



Experiencing First-Hand the Challenge Weekend

By Wes Farrow

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12)

During the last weekend of February, I experienced my first-ever Challenge Weekend with a group of men in Phoenix, Arizona. Wow. As our cofounder Bud Rose would say, “Glory!”

When I was young, I committed to read the Bible from start to finish in one year. But it was a 1 Corinthians 13:11 moment. That is to say, I was a child in my immature relationship with scripture. With a sense of duty, not obedience, I completed the task. The learning was substantial, but when I finished my faith was largely unchanged. How could this be?

In my rush to complete my commitment, I had hurried through readings with minimal prayer, reflection, and introspection. I did it alone without discussing and sharing what I had learned with other

Christians. As I grew into spiritual adulthood, I learned how to not only read, but experience scripture through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Challenge Weekend experience cracked the door open to a full life in the power of the Holy Spirit. Parts of the weekend are simply indescribable. The Challenge Weekend was a defining moment in my walk with Jesus. It was a leap toward the light in my formation as a Christian. It elevated my desire to know God’s calling for me in this life to a whole new level. I came down from the mountain challenged and encouraged by men of God, who spoke truth and shined light into my life.

As Jesus says in Revelation 3:20: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock ...” I heard this knock more loudly than ever on the Challenge Weekend. My new brothers in Christ were right there to help me open the door more widely than ever before. Now the work continues through my Small Group and

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INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Encouraging One Another

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor ... a cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9,12)

Encouragement is at the very heart of our mission (see the back panel). It’s why meeting together is so important to WorkLight participants.

We’ve invited our writers this month to share stories and insights into the key role encouragement plays and how the support of others enables them to persevere in being Christ in their workplaces.



We all face moments of darkness and discouragement. We struggle. We grow weary. These moments are like passing clouds obscuring our view of God’s transcendent and transforming power.

The encouragement of our brothers and sisters and their willingness to walk side-by-side is the light of Christ breaking through, helping us see the beauty of the sky again, and our eternal hope. Together, we continue on in our mission.

What they do for us, we do for them. Let us be that light of encouragement so as Christ we all bring honor and glory to our Father.

April Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Look Toward the Light

By Michael Lacognato

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

There is a heightened amount of stress and anxiety that comes with a job transition. In these situations, I always look for the light; but it's important for me not to look alone.

This past November, my company was restructuring my department, and my expertise didn't align with the new direction. As I discussed the organizational shift (one that I supported) with the CEO, I felt a sense of calm come over me that literally traveled from my head to my feet. I looked toward the light and knew I was going to be OK.

The transition period for me was loaded with opportunities to re-evaluate, to network, and also to continue to follow the light. I accepted that my life was in God's hands and not mine. I was merely the music while he was the conductor, and it was time to change the tune.

Two of the first calls I made after my employment situation changed were to my Worklight brothers. I called them because I knew they would be there to provide me with the spiritual perspective that I needed.

My Worklight Small Group has been where we all receive wisdom, support, and the grace of God's love. We are all from different walks of life, but our hearts are all the same.

I learned a lot in my month and a half of transition time. My daily routine was inconsistent, but I always had my faith and the support of my Worklight group. Even in the darkest times, there is always a light from God asking you to follow. Together as WorkLight brothers, we keep our eyes on his light.

Michael Lacognato has worked in a marketing capacity for over 30 years and is active in a variety of volunteering efforts in and around South Bend, Indiana.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, when the clouds of life hide your light, surround me with others to help me carry this burden.

REFLECT

Who at work has a burden that you can help carry by accompanying them?

DISCUSS

Share an experience where you've gone through a job transition and have experienced the support of faith-filled men and women.

Three Keys to Transformative Small Groups

For Small Groups to be effective, members need to work together to be **missional, formational, and relational**. All three are needed.

Learn more at bit.ly/WLgroups

REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

Night to Day

By Greg Aitkens

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

In July, I got a call from my good friend Richard: “Greg, I can’t do this anymore.” The tone of his voice was filled with despair and pain. He sounded weary and exhausted. He was an emergency room nurse on the graveyard shift at two very busy hospitals in Orange County, California. He was at a low point of desperation and did not want to return to work.

I listened intently to his words. He’d been working too many nights back-to-back—often working five or six 12-hour shifts each week. I asked him if he

could take a little time off to regain his equilibrium. He said he could do that.

In prior years, he’d mentioned a desire to move to a small town in northeastern Minnesota, which is where he is from. I encouraged him to look into a move and shared many highlights from a move to a small town that my wife and I had made just a few years ago.

Richard made the move to that small town a few months after our call. We have spoken several times since then. After many years of encouraging him to get off nights, he’s now working day shifts at a reasonable pace.

The other day he called to report that it had warmed up to 9 degrees and his voice was filled with joy! He had become a different person. He thanked me for encouraging him on several fronts. He was delighted to be in a new place with a lake 40 yards from his front door.

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Listening Well

By John Daly

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. (James 1:19)

Jack Sell, a long-time member, recently went to be with the Lord. At our last Chapter meeting we decided to honor him with memories about the impact he had on our lives.

He was particularly remembered for the gift of listening to people’s issues and giving wise counsel when needed. He did not try to fix people, but instead listened with love, concern, and compassion to so many of us who knew him.

I learned that being Christ to others does not mean trying to give them advice to get their problems healed. Instead, I learned from him that being with brothers and listening to them is a big part of the healing itself.

Having others who will listen and walk with you during your struggles is an important part of the healing process. Listening in Small Groups allows God’s grace to flow in love. Jack knew allowing others to be heard and understood was part of the healing they needed.

Being Christ to us meant he would listen when others might not give us the time and opportunity to be heard. He was generous with his time when you just needed someone to listen. What a gift it is to have a Small Group of brothers or sisters who do not judge you, but instead listen to you as Christ does.

Greg Aitkens is a member of the editorial team who lives in Cambria, California, with his wife Ginny. He can be reached at greg.r.aitkens@gmail.com.

PRAY

Father, you care for us with loving care and compassion. Help us have that same care and compassion for those around us.

REFLECT

Who are people around you now, who could really use your encouragement?

DISCUSS

How can you become an even better encourager?

John E. Daly is an attorney and lives in Burnsville, Minnesota, with his wife of 42 years, Peg. They have two married sons and six wonderful grandchildren.

PRAY

Lord, you have called me to serve in many different ways. Holy Spirit, please open my ears to hear what is being spoken and listen with your ears.

REFLECT

When you are in a small group are you truly listening to what is being said or thinking of what you should say next?

DISCUSS

How can I listen better to those in my Small Group?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Thanks for the Trials

By Karl Williams

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. (Hebrews 10:24)

The last year brought an unusual mix of challenges and complications to our industry. Recently there have been more issues than solutions for our company.

We have a leadership team of multiple managers and directors and meet weekly to communicate and solve issues to ensure the company is on track for our 10-year goal. As individuals, we are committed to our company's goals. We are also dedicated to our Christian faith. We're in this together and it makes a big difference.

We spend the first half of our meetings praying and seeking direction from the

Lord. To a person, we trust the Holy Spirit to guide us. During one of these meetings in the middle of a difficult situation, we began our prayer by thanking God for our circumstances.

A coworker began saying, "Thank you, God, for these trials." Each of us then began thanking the Lord for stressful, difficult, or taxing areas. "Thank you for being with me in this complicated customer issue." "Thank you for going before me to have a difficult conversation with a coworker." "Thank you, God, that you are present in our financial challenges."

We realized work is a blessing. The Lord blesses the work of our hands. The calluses are evidence of his gift. In thanking God for our issues, we were challenged to face our troubles together with perseverance and an attitude of gratefulness. "Thank you, God, because you are with us in our suffering, and you are faithful to the cross."

Karl Williams is the vice president of customer development at a family-owned logistics company. Prior to this role, he worked internationally in community development.

PRAY

Thank you, Lord, for the community you have put in my life to celebrate, pray, grow, and accompany each other. Help us build your Kingdom together.

REFLECT

Who is the community God has put in your life? Are you stewarding and fostering those relationships the way the Lord desires?

DISCUSS

What are some examples of community in your life that inspire greater pursuit of the Lord at work? How can you establish a greater community with your coworkers?

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Encouraging One Another

Thanks be to God, his word is abundant in providing us encouragement. For many of life's most difficult moments, the living word provides guidance, support, and love.

As active Christians we are called to do more than know the word, we

are called to share it and spread it. Through WorkLight, we answer a call to transform the marketplace for God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As Challenge Weekends continue across the country, the growth of Small Groups follows closely. New brothers and sisters in Christ are encouraging and supporting each other to draw closer to the Lord. As the hands and feet of this ministry, they go to work with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our new goal at WorkLight is to get 500 mid-career igniters on Challenge Weekends by 2025. These igniters are projected to launch 250 new Small Groups and engage 1,250 brothers and

sisters as active WorkLight participants. As each of these go on to impact their workplaces, the reach climbs to 10,000 professionals becoming aware of this movement of the Holy Spirit.

Where might you have an opportunity to encourage someone to join this movement? What relationships could you initiate, or re-initiate, to glorify God? Is there someone you work with who God wants in your Small Group, Chapter, or upcoming Challenge Weekend?

With you in Christ,

Wes

WorkLight Small Groups

By Paula Lent

When Jesus called the disciples Peter, James, and John, he met them where they were—in the ordinary work of their lives as fishermen, and at a time when they were facing discouragement. Throughout their time together, he listened as they expressed their confusion and met them in their times of doubt and fear. He saw and responded to them exactly as they were and prepared them to spread the good news and to go boldly forward in the Spirit.

As Christians, we can walk with one another in this same way, accompanying each other as we all seek to build the Kingdom of God here on Earth.

WorkLight Small Groups provide a unique opportunity for Christian accompaniment. I recently had the opportunity to speak with several members of South Bend-based men’s Small Groups, who described the life-giving nature of their groups, and the impact that having a space to be vulnerable and known has had on their walks with the Lord.

A key to making Small Groups work is a willingness to share openly about

one’s life and struggles, and thus to open oneself up to support and true accompaniment.

“There’s a level of trust and sharing about our personal lives,” says group member Mike Lacognato. “Everyone’s open. That’s one of the biggest benefits. It’s a huge weight off my shoulders to know that I can be myself and engage with my brothers with total confidence, and that I will be respected, encouraged, and prayed for.”

build camaraderie. “I’ve been blown away by the depth of our conversations and deepening of our friendships. We’ve learned a lot about each other’s families, backgrounds, ideals, and personal struggles,” says Tom Downs. He says that meetings also have been a space where men can seek workplace advice, such as, “Have you guys ever run into this situation where your boss wants you to do something you don’t think is right?”



“It’s a place where we can share about challenges in our workplaces, marriages, and families,” says Randy Raciti, who currently leads four Small Groups. “There’s a level of vulnerability and humility. While it’s nice hearing success stories they don’t always have the penetrating power that a story of humiliation has, which opens you up to the work of the Lord in your life.”

Sharing these types of stories enables participants to connect and get to know one another on a deeper level, and to

“Joining a meeting always brightens my day and sends me off with confidence and excitement about how I want to live that day and the following days,” Tom says. Mike agrees. “Afterwards, I feel refreshed and able to communicate with God on a different level.”

Paula Lent is a member of The Flame editorial team. To learn more and access Small Group support go to bit.ly/WLgroups.



Join our Community of CONTENT CONTRIBUTORS

We welcome stories for both *The Flame* and our Spark Workday Reflections. Go to bit.ly/WLcontentguide for details on contributing.



Catalyst for the Kingdom

By Annie D. Stutley

By definition, a catalyst is a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without undergoing any permanent chemical change. My husband, Bill, considers himself a catalyst.

A C-level executive, Bill isn't a micromanager. He doesn't roll his sleeves up and help his staff in the traditional way, but he does help. Greatly. When a team member is facing a challenge, Bill is a constant catalyst and has a disarming way of allowing them to see their circumstances honestly because he, himself, is relentlessly honest. Whether their underlying issue is pride, fear, or jealousy, he escalates their internal understanding. In a world that doesn't always like to hear the truth, Bill is a rare species. After watching him build leaders from entry-level positions time and again, the relentless catalyst is a blessing.

One time a team member with 10 years of experience in one department opted for a lesser-paid position in another department because she was a single mother with afternoon time commitments that she assumed stood in the way of her advancement. Her innate talents sat on the sideline because of her fear of admitting what she needed in order to develop her career.

After discovering her background, Bill asked her, "What is holding you back?"

Upon learning about her circumstances, he said, "I can work with your reason; you have to tell me if you can get the work done if I create the conditions you need."

Three years later, she was the recipient of one of the highest accolades in the company.

"If I set the conditions for them to do what I know they can do and give them the freedom to make decisions and feel empowered, they will flourish," Bill said after she won the award.

He's a catalyst. Bill tells them what the score needs to be, but he won't score the goal for them. He drives them to determine what tools they need to make the score. His rules are fair, and he does keep an accurate score, but all he does is hand them the hockey stick (or whatever they need) and encourages their will to win.

Just as the catalyst doesn't change itself as it sparks a reaction from a molecule, God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He gave us free will, but he doesn't micromanage how we exercise it freely. The onus is on us to hear him in our hearts, to listen, to believe his truth, and to act upon his Word. As Christians, we know in order

to build a kingdom we must first build a foundation with Christ in our lives. The same is true for those in business: In order to build the business, we must build those with whom we work.

We must be a catalyst for the Kingdom.

Bill DiPaola is the Chief Operating Officer for Ballard Brands, a portfolio of hospitality brands based in Covington, Louisiana. His wife, Annie D. Stutley, contributes to several magazines. Together, they live in New Orleans, Louisiana, with their three children.

...the Challenge Weekend

Continued from page 1

Chapter in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The abundance of encouragement is greater than ever to live life in the Spirit.

Since I started with WorkLight in 2020, God has repeatedly shown me how critical our work is to build his Kingdom in the workplace. After experiencing a Challenge Weekend for myself, I can feel the Holy Spirit stirring more than ever.

Together we've been called to bring the light of Christ into our workplaces. What Bud, Louis Grams, and John Mooney started almost 40 years ago, we are to continue into the next generation and beyond. Our work is just beginning. If you're reading this, then you are part of God's plan. Let us encourage one another forward in the name of Jesus.

Glory!

Wesley Farrow is president of WorkLight. He can be reached at wesley@worklight.org. For more information on Challenge Weekend opportunities, go to worklight.org/events/challenge-weekend/.

NEWS

STORIES OF CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Have you noticed that stories in the Flame and Spark are sharpening their focus on the workplace? Our commitment to shining the light of Christ in the workplace continues, and we encourage you to answer this call with us. If you have a story of the life of Christ at work, please let us know at communications@worklight.org.

IGNITER CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

Since 1983 Challenge Weekends have been at the center of this ministry's call to release the power of the Holy Spirit into the marketplace. Do you remember your first Challenge Weekend? Let us come together to make that defining moment available for the next generation. Mid-career Christian igniters across the country

are waiting. Who might God put on your heart to invite?

CHALLENGE WEEKENDS CHANGE LIVES

Forty-five men gathered in the Arizona mountains to encourage and challenge one another in the name of Jesus. Fifteen of these men were on their first-ever Challenge Weekend. Attendees traveled from near and far including New Mexico, Texas, Idaho, Georgia, Minnesota, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Toward the end of the weekend the youngest among us spoke to the Spirit-led power of this ministry: "Over the weekend I met such a network of strong faithful Christian men. I now have the support I never had before. I am looking forward to connecting with them on a weekly basis. It's been incredible and highly

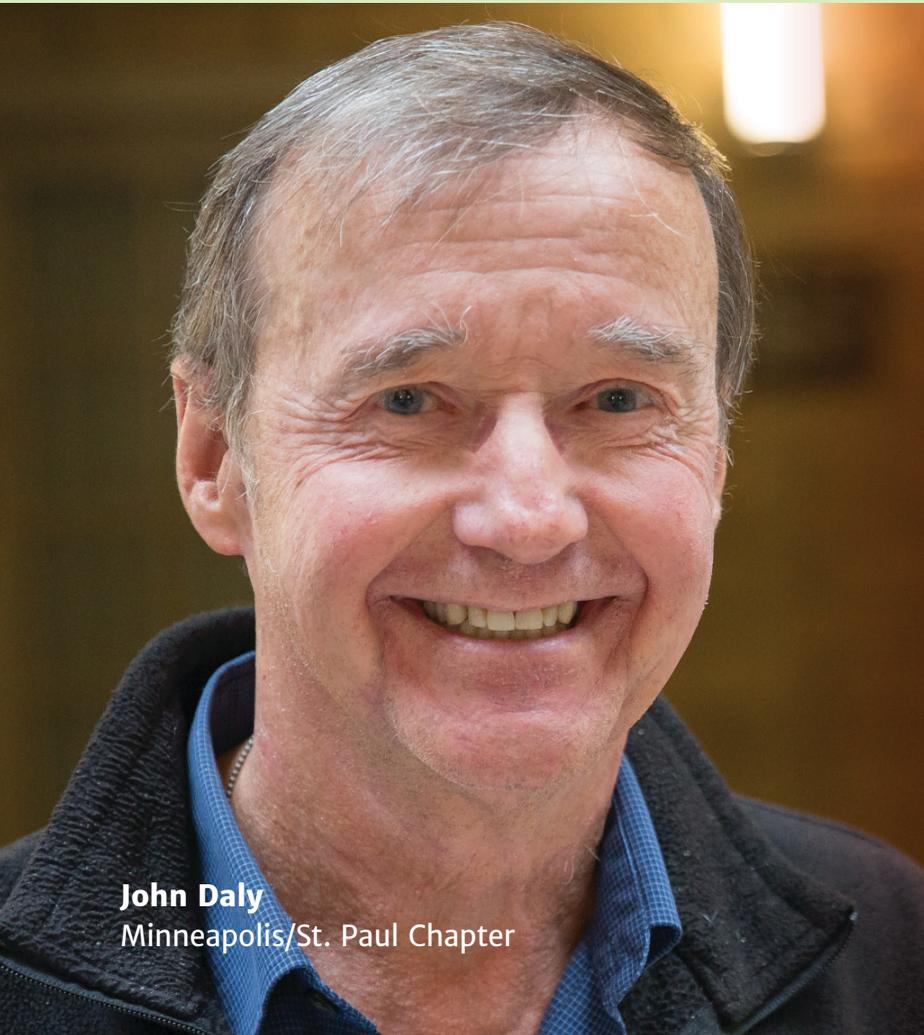
impactful to my life where I am right now at 25 years old."

The first women's Challenge Weekend of the year is just weeks away. Glory! Are you feeling called to join these sisters of Christ just outside of Fresno, California, at the end of April?

Learn more and find your next Challenge Weekend at worklight.org/events.

NATIONAL GROWTH COUNCIL UPDATE

The National Growth Council has begun to meet via Zoom. With coast-to-coast representation, our focus is to steward this ministry toward growth through the Challenge Weekend and the power of the Holy Spirit. Please pray for our work to be fruitful, for the harvest is plentiful.



TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD THE KINGDOM

WorkLight has been an important part of my life for more than 30 years. The ministry has helped shape me as a Christian, husband, father, and attorney serving others. To help ensure WorkLight can continue its important work, I have joined others and included them in my will. I hope you will consider doing the same.

Learn more about legacy giving at
WorkLight.org/KingdomBuilder

John Daly
Minneapolis/St. Paul Chapter

2022

APRIL

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

Galatians 2:20

THE FLAME

WORKLIGHT PRAYER

Father,

Fill us with your Holy Spirit
that we may be made new
and bring the presence of Christ into all we do;
That we may grow in love for you, and for all;
That we may be humble and wise stewards of your creation;
That we may bring your light into our workplaces;
That we may lead all to unity in you;
Through Jesus, our Lord.

Amen

VISION Being Christ in the workplace

MISSION To encourage and equip Christians to be God's presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence

VALUES WorkLight is an ecumenical workplace ministry committed to:

- Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
- Working for our Father, 24/7, 365 days a year
- Building a strong sense of community
- Living life in the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit

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NEWSLETTER STAFF

Managing Editor: Stevan Becker
Editorial Team: Greg Aitkens, Bill Dalgetty, Nancy Huddleston, Paula Lent, Annie Stutley
Design/printing: Andy Grams Design Solutions

For further information about WorkLight call or write:

WorkLight
5775 Wayzata Blvd #700
St Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: (612)-552-5656
info@worklight.org