

# Determine to Be Determined

☒ Determination will take you where you want to go. High achievers are people who hold onto their goals and their determination. They have learned to overcome discouragement, doubt and other obstacles.

Florence Nightingale spent her life determined to upgrade hospital standards. She would transform a hospital from a “place to die” to a “place of healing and renewed hope.” Although she experienced her own physical sickness and limitations during her adult years, she never quit. Nightingale launched a medical revolution from her bed and lived to the ripe age of 90. Someone once said, “All things are difficult before they become easy.” Nightingale pressed through every difficult place with determination. The world is better today because she was determined in her efforts.

What area do you need to press through with great determination? Hold onto your goal and go forward. Let your determination be used to change the world into a better place!

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# Faith vs. Sleep: The Battle for My Time

☒ Does anyone else ever feel like the main victim of a solid Christian faith is—sleep? Since my high school days I’ve felt that pull between my bed and the habits and activities I want to pursue for my faith. It’s getting worse as I get older—and this is coming from a guy without kids. I don’t know how you dads out there do it.

I suppose this conflict is a natural result of the type of lives men lead these days. We have a lot of different

priorities. We have to work, mainly; so anything else in our lives has to fit into the times before and after work. We usually try to prioritize family time for our after-work hours, but of course that spot has to be shared with home groups, Bible studies, church activities and—if we can manage it—personal time.

That's a lot to cram into the times between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m., which means we push the rest of the things we want to do into that before-work spot. Want to join a men's group? That usually means a brutal 6:30 a.m. or 7 a.m. start time. Want to spend some time in the Word and personal prayer before everyone else gets up? You may have to start even earlier.

With the variety of things in life that clamor for our time, sleep is often the primary victim. We know we need it, and we know it is essential to performing the other items on our schedules well. But—when it comes down to it—sleep time is usually the easiest part of the day for us to sacrifice.

At least that's the way it's always been for me. My responsibilities are split between two jobs, my activities and my marriage. This variety often leads to a direct confrontation between my pillow and my Bible. If I want some time alone with God, it means another half-hour away from the sheets. Sadly, the sheets win out more than I would like.

Time management is one of the most crucial things we have to deal with as men. Balancing activities, work, families, faith and rest is one of the toughest things we have to do. God clearly wants us to prioritize well because the Bible clearly places an importance on all these things. Proverbs frequently mentions the value of hard work, while the Ten Commandments makes no bones about the fact that rest, embodied in the Sabbath, is crucial.

Do you also face this fight between faith and sleep, or am I alone on this one? If so, how do you deal with it?

*This story was first posted in New Man [e-magazine](#).*

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# Media Watchdog Leads Protest of 'Christophobic' Cartoon About Jesus

✘ A Christian media watchdog is protesting a proposed animated TV show about Christ wanting to escape the shadow of His “powerful but apathetic father” and live a regular life in New York City.

*Movieguid*e founder Ted Baehr is seeking 500,000 signatures on an [online petition](#) to stop Comedy Central from pursuing the half-hour program *JC*. According to the network, the show portrays God as more interested in playing video games than listening to His son talk about adjusting to life in the big city. The show is being produced by Reveille, the company behind *The Office*, *Ugly Betty* and *The Biggest Loser*.

“The very concept of this show is blasphemous and Christophobic,” Baehr said in an e-mail to supporters. “Comedy Central wouldn’t develop such a show about Mohammed, the founder of Islam. So, why do they want to develop a show mocking Jesus Christ and Christ’s relationship to the Father, first person of the Holy and undivided Trinity?”

Just weeks before it announced *JC* in early May, Comedy Central opted not to air an image of the Muslim prophet Muhammad in a bear costume on its animated series *South Park* after the network was threatened by an extremist Islamic website. Comedy

Central obscured the character with a black box and bleeped out references to his name.

Baehr is part of a newly formed coalition that on Thursday condemned Comedy Central, which is owned by Viacom, for using a double standard regarding its treatment of Islam and Christianity. Citizens Against Religious Bigotry (CARB) is sending letters to network advertisers urging them to refrain from spending ad dollars on *JC*. On June 17 the coalition will identify which companies agreed not to sponsor the show.

In addition to Baehr, CARB includes Brent Bozell, president of the Media Research Center; James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family and now president of Family Talk; Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America; Family Research Council President Tony Perkins; radio talk show host Michael Medved; and Rabbi Daniel Lapin of the American Alliance of Jews and Christians.

"Why does Comedy Central give such deference to Islam while mocking Christianity," Perkins asked during a conference call Thursday. "Is it because they confuse the civility of Christianity with weakness?"

CARB released a video showing a pattern of offensive portrayals of Christ and God on Comedy Central, most from *South Park*. The video includes clips of Jesus defecating on President George W. Bush and a statue of the Virgin Mary menstruating on the pope.

After announcing *JC* last month, Comedy Central's head of original programming, Kent Alterman, said "comedy in purist form always makes some people uncomfortable." But Baehr called that claim "self-aggrandizing," pointing to *I Love Lucy*, *Up* and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* as examples of "great" comedies that don't blaspheme religion and are not designed to offend.

"Contrary to the opinion of many self-proclaimed pundits, mockery and personal ridicule is not good satire," Baehr said.

“It’s naked propaganda, designed to demonize and stereotype.”

*Movieguide* has launched similar protests of controversial films such as *Hounddog*, which depicted a scene of child rape, and *Antichrist*, which included explicit sexuality and disturbing scenes of mutilation and violence.

“Stopping this program that is so offensive to God is essential to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and letting people know His infinite love and glory,” Baehr said. “Every program or movie that mocks and ridicules Jesus Christ and the gospel breaks God’s heart ... another spear piercing His side.”

According to the AP, many development deals don’t result in a series. The network must first like the scripts enough to produce a test episode, then find that strong enough to put it on the air.

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## All in Favor

**Because of what Christ did on the cross, we can expect God’s best**

All believers want to experience God’s unmerited favor. We all want to enjoy God’s best and richest blessings. We want His provision, health and power flowing mightily in our lives. All these blessings are wrapped up in God’s grace. When His unmerited favor is on our side, nothing can stand against us. But if we can’t earn or deserve it, how can we be confident that we have His unmerited favor?

Our righteousness in Christ is our right to God’s unmerited favor. At Golgotha, the sinless Man became sin so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him. We can ask God

for big things because we've been made the righteousness of God through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

Many believers associate righteousness with a list of things they have to do. If they fulfill this list, they feel "righteous"; when they fail in terms of their actions or behavior, they feel "unrighteous." This is the wrong understanding of righteousness.

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For He [God] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (NKJV). We aren't righteous because we do right. We became righteous because of what Jesus did for us at the cross. Christianity isn't about doing right to become righteous. It's all about believing right in Jesus to become righteous. Attempting to be justified by good works and trying to keep the Ten Commandments to become righteous is to negate the cross of Christ. It's as good as saying: "The cross is not enough to justify me. I need to depend on my good works to make myself clean and righteous before God."

The grace of God is the unearned, undeserved and unmerited favor of God. When God answers you in your most undeserving moment, that is grace. That is His amazing, unmerited favor. At our lowest point, our darkest hour, His light shines through for us and we become a recipient of His unmerited favor. In and of ourselves, we don't deserve anything good. But because we are in Christ and in His righteousness, God will not withhold any blessing from our lives today. Our part isn't to struggle in our own works and be independent from God, but to focus on receiving all that we need from Him.

I believe the more righteousness-conscious we are, the more of God's unmerited favor we will experience. When the voice of disqualification comes to remind us of all the areas we've fallen short in, that's the time to turn to Jesus and hear His voice, which qualifies us. Because of what Jesus did on the

cross, we can expect good things to happen to us. We can ask God for big things and reach out to the blessed destiny that He has for us and our family members. His righteousness is our right to God's unmerited favor.

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## **Fireproof Producers Say Stakes Are Higher for New Film**

As they shoot the follow up to their surprise hit film, the makers of Christian drama *Fireproof* know that the pressure is on.

Currently being filmed in Albany, Ga., *Courageous* is a bigger effort in every way than the previous church-made movie that was the most successful independent release of any in 2008, grossing more than \$30 million at the box office and credited with saving and strengthening many marriages.

The ensemble drama has more demanding scenes, double the previous \$500,000 budget and higher production standards. And with heightened expectations for the film when it opens in theaters next year, the church's Sherwood Pictures group also has stepped up the focus on an integral part of its productions' prayer.

"We are definitely feeling that the stakes are higher," said *Courageous* producer and co-writer Stephen Kendrick, who scripted the film with his brother, Alex. Both men are on staff at Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, whose earlier inspirational films were *Flywheel* and *Facing the Giants*.

In addition to daily on-set devotions, a 24-hour prayer chain based at the church throughout the seven-week shoot, and regular prayer requests and praise reports shared with more

than 250,000 *Courageous* fans on Facebook, the film has a team devoted to prayer at each location.

Adapting a movie industry tradition of playfully clipping crew members' clothes with wooden pegs—a vital on-set accessory—when they are not aware, the “hostess” team of women marks the pegs with Scripture verses to remind those working on the set that they are being prayed for.

The prayer emphasis flows from the heart of the church, which features a two-story prayer tower outside its main entrance—from which up to 1,000 cards are sent each week to people who have been prayed for—and a prayer room below the pulpit where intercessors meet during each service.

“We don't want to spend two years making a movie that is just a good idea,” said Kendrick, crediting prayer with bringing the fathering theme of *Courageous*, which follows a group of law enforcement officers dealing with challenges in their own families. “The Lord knows what this generation needs to hear and when they need to hear it.”

Members of the church see the success of Sherwood Pictures over the last few years as an answer to their ongoing prayers that their congregation might touch the world from their small corner.

The success of *Fireproof* and the other films has drawn visitors from across the U.S. and even overseas curious to know more about the church that has taken on Hollywood. There have even been commercial coach tours of the city, showing tourists some of the different locations used in the movies.

But “it would be sad to me if all we were known for [was movies],” said Senior Pastor Michael Catt. “Making movies is just a portion of what we do.”

Some of the proceeds from Sherwood films have gone toward church ministries, including the development of an 82-acre sports park for use by the local community.

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# 'Charisma' Unveils Free Mobile News App

☒ To further its mission to serve the Spirit-filled community, *Charisma* magazine has launched a free Charisma News Mobile app, one of the first Christian applications to offer original news articles that inform readers about the work of the Holy Spirit worldwide, and inspire and empower believers to live life in the Spirit.

The Charisma News Mobile app is currently available for download at [app.charismamag.com](http://app.charismamag.com). Readers can also text "Charisma" to 46275 to download the app to their iPhone, iPod Touch, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Mobile or Palm WebOS smart phone.

"For almost 35 years *Charisma* has been more than a magazine; we've been a connective point for various streams within the Spirit-filled community," said *Charisma* Editor Marcus Yoars. "Now we're at an unprecedented crossroads of being able to mesh that unique role with today's technology, and the result is that we're connecting with people anytime, anywhere."

The app is part of *Charisma's* multifaceted initiative to engage new technology to better serve its readers. In May, the magazine unveiled a new design for its print edition, which incorporated new departments and enhanced online content. Its digital editions provide exclusive videos, music, podcasts, photo galleries and more.

"Our team of writers and editors generate excellent content that will be available not only in print but also at our fingertips with this free app," said *Charisma* Founder

and Publisher Steve Strang. "I believe this is only the first step of using the new technology to spread the gospel and tell people about the power of the Holy Spirit."

In addition to making *Charisma's* award-winning content more accessible, the Charisma News Mobile app also will help readers better connect with the magazine's website, which is being expanded and reorganized to serve as a hub for various Spirit-filled audiences.

Along with Bible studies and the latest book, music and movie reviews, mobile phone users also can find J. Lee Grady's hard-hitting Fire in My Bones column, provocative commentary from Harry R. Jackson Jr. and insightful Bible teaching from Joyce Meyer.

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## Crying Wolf on Racism

✘ The controversy surrounding Arizona's new border law is unprecedented. From the White House to girls on the basketball team, we find people voicing their criticism of the legislation.

Many people upset about the law call it "racist" and "xenophobic."

Unfortunately, it seems the real reason for the outcry is a political attempt to change the tables in the 2010 and 2012 elections.

The real game-changer would occur if the largest minority vote, the Hispanic community, falls uncontested into the hands of the Democratic Party. If the Democrats can ramp up the rhetoric

loud enough and long enough, they may very well attract a majority of Hispanic voters for the next two and a half years. If they can keep the controversy going instead of solving the problem, the party will maintain both their Congressional seats and perhaps even the presidency.

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## Home (Land) Schooling

**Why more Christian universities and colleges are branching out with Israel-based programs.**

Why study the Bible in Israel? OK, yes, the answer *is* evident—but it never hurts to hear it stated plainly, as a brochure for one U.S. Christian college put it: “Don’t just read about the Sea of Galilee—visit it!”

Point taken. Nothing beats *going to* the ancient land of Israel to really learn about its history and its people.

Numerous Christian colleges across the U.S. offer opportunities to study in Israel. Each program varies in duration and level of academic detail, but nearly all the schools enable students to pick up valuable course credits while learning within earshot of Jerusalem’s busy streets and beyond.

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# How Health Care Reform Demonstrates This Biblical Principle

☒ *Health sharing plans are applauding an exemption in the federal health bill*

Michael Bristol doesn't have health insurance and he doesn't want it. Thanks to an exemption in the new federal health care bill, the 37-year-old businessman can continue sharing those costs with other Christians.

That's because the bill exempts members of health cost sharing plans from a provision requiring all Americans to purchase coverage by 2014. In Bristol's case, that is significant. Three years ago the Vero Beach, Fla., resident needed expensive brain surgery. After a deductible, his bills were paid by fellow members of Medi-Share, a program of Christian Care Ministries (CCM) in Melbourne, Fla. "It's a blessing," Bristol said. "I feel God has protected His people and His kingdom."

Bristol's family is one of more than 35,000 households participating in the three largest Christian sharing ministries, which collectively have paid more than \$1 billion of medical expenses since the 1990s.

Because the plans are not legally insurance policies, they also won't face measures that will negatively affect insurance companies, said CCM President Robert Baldwin. "I would say about 95 percent of our members have been very relieved and excited they can continue in health sharing ministries," he said.

The requirement that citizens purchase health coverage could prove to be a recruiting tool for these ministries, whose

monthly plans are usually cheaper than traditional insurance, said the Rev. Howard Russell of Christian Healthcare Ministries (CHM) in Barberton, Ohio. In the past, some people have inquired about CHM only to later say they couldn't afford it. Now, they will have no choice if they want to avoid penalties. "We no doubt will be a cost-effective alternative," Russell said.

James Lansberry, vice president of Peoria, Ill.-based Samaritan Ministries International, believes the health bill will allow government subsidies to pay for abortion. He said Christian sharing ministries "will be the only pro-life option left for Christians."

But the most important thing participating in CHM brings to Jodi Swiderek of Madisonville, Tenn., is freedom from the possible financial ruin she and her husband faced in the past. "This has provided an affordable way for us to have health insurance that has brought so much peace to us it's hard to describe," she said. "It is totally a ministry. It's not just taking money and paying health care bills."

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## Brother of Prominent Atheist Makes a Case for Faith



*The brother of famous atheist Christopher Hitchens is a committed Christian who says faith is absolutely reasonable.*

British journalist Peter Hitchens believes faith is reasonable, and that's no small feat. The brother of *God Is Not Great* author Christopher Hitchens embraced atheism as a

teenager and flamboyantly burned his Bible when he was 15.

But at age 30, while in Brussels on vacation, he saw Rogier van der Weyden's 15th century painting *The Last Judgment* and saw himself in its images of sinners headed toward hell. That began a slow journey to his childhood faith. Now part of the Church of England, Hitchens has made it his aim to puncture the "arrogant, self-satisfied superiority of the modern anti-theist."â€

In his newly released memoir, *The Rage Against God*, he challenges three popular atheist arguments: that conflicts fought in the name of religion are always about religion; that it is possible to confidently know right and wrong without acknowledging the existence of God; and that atheist regimes are not truly atheist.â€

He says he can't argue points of faith like a theologian. "What I can do is say, the one thing of which I'm certain is that there is a good, firm, reasonable case for belief in God and in the resurrection, which any thinking human being can, if they wish, accept," he told *Charisma*.

Hitchens debated his brother in Grand Rapids, Mich., in 2008, and found the college-age audience more sympathetic to atheism than he expected. The debate grew heated at times, and though the brothers "aren't friends," Hitchens said their "diplomatic relations are good."â€

A conservative commentator, Hitchens says Christianity is under attack in Britain, pointing to Christian nurses who have been told they can't pray with patients or wear a crucifix to work, and adoption agencies forced to place children with same-sex couples.

Yet he believes religion will experience a revival in Europe, possibly as Western societies lose their economic clout and it becomes harder for people to assume all problems have material solutions. But the beneficiary of that revival could be Islam,

he says, “particularly if Christianity doesn’t fight its corner now.”

“I think it’s one of the paradoxes of the anti-God campaign,” he said. “They devoted a lot of effort into trying to drive Christianity out of the center of public life, and they may just have ... cleared a space for Islam, which will be much more hostile to them and which has absolutely no interest in any of the anti-theist arguments.”

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For *Charisma*’s full interview with Peter Hitchens, visit [hitchens.charismamag.com](http://hitchens.charismamag.com)