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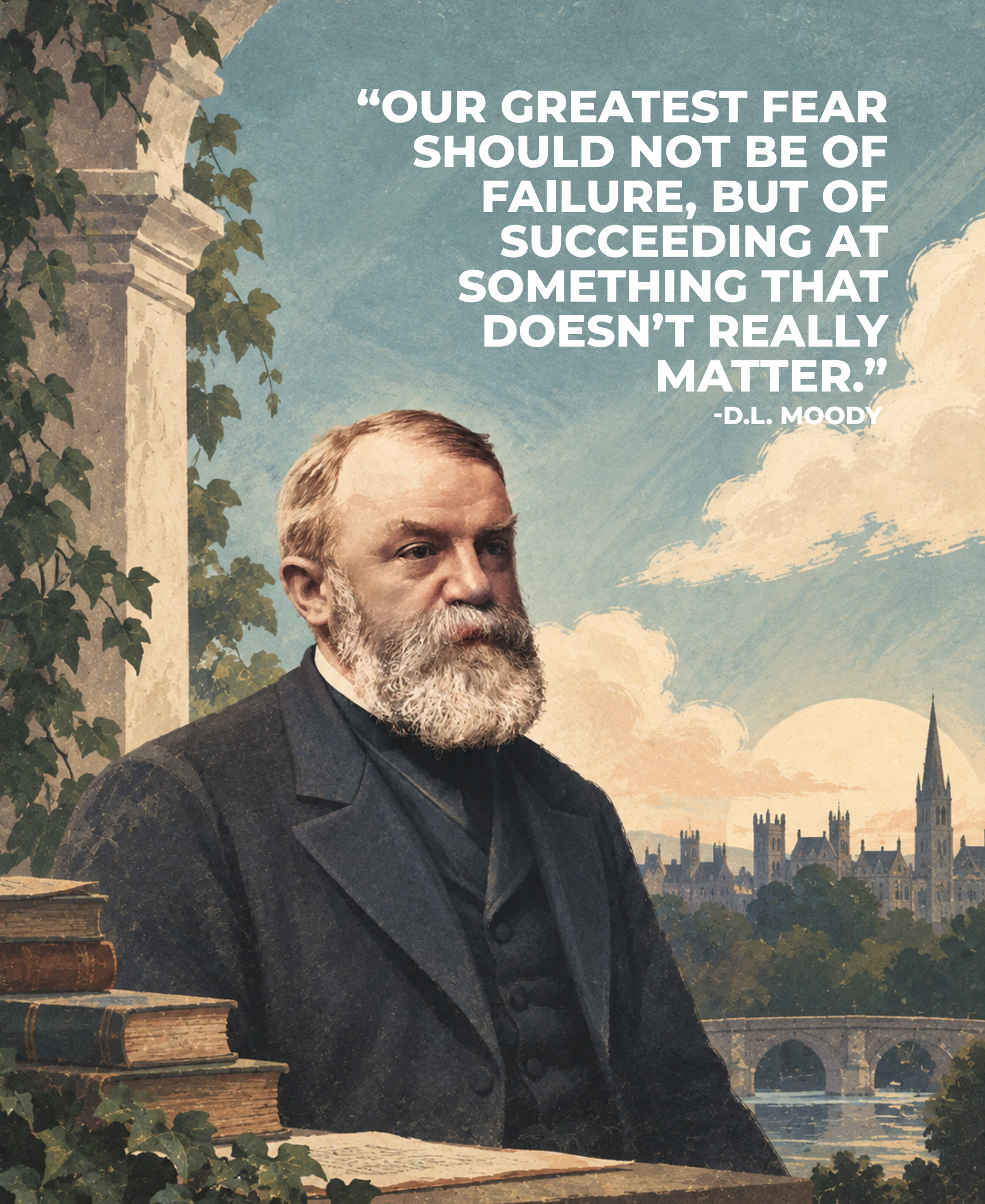
SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2026

EGM TIMES

EXPOSING | ENCOURAGING | EMPOWERING



INFLUENCE


“OUR GREATEST FEAR SHOULD NOT BE OF FAILURE, BUT OF SUCCEEDING AT SOMETHING THAT DOESN’T REALLY MATTER.”
-D.L. MOODY

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President: Evg. Jacob Vilgi Oommen
Associate Editor: Gideon Pingkihan
Content Editor: Effie Ochago
Design: EGM Media

EDITORIAL

I still remember the early years of my ministry. I was fired up to serve God and always on the move to build the Kingdom of God. I was pumped up, excited, and my hands were always full, working on various missions to reach people with the Gospel—until one day, I realized that I was more excited to talk about God than to talk to God.

It became a turning point in my life and ministry. I thought following Jesus in this modern world meant attending church regularly and being immersed in spiritual activities. But later, I realized that God's principle has never changed when it comes to influencing this world with the Gospel. It starts with being influenced by God daily before we can become an influence in this world.

You are simply an instrument in the hands of God, carrying what you receive from Him to the world around you. But we are living in a world where we constantly face countless influences coming our way in attractive forms, and it is easy to fall for them.

In this social media age, influencers are growing in incredible numbers. But in the midst of it all, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we should constantly ask ourselves, "Who is my influencer?"

Let Jesus Christ, the greatest Influencer of all time, be the ultimate influence in your life. As you read through the following pages of this edition, it is our prayer and earnest desire that you will be encouraged to keep Jesus as the greatest influence in your life—not occasionally, but consistently, every single day.



In His Service
Evg. Jacob Vilgi Oommen
President
EGM Times

AFTER THE CROWD IS GONE: WHAT GEN Z MUST DO NEXT?

-Gideon L. Pingkihan

I recently attended Planetshakers Live in Manila. I stood inside an arena with thousands of people gathered for one purpose: to worship Jesus. The lights, the music, the voices, and the atmosphere created a moment I will not easily forget. Young people raised their hands. People sang at the top of their lungs. For several hours, an arena was filled with the name of Jesus. And honestly, it was beautiful. There is something powerful about seeing thousands of people, especially young people, openly worshipping God. In a world that often tells us to be ashamed of our faith, seeing a crowd boldly sing about Jesus is worth celebrating. But when the worship ended, the lights came on, and thousands of people began walking out of the arena, a question came to my mind:

What happens after this? What happens after the music stops? What happens after we return to our homes? What happens when there is no worship band, no stage, no crowd, and no powerful atmosphere? Because the real test of our Christianity does not begin when we enter the arena. It begins when we leave it. This is the challenge I want to give to my generation. Gen Z does not only need another encounter with God. We need to become disciples of Jesus. Do not misunderstand this. We need encounters with God. We need worship. We need gatherings where believers can come together and declare the name of Jesus. What happened in Manila should not be criticized simply because thousands attended. We should celebrate every opportunity for people to hear about Christ and worship Him.

But we must never confuse a powerful experience with a transformed life. You can cry during worship and still refuse to obey God. You can raise your hands and still live with unrepentant sin. You can sing every word of a worship song and still neglect the Bible. You can attend the biggest Christian event and still never pray when you are alone. You can feel God's presence in a crowd but fail to seek Him in private.That is the danger. Jesus Himself asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). That question should shake us. We call Jesus "Lord" when we sing. But is He Lord over our relationships? Is He Lord over our secret life? Is He Lord over what we watch, what we say, what we post, and what we do when nobody is watching?

If Jesus is only Lord during a worship event, then we have reduced Christianity to an experience. But following Jesus is not an event. It is a life of obedience. James 1:22 says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."That verse is especially important for Gen Z. We are surrounded by Christian content. We can watch sermons on YouTube, save Bible verses on Instagram, listen to worship music on Spotify, and share Christian clips on TikTok. We have access to more spiritual content than almost any generation before us.But consuming Christian content does not automatically make us Christians. Knowing verses is not the same as obeying them. Listening to preaching is not the same as applying it.Being inspired is not the same as being transformed. We can attend event after event and still remain spiritually immature if we never allow what we hear to change how we live.

Jesus had crowds too. Thousands followed Him. People came to hear Him preach. They came because of miracles. They came because they wanted something from Him. But Jesus did not stop with the crowd. He made disciples. And there is a difference. The crowd is present for the moment. The disciple follows when it becomes difficult. The crowd can be impressed. The disciple obeys. The crowd can sing. The disciple submits. The crowd can celebrate Jesus. The disciple lives for Jesus. Before Jesus ascended into Heaven, one of His final commands was clear: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." — Mark 16:15

Matthew 28:19–20 says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Jesus did not simply tell His followers to gather.

He told them to go. He told them to teach. He told them to make disciples. That is why my experience at Planetshakers made me think: Thousands of us gathered. Thousands worshipped. Thousands declared the name of Jesus. But after the crowd was gone, how many of us were willing to go? How many will return home and open their Bible? How many will commit to prayer? How many will join a Bible study and remain faithful to discipleship? How many will share the Gospel with a friend? How many will serve in their local church? How many will choose holiness when nobody is watching? How many will make disciples? This is not a criticism of worship gatherings. This is a challenge to what comes after them. A worship event should not be our destination. It should be a sending point. We should not leave saying only, "That was an amazing night." We should leave asking, "Lord, what do You want me to do now?"

John 14:15 says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Love for Jesus is not measured by how loud we sing about Him. It is measured by whether we obey Him. The world does not need another generation of Christians who only know how to attend.It needs a generation that knows how to go. We need young people who know the worship songs, but also know the Scriptures. Young people who can worship in an arena, but can also pray in their bedrooms. Young people who can stand with thousands for Jesus, but can also stand alone for Him. Young people who do not just chase the next spiritual high but pursue a genuine relationship with God. Young people who do not only post about revival but become part of God’s work in reaching others.

So yes, I am thankful that I attended Planetshakers Live in Manila. I am thankful that I witnessed thousands worshipping Jesus. It reminded me that there are still young people hungry for God. But my prayer is that our hunger will not end with one night. That our worship will become obedience. That our encounter will become transformation. That our gathering will become a mission. And that when the music stops, we will still follow Jesus. Because after the crowd is gone, Jesus is still Lord. His Word is still true. His mission is still urgent. And His command has not changed: Go. So Gen Z, the question is not simply: “How many came to worship?” The deeper question is: “After we have worshiped, how many are willing to go?”



WHO IS INFLUENCING YOU?

-Evg. Jacob Vilgi Oommen

If I asked you who the greatest influencer of all time is, what would your answer be? Before you answer, perhaps the first thing that comes to mind is a checklist—a checklist shaped by the standards of the world around us. How many social media followers do they have? How many views do their YouTube videos receive? How many likes do they get on Instagram? How much do they charge per event? What brands do they wear? What car do they drive? These are just a few of the standards our world has created to determine whether someone is worthy of being called an "influencer."

Sadly, we can sometimes carry these same criteria into the Christian world as well. When was the last time you watched the sermon of a pastor whose YouTube video had only ten views? When was the last time you saw an unknown pastor from a small village preaching at a major Christian conference? He preaches a great sermon and is anointed as well, but he doesn't have a social media account or many followers.



This is the sad reality we live in today. God has called each and every one of us to be an influence wherever He has placed us in life. But before we can become influencers of the Gospel, we must make sure that we ourselves are being influenced by the right Person. As Christians living in this modern world, one of the most important questions we should ask ourselves every day is, 'Who is influencing me the most?' Many people may influence us, but our greatest and ultimate influence should always be Jesus Christ. Jesus should be the first and greatest influence in our lives, every single day. Notice, I didn't say your pastor, your favorite preacher, worship leader, or podcaster—I said Jesus Christ.

"But before we can become influencers of the Gospel, we must make sure that we ourselves are being influenced by the right Person."

Why Should Jesus Be Your Influencer?

As Christians, our aim should be to become more like Jesus every day, and we can do that only when Jesus is the greatest influence in our lives. Everyone else is human, with limitations, weaknesses, and the capacity to fall into sin.

I have seen Christians become devastated or even begin questioning their faith when a Christian leader they deeply admired fell or failed in their walk with God. Why can the failure of a leader shake someone's faith so deeply? Sometimes, it is because their confidence had gradually become rooted more in the leader than in Jesus Christ.

We are living in a dangerous time when some people who started as Christian leaders, pastors, or worship leaders have gradually turned into something very different. A person may begin with the mission of pointing people to Christ and making disciples of Jesus, but somewhere along the way, the focus can shift. Instead of making disciples of Jesus, they begin making disciples of themselves—and that can ultimately end in disaster.



When this problem began to appear in the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul strongly warned believers against elevating Christian leaders into rival camps and allowing loyalty to human personalities to bring division into the church. Their ultimate allegiance belonged to Jesus Christ. Paul could have easily built a kingdom for himself because of the influence he had among the people he ministered to, but he never did that. Do you know why? Because he had the right Influencer in his life, and that was Jesus Christ alone.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3:4-9 ESV "For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building."

Here we can see a key principle Paul teaches us—one that helps us place our ultimate trust in Jesus Christ rather than in any human leader. Anyone and everyone you see in this world as a Christian influencer is ultimately a fellow worker of God. They are not God; they are servants of God. Their primary mission should be to point people to Christ. If anyone consistently directs people toward themselves instead of Christ, we should recognize it as a serious warning sign and carefully examine their teaching in light of the Word of God.

When Jesus is the greatest Influencer in your life, your desire will not be to draw people to yourself, but to point them toward our Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul himself said, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1, ESV).In other words, follow me only as I follow Christ.

Jesus Christ should be your greatest Influencer because He will never fail you. He is God. You do not need another human being to serve as a spiritual mediator between you and God. Jesus Christ Himself is our mediator, and through Him we have direct access to God. "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5, ESV). Never allow anyone to deceive you into believing that they must become your spiritual mediator. Christian leaders are called to lead people to Christ, not to themselves. In today's Christian world, we see a growing emphasis on having a "spiritual father" or what some call a mentor. Having a mentor is not a bad thing. In fact, godly mentorship can provide wisdom, encouragement, and accountability. But the moment your mentor begins to take the place that belongs to Jesus in your life, the relationship becomes dangerous.

Sadly, some Christians can become more committed to their spiritual father than they are to Jesus. If you have a spiritual father or mentor, that relationship should keep you accountable and lead you to become more committed to Jesus Christ, not more dependent on another person. Paul demonstrated this kind of relationship when he said, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1, ESV). A true spiritual mentor does not lead people to himself; he continually points them to Christ.

Your mentor can offer wisdom and godly counsel, and Scripture teaches us that there is value in receiving wise counsel (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22). However, your mentor should never control your decisions or become the final authority in your life. Jesus Christ and the Word of God must remain your ultimate authority.

In the same way, your mentor should not dictate what you should preach or teach. You should seek the leading of the Holy Spirit while remaining firmly grounded in Scripture. The Holy Spirit will never lead us contrary to the Word of God.

In this world of countless voices and influences competing for our attention, as Christians, we must take intentional steps to make sure that Jesus remains our greatest influence. We can learn from mature believers, receive godly counsel, and value spiritual mentors, but no human voice should ever become greater than the voice of Christ and His Word in our lives.



Never allow spiritual activities to take priority over your personal time with God and His Word. Don't let the enemy deceive you into thinking that spiritual activities or resources can replace a personal relationship with God. They can encourage and strengthen your faith, but God and His Word should remain the ultimate influence in your life.

Jesus Christ is the greatest Influencer of humanity. During His time on earth, there was no social media, internet, or any of the modern technology we have today. Yet more than two thousand years later, His words continue to transform lives across nations and generations. Bible is the best-selling book in the world. Jesus Christ remains the greatest Influencer of all time. Even today, He stands above everyone else, and the amazing truth is that, as children of God, we have direct access to Him.

Substituting Jesus with anything else as the greatest influence in your life is simply not worth it. As a Christian, do you have a desire to influence this world? Then let Jesus Christ be the ultimate Influencer of your life.

Before You Influence Others: 5 Ways to Be Influenced by Jesus

1.Start Your Day With Prayer : When you wake up, take a few minutes to pray. It doesn't have to be long or systematic; simply take a moment to seek God's face and ask Him to remain your primary influence throughout the day.

2.Start Your Day With God's Word : Take a portion of Scripture and meditate on it. This will give you strength and help you remain rooted in God's Word as you face the many other influences of this world throughout the day.

3.Filter Your Influences : When you face countless influences throughout the day, filter them through the light of God's Word. Intentionally guard yourself against being influenced by the ways of this world.

4.Don't Be Distracted by What Looks Attractive : Discern the goodies the devil brings your way to influence your mind and heart. Don't be distracted by how attractive they may appear; instead, recognize them and resist the goodies of the devil.

5.Stay Consistent : Don't practice the above four steps only occasionally; make them a consistent part of your daily life. Consistency is the key.

THE STORY BEHIND THE SONG "When I Call on Jesus"


Nicole C. Mullen

"When I Call on Jesus" is a powerful gospel song written and performed by American Christian artist Nicole C. Mullen. The song was born out of a difficult period in her life, giving its message of prayer, dependence on God, and hope a deeply personal dimension.

Mullen wrote this song when things were really tough for her. She needed to remember where her help came from. Mullen had to remind herself that her help came from Jesus. So she did not let her problems get the best of her. Mullen turned to Jesus. Made a statement of faith. Mullen knows she can get strength and comfort when she calls on Jesus. Jesus is where Mullen gets her help. She calls on Jesus when she needs it.

The song speaks the truth that faith does not mean to be without hardship. Christians may have times of doubt, pain, and discouragement, but they can still cry out to God in the midst of those things. For Mullen, writing songs became a way to express that reliance and encourage others facing their own struggles.

At its core, "When I Call on Jesus" is about the power of prayer. To call on Jesus is a choice we make to confront ourselves with God, instead of letting our worries and despair have the last word. He reminds us that in the midst of chaos and chaos, no one is ever truly alone. This personal origin is part of what makes the song so relatable. It was not written from a place of having everything figured out, but from the experience of needing God in a difficult season. Its message continues to remind listeners that when human strength reaches its limits, they can still call on Jesus.

Ultimately, "When I Call on Jesus" is both a testimony and an invitation: whatever season we are facing, we can bring it to Christ and trust Him to meet us there.

When Your Life Gets There First

-Dr. Gladys Childs

I once had a woman tell me something about myself I had no idea was true. After church, she told me she had been watching how I treated people when I thought nobody was paying attention. Then she described a moment I had completely forgotten. I had stopped to talk with someone who was hurting and stayed longer than I needed to.

I didn't remember what I said. I didn't know anyone was watching. But she was. That conversation stayed with me. We spend so much energy trying to build influence, make our message count, and get people to notice. Meanwhile, God may be doing His deepest work through a life that isn't trying to be noticed at all.

We are trained to think influence gets constructed. Build the brand, grow the platform, and watch the numbers climb. But I wonder if God measures it differently.



Paul wrote to a young church in Thessalonica after a mob had stormed the house where he was staying and dragged Jason before the city authorities. This was hardly an easy beginning. Yet Paul writes, "And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia" (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, ESV). Look at those verbs: became, and then became again. Nothing there was launched or achieved; God was shaping them.

The Greek word Paul uses for "example" is typos, a word that can mean a mark, impression, pattern, or example. They received the word under affliction, and what they became was the impression that pressure left. Their lives carried the evidence of what God was doing in them.

Then Paul says the strangest part. "For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you... but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything" (1 Thessalonians 1:8, ESV). The verb Paul uses for "sounded forth" carries the idea of something resounding outward, spreading from one place to another.

"We are trained to think influence gets constructed. Build the brand, grow the platform, and watch the numbers climb. But I wonder if God measures it differently."



Moses didn't know at first, though he found out soon enough. The Thessalonians knew because Paul told them what their lives had become. So knowing isn't the problem. The problem begins when we take what Christ has formed in us and start managing it, wondering what people think. Character can survive being seen. It gets complicated when we start caring who notices.

Notice he doesn't say they kept silent. The word sounded out from them, so they spoke plenty. Read the end of verse 8 again. "So that we need not say anything." Somebody's words became unnecessary, and they were Paul's. What these believers had become got there first and made his introduction beside the point.

They had no idea their reputation had outrun the apostle. Centuries earlier, Moses had no idea either. He came down from Sinai after forty days, "and Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God" (Exodus 34:29, ESV). Aaron and the whole camp saw it and backed away, afraid to come near him. The one man who could not see the shining was the man doing the shining.



The good news is that we don't have to manufacture any of it. Christ forms us in the places nobody sees. During scripture reading. An apology offered before we are ready, before we have finished deciding we were wrong. A text to the coworker whose mother died in March, sent in July when the casseroles have stopped coming.

Jesus said it plainly: "You are the light of the world." Then He set a picture beside it, a city on a hill that cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14). He never told us to shine harder. He told us what we already are, observed that nobody lights a lamp to hide it under a basket, and then named the point: people seeing good works and giving glory to the Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). A city does not glow because it wants to be seen. It glows because people are home with the lights on.

The lady at church never knew what that moment had meant to me because, honestly, I had forgotten it. I was simply doing what seemed right in front of me. But she remembered.

Maybe that's more of how the kingdom works than we realize. We may never know who is watching, what they are carrying, or what some small act of faithfulness will leave behind. We don't have to know. We don't have to manage the impression. We keep receiving His Word, let Him form what only He can form, and keep living faithfully. Sometimes our lives get there first.



Dr. Gladys Childs, host of Bare Faith and known as the "Truth Doctor," boldly exposes lies that keep people from God's truth, speaking with authority and real-life grit as a pastor's wife, author, speaker, and former professor. Her new book, Chasing Emptiness, Finding Fullness, invites weary hearts to stop striving for what cannot satisfy and encounter the Spirit's fullness in everyday life.

SPOTLIGHT

The Technology Transforming Bible Study

Bible apps have changed how millions of Christians access, study, and engage with Scripture. What once took the effort of lugging around your physical Bible can now be done in seconds from your smartphone, tablet, or computer. Digital Bible databases are at the heart of Bible apps. Different translations are stored electronically so that users can search for a verse, word, phrase, or topic almost instantly. Instead of skimming pages, readers can type in a reference such as John 3:16 and instantly locate the passage. Today's bible apps do more than just show words. Many have audio Bibles that you can listen to while traveling, exercising, or doing housework. Some apps even have multiple translations, original language tools, dictionaries, commentaries, cross-references, and maps all in one device, where once a whole library of study materials was needed. Cloud technology has also improved the experience: when creating an account, users can often sync their reading plans, bookmarks, notes, and highlights across devices. They can start reading on their phone and then go to their tablet or computer later to continue studying without missing a beat.



Bible applications offer several useful features to help you get the most out of your reading. Search and recommendation functions allow people to instantly find relevant passages dealing with specific topics or themes, such as anxiety, forgiveness, faith, and hope. Moreover, offline access is essential for people who do not have reliable access to the Internet or who have limited access to it. Many Bible apps offer the option to download particular translations or audio Bibles to avoid needing an internet connection.

Technology makes Scripture more accessible to people with varying needs. Adjustable text sizes, audio narration, and assistive features can help people who have trouble reading printed Bibles. Convenience, however, has its problems. Having access to Scripture at the touch of a screen does not mean we engage with it deeply. A tap away from distractions like notifications and social media. Bible apps are thus more than a tour de force. They show how electronic devices can make scripture easier to access, carry and search. It's a tool, though. The deeper question is not how easily we can access the Bible, but whether we are allowing what we read to shape our lives.

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IMPACT OF ONE YES

A Calling That Reached Beyond Borders

DR. LESTER SUMRALL



Dr. Lester Sumrall was a pastor, evangelist, missionary, author, broadcaster, and humanitarian whose life was devoted to reaching people with the Gospel. For more than sixty years, he preached, traveled, wrote, established ministries, used media, and helped those in need. His influence continues through churches, Christian broadcasting, humanitarian work, and ministries that carry on his vision.

Lester Frank Sumrall was born on February 15, 1913, in New Orleans, Louisiana. At seventeen, he became seriously ill with tuberculosis. According to accounts of his life, while near death, he had a vision of a coffin on one side and an open Bible on the other. He understood it as a call to dedicate his life to preaching the Gospel. He recovered and went on to spend approximately sixty-five years in ministry.

Sumrall developed a strong passion for missions at a young age. His travels took him across the world, and he ministered in about 110 countries during his lifetime. He traveled with Howard Carter and spent time with Smith Wigglesworth, two influential figures in the Pentecostal movement. He also wrote more than 130 books, sharing his teachings on faith, the Christian life, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

His ministry was never limited to the pulpit. In 1957, he founded the Lester Sumrall Evangelistic Association, or LeSEA, and expanded his work through publishing, radio, and television. Sumrall understood that many people might never attend a church or crusade, but they could still hear the Gospel through media. He used every available platform to reach people beyond the walls of the church.

One of the most important parts of his ministry was his connection with the Philippines. In the 1950s, Sumrall came to Manila, where his ministry became part of an important chapter in Philippine Christian history. According to the historical records of Cathedral of Praise, events surrounding the widely publicized case of Clarita Villanueva opened doors for large evangelistic meetings. Sumrall, together with Clifton Erickson and Oral Roberts, held crusades at the Sunken Garden near Manila City Hall, where large crowds gathered to hear the Gospel.

In 1954, Sumrall founded Christ Is the Answer, the church that would later become the Cathedral of Praise. He eventually continued his missionary work in other parts of the world, but the church remained. Other leaders carried the ministry forward, and it grew through the years. Today, the Cathedral of Praise remains one of the visible parts of Lester Sumrall's legacy in the Philippines.

Later in his life, Sumrall became deeply concerned about hunger and human suffering. In 1987, he founded Feed The Hungry, with a vision of feeding the hungry, strengthening the Church, and reaching people with the hope of Christ. He believed that ministry should not only address spiritual needs but should also respond to practical suffering.

This reflects the message of James 2:15–16: faith cannot remain only in words when people are in genuine need. The Gospel must be preached, but compassion must also be demonstrated.

Dr. Lester Sumrall died on April 28, 1996, but his influence did not end with his death. His books continue to be read, his teachings continue to be shared, and the ministries connected to his life continue their work. His legacy can still be seen through missions, broadcasting, humanitarian work, and churches—including the Cathedral of Praise in Philippines.

Lester Sumrall's life shows what can happen when a person is willing to use every opportunity for God's work. He preached when there were people to reach. He traveled when there were nations to visit. He used books, radio, and television to take the Gospel farther. And when he saw people suffering, he responded.

He did not limit ministry to one place, one method, or one generation. He simply spent his life reaching people in every way he could—and decades later, that impact continues.

Dr. Sumrall said yes to his God-given calling and finished his race well. Will you run from the call of God, or will you courageously run toward it? Say yes to His purpose for your life, it is eternally worth it.

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

REMEMBERING

Pakistan

Christians in Pakistan continue to suffer serious persecution, including legal discrimination, blasphemy accusations, mob violence, forced conversions and attacks on churches and Christian communities. The Constitution of Pakistan formally guarantees religious freedom, but Christians still face restrictions and insecurity because of discriminatory laws and social hostility.

One of the most serious threats is the country's blasphemy law. Accusations of blasphemy can result in long jail sentences, along with, in some countries, the death penalty. Human rights groups have documented how such accusations can be abused against religious minorities and can provoke violence before a case even comes to trial. Christians accused of blasphemy can face imprisonment, social shunning, and death threats even if the charges are later dropped.

Christian communities have also been devastated by mob violence. Mobs vandalized Christian homes and set fire to many churches in 2023 following accusations of Quran desecration in Jaranwala. In Sargodha, Lazar Masih, 74, was brutally beaten in 2024 after being accused of desecrating a copy of the Quran and later died of his injuries. The incidents show the danger that can come even from an unproven accusation.



"Christian women and girls face additional vulnerabilities; there are reports of abduction and forced conversion and marriage. "Reports of forced conversions of Christian and Hindu girls in Punjab and Sindh continued throughout 2025, the 2026 USCIRF Annual Report noted.

Persecution is not just for individual believers. Christian communities may be subject to discrimination in employment, education, and access to social opportunities. Churches and Christian neighborhoods may also be subject to intimidation and violence. Authorities have been criticized for not consistently holding perpetrators accountable, leaving a climate of fear.

Notwithstanding these challenges, Pakistani Christians still worship, serve their communities and hold on to their faith. Their experience reminds us that religious freedom is not simply about constitutional guaranties; it is about laws that protect minorities, accountability for violence and the freedom to practice one's faith without fear.

Christians worldwide can respond with prayer for the believers in Pakistan, raising awareness of their plight, and backing organizations that work to protect religious liberty and vulnerable Christian communities.



More Than a Message: Becoming Models

Worth Following

-Gideon L. Pingkihan

I have stood before young people to preach, lead a fellowship, and encourage them to pursue God. I have been in the ministry since I was a teenager. But the longer I serve in ministry, the more one question continues to challenge me: What do they see when the preaching is over? It is one thing to stand behind a pulpit and tell young people to live for Jesus. It is another thing to let them see what following Jesus looks like in everyday life. Because young people are watching. They are watching how we respond when things do not go our way. They are watching how we treat people who disappoint us. They are watching what happens when no one is applauding and when there is nothing to gain. They are listening to our sermons, yes—but they are also reading our lives. And sometimes, what they see can speak louder than what we say.

This generation has no shortage of information. A young person can open a phone and access sermons, Bible studies, podcasts, Christian content, and answers to countless questions within seconds. Information about God has never been more accessible. Yet access to information does not automatically produce faith. Sometimes, what young people are looking for is someone who makes the message believable. Someone worth following.



As someone who has spent years serving in ministry and walking alongside young people, I have come to realize that discipleship is not only about what we teach. It is also about what we model. Whether I am preaching, leading a youth gathering, sitting in a fellowship, praying with someone, or simply having an honest conversation with a young person, my life is communicating something about the faith I claim to believe. That realization is both humbling and convicting.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Those are weighty words. Paul did not merely tell believers to listen to his teaching. He invited them to observe his life. His faith was not confined to his message; it was evident in the way he lived. This is the kind of model our young people need today. Not perfect people. Not Christians who pretend they have never struggled. Not leaders who appear spiritual in public but live differently in private. They need authentic people.

One of the greatest dangers facing the Church is when there is a visible gap between what we proclaim and how we live. We preach grace but refuse to forgive. We speak about love but treat people harshly. We call young people to holiness while quietly tolerating compromise in our own lives. We teach humility but become defensive when corrected. Young people notice these contradictions. And for some, hypocrisy becomes louder than the Gospel they hear. This does not mean that mature Christians must become flawless before we can lead others. If perfection were the requirement, none of us could disciple anyone. Being a godly model does not mean never failing. It means being honest enough to acknowledge when we do.

A mature Christian should also know how to say, "I was wrong. Please forgive me." That, too, is discipleship. When young people see us repent, they learn that following Jesus is not about maintaining a perfect image. It is about continually surrendering ourselves to Christ and allowing Him to transform us. Authentic faith does not hide behind a title, position, or ministry. It walks in the light. Paul told Timothy, "Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Notice that Paul did not only tell him to preach well. Timothy was called to be an example. His words mattered, but so did his conduct. His faith mattered, but so did his love. His ministry was inseparable from his life. That should challenge every mature Christian.

What kind of Christianity are young people learning from us? Are they seeing us remain faithful when life becomes difficult? Are they seeing us serve without needing recognition? Are they seeing humility when we are corrected? Are they seeing love that goes beyond the church service? Are they seeing integrity when no one else is watching?

Because whether we intend to or not, we are teaching through our lives. I have seen that some of the most meaningful moments in ministry do not happen when I am holding a microphone. They happen in conversations after a gathering, in moments of prayer, in listening to someone's struggles, and in simply being present. Programs and events are important, but young people also need relationships. They need to know that faith is not merely something we perform on a platform; it is something we live out with people.

"Being a godly model does not mean never failing. It means being honest enough to acknowledge when we do."

Jesus modeled this perfectly. He did not only teach crowds from a distance. He walked with His disciples. They saw Him pray. They watched Him serve. They witnessed His compassion. They saw His obedience to the Father, even in suffering. His life gave weight to His words. As mature Christians, we must remember that our goal is not to make young people dependent on us. We are not the destination. We are only meant to point them toward Christ. John the Baptist expressed this beautifully when he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Perhaps that is the heart of true spiritual influence.

Not becoming someone famous enough for others to follow, but becoming someone whose life makes others want to follow Jesus. Perhaps young people are not simply looking for more voices telling them what to do. Perhaps they are quietly asking, "Can someone show me what this faith actually looks like?"

May our answer be found not only in our sermons, Bible studies, and social media posts, but in our speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. And may we live so faithfully that if the next generation follows our footsteps, those footsteps will lead them—not to our name, our platform, or our accomplishments—but closer to Jesus.



Gideon Pingkihan is a youth pastor and a writer based in Diffun, Quirino, Philippines. With a heart for biblical discipleship and the next generation, he writes to encourage believers to stand firm in God's truth and live lives that faithfully reflect Christ. He has a passion for preaching God's Word, music ministry, and equipping believers to grow in their faith and live for Christ.

THE BOOK SHELF

In From This Day Forward, Pastors Craig and Amy Groeschel encourage readers to make five commitments for a strong and lasting marriage: Seek God, Fight Fair, Have Fun, Stay Pure, and Never Give Up.

This is an incredible book for anyone who is married or planning to get married. It reveals many of the blind spots couples can face in marriage and addresses them from a biblical point of view. Through practical wisdom and biblical principles, the book encourages couples to put God at the center of their relationship, work through challenges in healthy ways, protect their marriage, and remain committed to one another.

From This Day Forward can bring fresh hope to a struggling marriage while also equipping couples to build a stronger, healthier, and more Christ-centered marriage.

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Godly Influence Beyond the Screens

-Effie Ochago

One of the great blessings of our generation is that technology enables us to reach people we may never meet face-to-face. A single post, video, or message can cross borders in seconds. It's not a bad thing to have a big platform. In fact, it can be a great gift from God and a powerful means for spreading the gospel. If God gives you influence over many people, be a faithful steward of it.

But we should not confuse a large audience with eternal significance. Apart from Christ, all earthly accomplishments, including a huge platform, are vanity. Ecclesiastes 1:2 reminds us, "' Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher... All is vanity. Numbers pass, trends change, public attention waxes and wanes, but the life hidden in Christ has eternal value.

The most influential people in Scripture were known by heaven before the world knew them. God met Moses in the desert. Once David worshiped in lonely fields before he ruled a kingdom. Even Jesus often pulled away from the crowds to spend time with His Father. Public ministry was just the overflow of private fellowship.

God has never measured faithfulness in followers or views. He gauges the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." People can be impressed with a platform, but God is not necessarily impressed. He is delighted with a son or daughter who walks humbly with Him, whether his or her audience is ten or ten million.

This truth frees us. If God decides to expand our reach, we receive it and steward it well. If He tells us to serve in obscurity where few will ever hear, we do it joyfully. Our value was never in the sizes of our platform, but in the one who called us His own.

In the end, nothing we do for God has lasting value if we are not walking in love. Godly love, perhaps the greatest influence a believer can have, expects nothing in return. It gives, it forgives, it serves without any credit. Jesus is our great example. He didn't die for popularity; he died because his very nature is love. But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8).

We are not effective because of how talented we are, but because of how deeply the love of Christ has shaped us. Jesus said in John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Observe: He didn't say people would recognize His disciples by the size of their ministries or the quality of their content. Its characteristic sign is love.

And the apostle Paul makes this beautifully clear in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. We can talk with great eloquence, pray fervently, have amazing spiritual gifts, understand deep mysteries, and even make great sacrifices, but without love, it amounts to nothing.



"Numbers pass, trends change, public attention waxes and wanes, but the life hidden in Christ has eternal value."

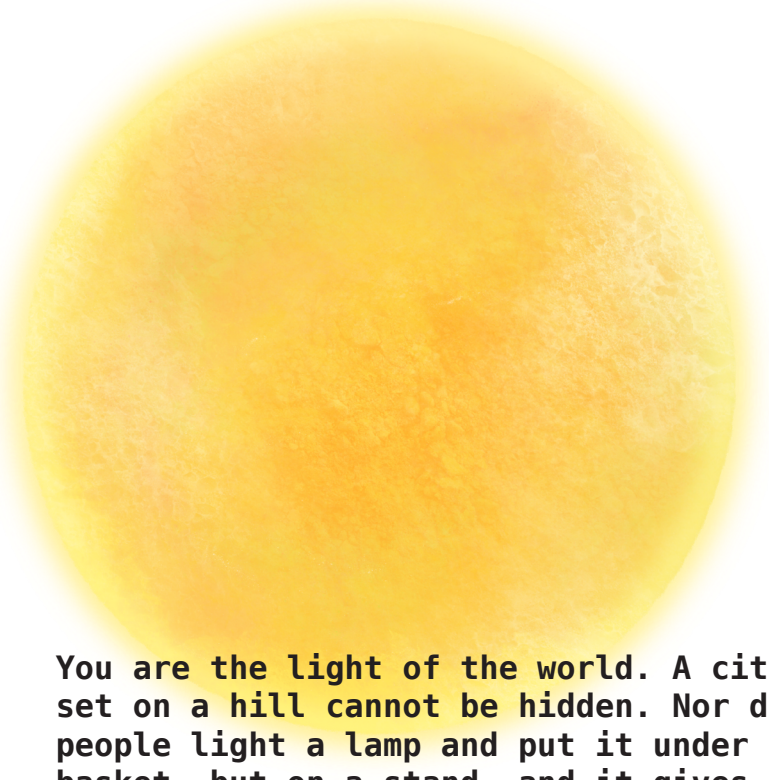
Maybe the best kind of influence is not going viral, but being a daily reflection of Christ. And this is not a screen-limited influence. Our mission field is wherever God has placed us. It can be our workplace, classroom, home, church, neighborhood, or the people we meet every day. How we treat a fellow worker, how we bolster a friend, how we serve our family, how we respond to difficulty can lead people to Christ. You may not have thousands of followers, but you can have lasting influence.

This is where the fruit of the Spirit really shines through. Galatians 5:22-23 tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." In a world which often rewards outrage, self-promotion, and performance, just being a Spirit-filled, decent human being is surprisingly counter-cultural.

All you need to have a positive impact is to radiate the fruit of the Spirit. It may sound surprisingly simple, and that is because the Christian life is more about letting Christ be formed in us than trying to make ourselves look influential. As we abide in Him, His character begins to show itself in our lives. The fruit of the Spirit is not something we bring forth by our own effort. It is produced by the Holy Spirit as we abide in Christ. John 15:5: Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches… apart from me you can do nothing." The power lies in rest, not in striving. That's the beauty of grace. We don't need to do anything to earn God's approval before we can represent Him. We don't need a perfect picture or a polished personality. We keep following Jesus, and as we get His love, we naturally give it to others.



Effie is a writer and editor based in Nairobi, Kenya, with a deep passion for the word of God. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Language and Communication and currently serves as the Content Editor for EGM Times. Dedicated to sharing biblical truth and inspiring others in their faith journey, she uses her writing to uplift and encourage.



You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

– Matxthew 5:14–15

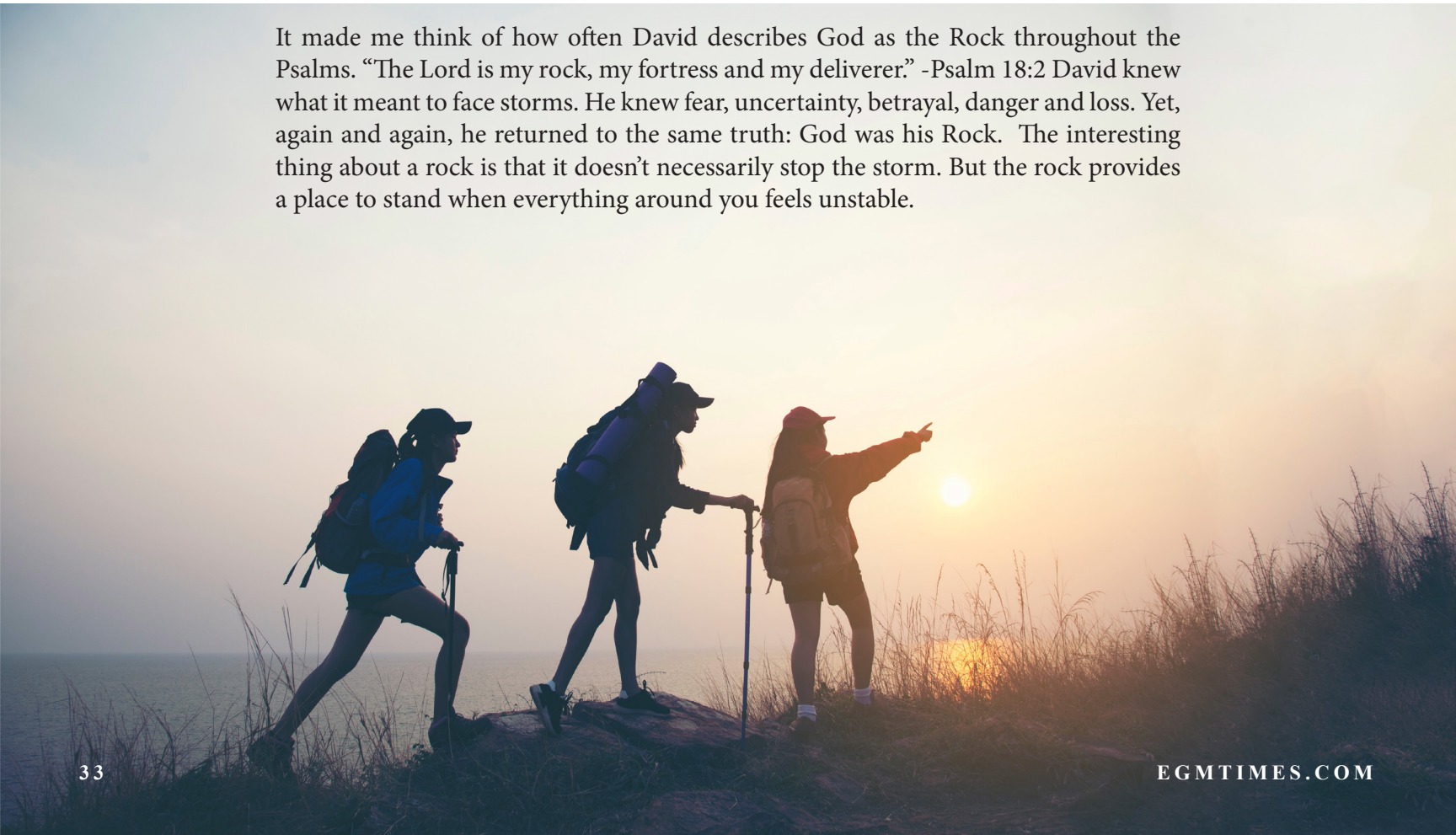
Under the Shadow of the Rock

-Daya Raja

Recently, I went on a hike through a Wildlife Sanctuary with a few of my friends. It had been raining heavily, and after walking for about an hour and a half, we finally reached a large rock formation. The rock looked as though it had been split open, leaving behind a huge cleft. A few steps further, we came across a massive waterfall. The water came crashing down with tremendous force. The sound was overwhelming, and the sheer power of the waterfall was something to behold.

And yet, there was something strangely serene about standing in the cleft of that rock. Although it was still pouring outside, as long as we stayed under the shelter of the rock, it almost felt as though it wasn't raining at all. The waterfall was right there, just a few steps away, but somehow, it did not bother us either.

It made me think of how often David describes God as the Rock throughout the Psalms. "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer." -Psalm 18:2 David knew what it meant to face storms. He knew fear, uncertainty, betrayal, danger and loss. Yet, again and again, he returned to the same truth: God was his Rock. The interesting thing about a rock is that it doesn't necessarily stop the storm. But the rock provides a place to stand when everything around you feels unstable.



That day in the Wild Life Sanctuary reminded me that God's protection does not always mean that He removes the storm from our lives. Sometimes, His protection looks like giving us a place to take refuge within the storm. Perhaps that is what faith often looks like. Just as the rock covering deflected the torrential downpour overhead, God acts as a shelter over our minds and hearts. When the ground underneath the trail became muddy and slick, the rock remained firm beneath our feet.

God's covering is unlike anything else we can find. His protection is unlike anything else we can experience. And the stability He offers is not dependent on how calm our circumstances are. David says: "He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken."- Psalm 62:6 That day, standing beneath that cleft in the rock, I understood this verse a little differently. The storm didn't have to disappear for us to feel safe. We simply needed to know where our shelter was.

In Exodus 33, when Moses asked to see God's glory, God told him that no man could see His face and live. So God placed Moses in the cleft of the rock and covered him with His hand as His glory passed by (Exodus 33:22). Centuries later, the hymn writer Augustus Toplady captured this truth in the classic words: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." Through Christ, that cleft is always open. Whatever downpour you might be walking through today, remember that you don't have to fight the storm on your own strength. Step into the shelter, stand firm on the solid foundation, and let God be your refuge.





Daya thinks it's absolutely cool to be known by Jesus. She deeply appreciates nature, art and silence. Her dream is to fall in love with Jesus and humanity every day. Daya can be reached at dayaraja95@gmail.com.

HARD TRUTH

WHEN SERVING REPLACES SITTING: SPIRITUALLY BUSY, SPIRITUALLY EMPTY

-EGM Times Team

For those of us involved in ministry, there is always something to do. A message needs to be prepared. A fellowship needs to be organized. Someone needs encouragement. There are rehearsals, meetings, prayer gatherings, discipleship sessions, outreaches, and responsibilities that seem to multiply faster than the hours available to us. We move from one spiritual activity to another, often believing that being constantly occupied with ministry means we are spiritually healthy.

But a full schedule does not always mean a full soul. It is possible to be surrounded by the things of God and still feel distant from God Himself. We can sing about Him publicly but rarely worship Him privately. We can prepare messages for others while neglecting to let His Word speak to our own hearts. We can pray for everyone else yet struggle to spend quiet, unhurried time alone with Him.

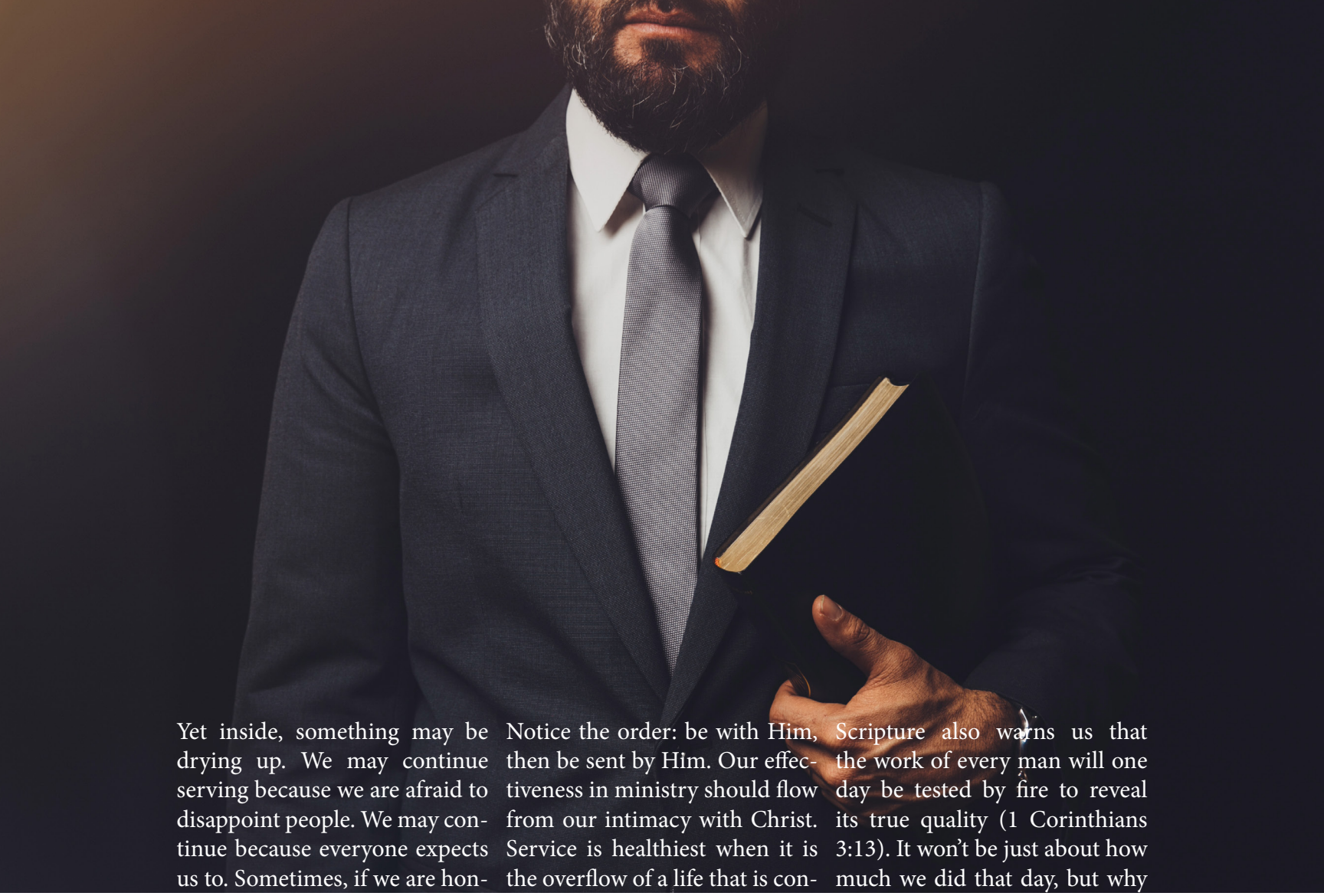


We can be spiritually busy, yet spiritually empty. This is one of the dangers of serving God for a long time. Ministry can become so familiar that we unconsciously begin measuring our spiritual condition by our activity. If we attended every meeting, led the program, preached the message, completed the task, and showed up whenever we were needed, we may feel that we have done enough.

But activity is not the same as intimacy. Jesus' encounter with Martha and Mary speaks directly to this tension. Martha was serving. There was nothing inherently wrong with what she was doing. In fact, service is good. Ministry requires people who are willing to work, sacrifice, prepare, and carry responsibility. Martha's problem was not that she served. The problem was that in the middle of her service, she became "worried and upset about many things" (Luke 10:41). While Martha was busy doing something for Jesus, Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to Him.

Jesus said that Mary had chosen what was better. This does not mean every Christian should stop serving and sit all day quietly. Rather, it reminds us of a crucial truth: we must never allow our service for Jesus to replace our relationship with Jesus. Jesus gave us a different foundation for fruitful living: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself… neither can you, unless you abide in me" (John 15:4). Before fruitfulness, there must be abiding. Before the public ministry, there must be private communion. Before we pour into others, we must allow God to pour into us.

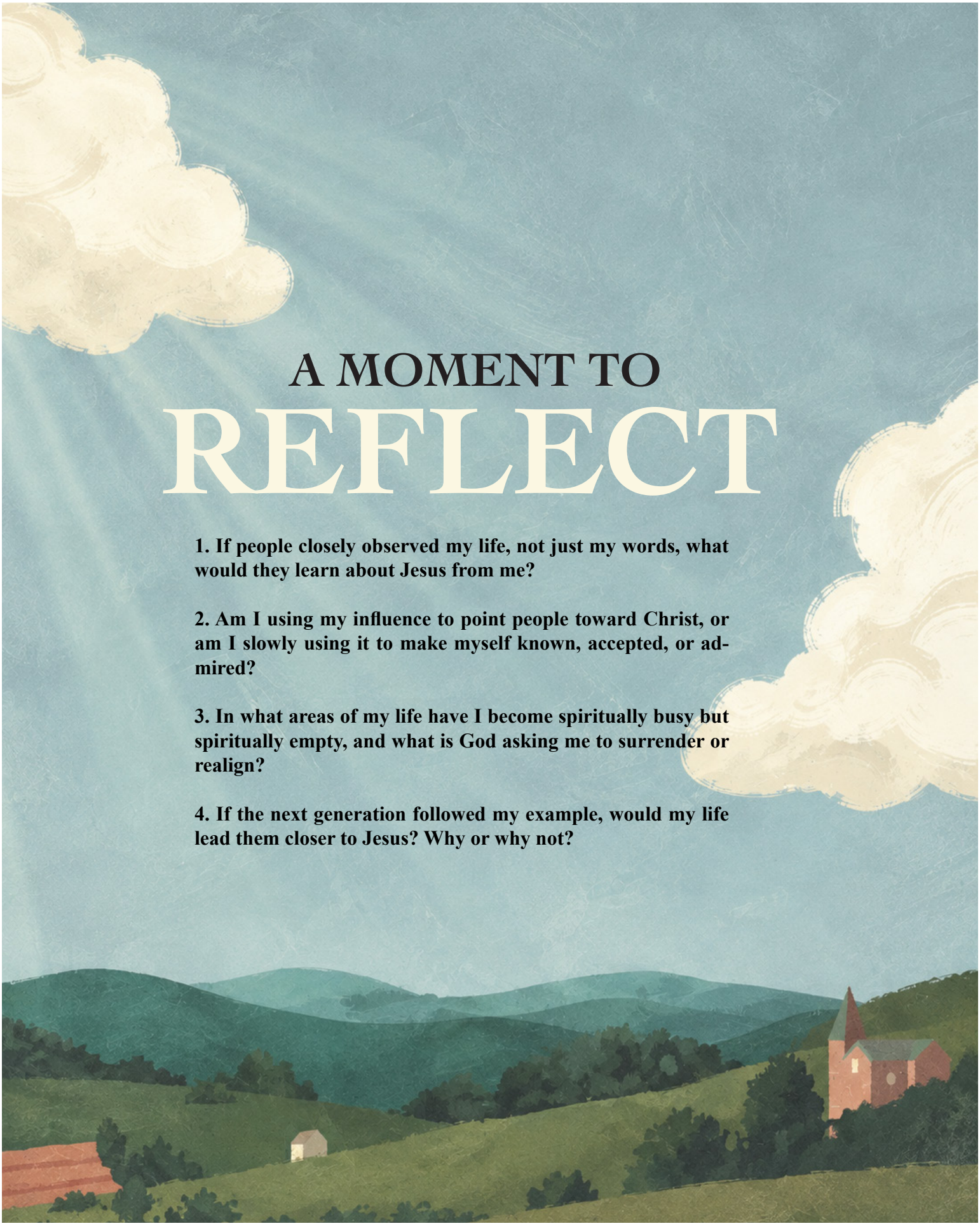
Perhaps one reason spiritual emptiness becomes so dangerous is that it does not always stop us from functioning. We can still preach. We can still sing. We can still lead. We can still organize events and fulfill ministry responsibilities. From the outside, everything may look fruitful.



Yet inside, something may be drying up. We may continue serving because we are afraid to disappoint people. We may continue because everyone expects us to. Sometimes, if we are honest, ministry can even become connected to our sense of identity. We feel valuable because we are needed. We feel important because we have a role. And slowly, without realizing it, doing things for God becomes a substitute for simply being with God. But God is not impressed by our exhaustion if it comes at the expense of our relationship with Him. Jesus did not call His disciples first to build programs, organize activities, or manage ministry. "He appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14).

Notice the order: be with Him, then be sent by Him. Our effectiveness in ministry should flow from our intimacy with Christ. Service is healthiest when it is the overflow of a life that is continually abiding in Him. That may be the invitation many of us need today. Not necessarily another meeting. Not another responsibility. Not another task to complete. Perhaps we need to return to the feet of Jesus. The world may applaud our productivity. People may appreciate our service. Ministry may continue to demand our time and energy. But we must regularly ask ourselves: When was the last time I came to Jesus with nothing to perform, nothing to prepare, and nothing to prove—simply because I wanted to be with Him?

Scripture also warns us that the work of every man will one day be tested by fire to reveal its true quality (1 Corinthians 3:13). It won't be just about how much we did that day, but why we did it, and if it was rooted in Christ. Men may be moved by our works today, but only that which is built upon Him shall stand when it is tried. We were never meant to sustain ministry apart from God's presence. So let us serve faithfully. Let us work diligently. Let us answer the call God has placed upon our lives. But let us never become so busy doing the work of God that we forget the God we are working for. Because a full ministry calendar can never replace a full heart before Him.



A MOMENT TO REFLECT

1. If people closely observed my life, not just my words, what would they learn about Jesus from me?

2. Am I using my influence to point people toward Christ, or am I slowly using it to make myself known, accepted, or admired?

3. In what areas of my life have I become spiritually busy but spiritually empty, and what is God asking me to surrender or realign?

4. If the next generation followed my example, would my life lead them closer to Jesus? Why or why not?

THE TURNING POINT

Receive Salvation

Salvation is a gift of God's grace, not something we earn. We are saved by trusting in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again to give us new life (Ephesians 2:8–9). Through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life with God (John 3:16; Romans 6:23). To respond to Jesus is to repent and believe, to turn away from sin and place our faith in Him.

True faith includes confessing Jesus as both Savior and Lord and surrendering our lives to His authority (Romans 10:9). Salvation is the beginning of a transformed life, where God forgives, renews, and gradually shapes us through the Holy Spirit as we learn to follow Christ daily.

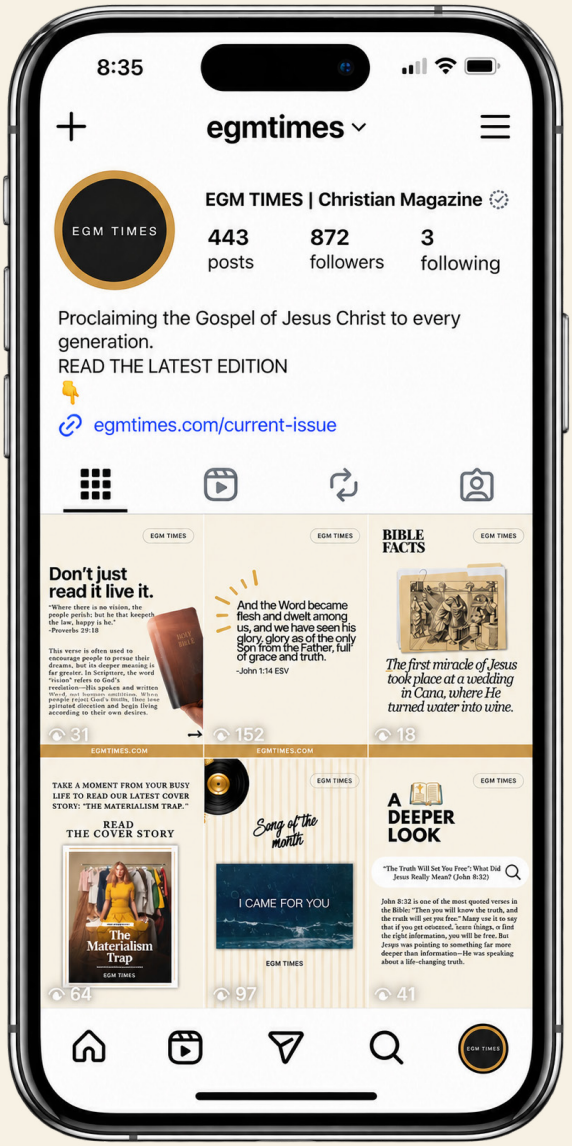
A Prayer of Repentance and Faith

Lord Jesus Christ, I confess that I am a sinner and that I need Your mercy. I turn away from my sins and place my trust in You alone. I believe that You died for my sins and rose again. I receive You as my Savior and submit to You as my Lord. Change my heart, lead my life, and help me follow You. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, tell someone you trust, find a Bible-believing church, and begin walking with others who will help you grow in faith.

-Team EGM Times

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