**6. The progress of the gospel is only gauged by political progress.** The biggest mistake of the Christian Right since the 1980s has been to focus only on politics and elections. Hence, while we won many elections, we lost the broader culture. Politics and public policy initiatives are only one of the several cultural mountains the church needs to influence. Even though I believe the Bible teaches that we should endeavor to see institutional conversion and not just individual conversion, mere changes in the law are not enough if we don't win over the hearts and minds of people. Revival and spiritual awakening without systemic change will only have temporary effects.

Conversely, reformation without spiritual awakening makes us no different than the Muslims who believe the sign of national conversion to Islam is when a people group adopts Shariah law. The gospel drills down much deeper than politics and systemic change; the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and only the gospel can deal with both original sin and bring corporate transformation, per Isaiah 61:1-4, where the individuals who hear the message are the same ones who eventually rebuild the

ancient ruins and restore whole cities.

**7. Ecclesial titles are given to marketplace leaders.** Although I am a great proponent of the fivefold ministry function (Eph. 4:11) in the marketplace (for example, Daniel the prophet was a politician not a priest), I do not think it wise to bestow upon a marketplace leader a title used in the New Testament for church leaders. This is different than laying hands upon them and commissioning them as apostles of government or prophets of economics, which is an adjective describing a function.

Not only is there no New Testament instance of a marketplace leader being given that title in the church, but it is also silly to think that a governor of a state or mayor of a city (and other high-level marketplace leaders) need an ecclesial title to be more effective in the marketplace. Those titles would, in fact, hinder them in the context of a culture where it is more wise to think biblically but speak secularly. (It is also a hindrance to use those titles in most churches!)

I know that most, if not all, of the original 12 apostles were all marketplace leaders, but they were not given the title of *apostle* until they left their businesses and functioned in the church realm. Peter said it was not right for them to focus on anything else but prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:2-4).

**Joseph Mattera** *is overseeing bishop of Resurrection Church, Christ Covenant Coalition, in Brooklyn, N.Y.*

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# 7 More Ways Husbands and Wives Injure Each Other Without Even Knowing It

I recently wrote two blog posts, “7 Ways a Wife Injures a Husband Without Even Knowing It” and “7 Ways a Husband Injures a Wife Without Even Knowing It.” These two posts have quickly become the most-read blog posts in my blogging career.

I received lots of feedback. Numerous sites reposted them. I made a new friend when Stronger Marriages shared them. I can see Dave Willis and I becoming friends and working together in the future.

*Charisma* suggested I add more ways husbands and wives injure each other, based on the two post’s feedback.

So, here are seven more ways husbands and wives injure each other:

**1. Sarcasm.** In my original post, I wrote it with some sarcasm, explaining it was easier that way to address a more difficult subject. I still think it was easier, but it wasn’t received well by everyone. A few very vocal people were offended, so I edited that version. It reminded me, though, why I wrote the post. We sometimes unknowingly hurt one another in the way we approach an issue. That certainly was not my intent. Attempting humor isn’t funny if it’s only funny to you but actually hurts another. (And I also learned that some people need to learn how to better offer constructive criticism.)

**2. Comparison.** I learned that some were offended that they were grouped into a general post, rather than making one post for husbands and wives combined. I get that. We do generalizations all the time, though. Conservatives, liberals and moderates. Introverts and extroverts. At the same time, I

understand that no one is just like someone else. We are all unique—but equally true, in many ways we are also alike. We all have similar needs and desires. Still, it did remind me of a way we injure our spouse and so the point is well taken. We should be careful not to compare our spouse to others—especially in a negative way. They are unique individuals.

**3. Ignoring.** Some commented they feel ignored in the marriage. It could be the response to an argument or the boredom in a relationship or simply refusing to actively listen. But when a spouse pretends the other spouse isn't even in the room—or makes the other spouse feel as if that's the case—it hurts.

**4. Devaluing the relationship.** Some spouses feel they are more serious about making the marriage work than their spouse. Not taking the relationship seriously allows holes to develop and injures the other spouse. And a spouse knows when we aren't placing a high enough value on the marriage.

**5. Lack of contentment.** Numerous people indicated they were tired of their spouse never being satisfied in the marriage. It feels to them like the discontentment is directed toward them. In the relationship—in life, with social status, with finances—when one spouse is never satisfied, even when the dissatisfied spouse doesn't intentionally or knowingly blame the other, it injures. Deeply.

**6. Putting others first.** Some spouses feel forgotten or neglected. When everyone else gets the best of a spouse's time and the family gets the leftovers, it injures the relationship and the heart of the neglected ones.

**7. Ignoring a spouse's needs.** Several spouses noted they were hurt most when their spouse didn't realize how something was so important to them. It could be as simple as closing the cabinet doors, which may seem like a frivolous request to one spouse but to another, it drives them crazy. When we act like

it doesn't matter or isn't "that big of a deal," we injure the one to whom it is a big deal. (Now, granted, everything can't be a big deal, or nothing really is a big deal, but we should value the other person enough to care about the things they care about, and when it's easy enough to do, why not comply?)

By the way, the last example is one from my own marriage. It doesn't matter to me that a cabinet door is slightly ajar. It bothers my wife greatly. I can clearly see that cabinet doors were designed to close. So, knowing it matters to her—I close them. Easy enough.

For more complicated issues, it requires better communication, mutual understanding and a willingness to humble ourselves in the relationship. When two spouses are doing this—and yes, it takes two—I am convinced that any marriage can be a great marriage.

Sadly, in my experience, many people think they are doing that, but they are really only expecting one spouse to do all the humbling of themselves. If the other spouse would only see and do things their way, they think, things would be good in the marriage. That doesn't work, however. It takes two people, both willing to collaborate and compromise toward a greater reality of the two unique individuals becoming one.

Let me close by sharing a couple of general thoughts. First, I'm trying to help marriages. I realize all of these—maybe none of these—apply to your marriage. Some marriages are in serious trouble, and these posts can't help at the stage where you are at right now. You may need professional counseling, and I strongly encourage you to get help if needed.

Some have dismissed these as too elementary. I understand that too. Although, I must say, some of the replies were extremely harsh and unkind in the way they expressed themselves. I seriously couldn't help but wonder if that type response is occurring in the marriage if there is a wounded spouse and the

spouse doing the injuring is totally unaware of the hurt they are causing. (Which is why I wrote the posts.)

No post can be an answer for everyone. I'm grateful, forever, for the numbers who have been positively impacted by them. I'm overwhelmed by your responses. Thank you.

Now help other marriages (and be kind in your reply). What are other ways husbands and wives injure each other without even knowing it?

**Ron Edmondson** is a church planter and pastor with a heart for strategy, leadership and marketing, especially geared toward developing churches and growing and improving the kingdom of God.

*For the original article, visit .*

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## **Hillsong's 'Alive' Hits No. 1 on 'Billboard' Charts for Third Week**

Six months ago, the world had never heard of Hillsong Young & Free, yet Hillsong Church's new **worship** sound is now on top of the world, with its first single, "Alive," hitting No. 1 on *Billboard's* "Hot AC" chart for the third week running.

While Hillsong's music is played and sung in churches globally, the new youth sound of Hillsong Young & Free was a bold new direction and a dramatic shift from what people knew and loved.

Between "Alive" and "Back To Life," the first album from

Hillsong Young & Free has been at the top of the TRAA/TCM chart in Australia for 18 weeks, and the *Billboard* "Hot AC" success of "Alive" has confirmed the album's global status.

"Our first album is a message and a movement," says youth pastor Laura Toggs. "Our songs are the expression of our love for Jesus Christ, straight out of the heart of our youth ministry here at **Hillsong Church.**"

However, Toggs says the group was genuinely humbled by the success and grateful to everyone who has supported the new team.

"We really wanted to make sure that we captured the sound of our current youth generation," she says. "The best part about this is that these songs seem to have transcended age, culture, language and even denominational boundaries.

"Our feedback about 'Alive' is that it enables people to celebrate life and freedom that can only be found through faith in Jesus Christ."

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## You Need the One Who Knows Your Struggle

I may lose all credibility when I tell you this, but my son has talked me into watching a few *Dr. Who* episodes. It's mostly ridiculous science fiction, which is why I scoffed for a long time, but the Doctor is quirky and appealing. Then I found out he he had secret pain, having lost his entire race, including his family. Now I see him as a rich character and try to ignore the other elements of the story, like a phone booth spaceship and giant alien wasps.

So I was sitting on the couch between my two menfolk, and I said, "I'm going to ask you a serious question, and you have to respond because it's my birthday. Why is it that all of the best characters have experienced deep suffering?"

At that point, Caleb thought he should call his AP English teacher, who would actually care about such things.

So I'll ask you, because I can't see your eyes roll if you think I'm goofy.

Really, don't we love the character who, every once in a while, has eyes that cloud over with a memory hard to bear? The character who can say, "I know"?

We need someone who gets what we're going through.

It's why we love Jesus.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses" (Heb. 4:15, NIV).

Jesus knows about struggle.

He knows.

It's the best of every story, the hero who acts as much out of his knowledge of pain and struggle as he does out of any quality of character he might have. He can help because he's been there.

Trust your story to the One with the shadow of suffering in his eyes.

**Christy Fitzwater** *is the author of A Study of Psalm 25: Seven Actions to Take When Life Gets Hard. She is a blogger, pastor's wife and mom of two teenagers and resides in Montana. Visit for more information about her ministry.*

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# Does Sex Always Sell?

Does sex always sell? Does obscene, profane language? Do moviegoers in America and overseas prefer gritty, edgy movies that attack traditional religious, moral values?

These are some of the questions that Dr. Ted Baehr, founder and publisher of Movieguide: The Family Guide to Movies and Entertainment, will answer Friday night at the 22nd annual faith and values awards gala when he presents highlights from Movieguide's 2014 "Report to the Entertainment Industry" before a crowded room of Hollywood executives leaders and other opinion leaders.

The gala will take place Friday night at the Universal Hilton Hotel, right next to Universal Studios in the heart of Hollywood.

Each year, Dr. Baehr, a speaker on the effects of the media on children, and his Movieguide staff conducts a comprehensive financial analysis of the kinds of content that moviegoers seem to favor at the box office and on home video.

All the major movies released by Hollywood during the previous year are examined and their box office and home video earnings compared.

Dr. Baehr presents highlights of the annual report at the gala, and the full report is made available to Hollywood executives and the public after the awards.

The gala also hands out awards to the best movies for families, the best movies for mature audiences, the most

inspiring movie and television program, the most inspiring performances in movies and television, and the best, most conservative movie and TV program. More than \$300,000 in prizes will be presented as well.

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# Justin Bieber Seeks Spiritual Cleansing, Baptism in New York

Justin Bieber, who has found himself in legal troubles multiple times in the last few weeks, sought spiritual help Saturday night.

According to the *New York Post*'s Page Six, the pop star was on the hunt for a private pool in Manhattan so he could get baptized with Hillsong NYC. Bieber was reportedly in New York Saturday for *Maxim* magazine's Super Bowl party.

"Justin and his team spent time on Saturday searching for a place with a pool where they could conduct a baptism for him, a cleansing ritual, with the Hillsong Church. But they couldn't find a place in time," a source told Page Six.

Another source said, "Justin is serious about his Christian faith, and after recent events, he needed to take a pause."

The megachurch's pastor, Carl Lentz, is a friend of Bieber, to whom Bieber tweeted, "Amazing sermon at church this morning. Love you man. I broke down today," after attending a service in September.

The 19-year-old entertainer was arrested Jan. 23 in Miami Beach on charges of driving under the influence, resisting

arrest and driving with an expired license. He could face six months in jail if convicted.

The Canadian was also charged last week with assaulting a limousine driver in Toronto in December. An assault conviction in Canada carries a maximum sentence of five years.