

# Ever Deeper

By Bryan Beck

Nobody likes to be stuck in a snowbank, especially on the day you're supposed to be proposing.

It was December 23, and Christmas spirit was in the air. The buzz and excitement of friends, family, and coworkers, and my own anticipatory nerves enveloped me. I had gotten permission from my boss to leave early so that I could drive six hours for a surprise marriage proposal.

A wiser man than I might have accounted for the blizzard conditions and a layer of ice on a lonely county road or taken a break to let the storm pass. Let's just say I should have been praying for wisdom.

Several hours later, the tow truck had found me, the storm had abated, and I was back on the road. Should I go home? Give up on the idea of marriage and stay in the safety of a long-distance relationship? Never. The build-up to this day, the outpouring of support, and encouragement of my community was too strong. I had no desire to give up.

Wiser for wear, I white-knuckled the next five hours of driving and was engaged that evening. Our marriage hasn't been easy. There have been difficult family dynamics, health problems, and years of infertility. But none of those are reasons to regret choosing the next step to be with my wife—in fact, they've been reasons to keep going.

It strikes me how differently we (myself included) approach faith. We learn God loves us, that we are sinners in need of saving, and that Jesus saves. We adopt the name Christian. These are all foundational things we need to remind ourselves of. I've heard several relationship programs encourage you to keep "dating your spouse." The question becomes, do we ever move beyond that, to include what the Apostle Paul called "solid food" (1 Corinthians 3:2), or what Jesus might have called becoming more like him (Luke 6:40).

As author Skye Jethani wrote about in his

*Continued on page 6*

## INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

### Perseverance

*For this reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. (2 Peter 1:5-8)*

There is a difference between a follower and an admirer. A follower makes every effort to be what he admires. An admirer is detached and doesn't see what he admires has any real claim on him.

As followers, Christ has a claim on us. When things get tough, we must persevere. It takes effort and persistence to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Things of value take effort. Work is a gift from God to get results for the good of all. Sin and the resulting toil just make work harder; therefore, more effort is needed.



Anything worthwhile takes time, work, and perseverance. We are not alone. God has given us his grace and the WorkLight community to accompany us through the tough times.

Are we giving our best effort? Are we taking advantage of his power and grace to sustain us?

June Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

## Don't Give Up

By Irene Robinson

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)*

When I tell people that I work as an occupational therapist, they usually respond with something like, “Wow, that must be so rewarding!”

It is truly rewarding ... about 20 percent of the time. The other 80 percent involves death, mental illness and addiction, homelessness, patient/family drama, elder abuse and neglect, and patients who resist, refuse care, or do not want to get better.

It takes intentional perseverance to stay in this field, continuing to bring Christ's love and mercy to others. For a long time, however, I internalized the comments made to me by people in pain.

Once, I worked with a man who had recently suffered a traumatic brain injury. TBIs often cause people to lose their social inhibition. Due to unexpected events, I arrived 10 minutes

late to our session. He sat in the middle of the gym and yelled at the top of his lungs—to me and the 20 other people in the gym—that I was an incompetent moron. He demanded to work with another therapist.

Another time, I worked with a man who spent 20 minutes berating me for being a stupid 20-something who had no business working with people who were sick because I had probably never experienced anything hard. (False).

Slowly, I learned to notice the rewarding moments.

A young patient who had suffered a devastating stroke wrote me a card thanking me for serving him. He told me he was praying for wisdom and strength for me in my work with others. That card still hangs on the wall in the rehab unit.

Another patient hugged me as she was about to be discharged and said, “you are family now.”

And once, as the words, “you're incompetent!” continued swirling in my head, a patient, with tears of gratitude, told me that I had made a dramatic difference in his life, and that he owed his recovery to my professionalism and empathy.

I still must fight to recognize the moments of joy and hope. In grasping those moments, I see the Lord walking beside me, encouraging me. Nothing, not even suffering, can destroy the Lord's hope for me and those I serve.

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*Irene Robinson is an occupational therapist working in acute care and inpatient neurorehabilitation. She lives in Portland, Oregon.*

### PRAY

*Lord, you have called us to be true disciples: going into hard situations so we can bring your love and mercy. Please empower us by your spirit to continue in the work you've called us to do.*

### REFLECT

*Are you putting on the armor of God and standing in truths amidst difficulties?*

### DISCUSS

*Do you internalize negative workplace comments?*

# NATIONAL CHALLENGE WEEKEND



Our Annual Conference  
this fall will be a National Challenge Weekend in  
Arizona. It will mark our 40th year as a  
ministry. Details coming soon.

## REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

## Courageously Vulnerable

By David Magill

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)*

This year, I went through a stressful process of job searching. Looking for a new job while currently employed meant taking lunch breaks and sick days in order to do interviews. Now, I'm in a new position at a company I love.

In the final round of interviews, it seemed like everything was going great, until the last minute when the company president asked about my college history. "I don't see a college degree on your resume," he said. "Did you graduate from college?" I froze dead.

I didn't graduate from college and it's something that I've felt to be an Achilles' heel.

Immediately, my mind started to race with ways to respond: perhaps lie, give a half-baked excuse, express untrue intentions about going back to college.

Instead, I chose to be brutally honest. I said, "It's one of my biggest regrets. I basically failed out. Things were going really wrong for me, and I made a lot of bad decisions and because of that I missed an opportunity."

The next day, I was offered the position. Shortly after I started, a manager came up to me and told me that my brutal honesty is what got me hired.

I learned the value of being honest, even about things that might make one appear inferior to other people. The Lord calls us to persevere in righteousness in all situations, letting him take care of us instead of trying to take care of ourselves.

## REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

## When the Rain Came

By Dan Deblasio

*"The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock." (Matthew 7:25)*

In May of 2014, my position was eliminated from the company where I had been employed for eight years. I liked the company and my job. I was 62 years old and expected to retire there. I was asking: "Lord, what should I do next?"

Over the next three years, I sought work with other companies in my area of expertise. I did land some occasional consulting work; however, no permanent positions were offered. Yet, God took good care of us. I continued to pray about landing a new position.

In 2015, my sister-in-law Barbara was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. She died that year and willed her home to my wife, Marilyn. The home needed a lot of work, and I became the full-time project manager until we could sell it. I could see God had other plans during that time. Despite all the twists and turns of life, I was developing a new level of trust in God.

I continued looking for a permanent position. I was blessed to work for two companies during this time until I wasn't able to get benefits anymore. I elected to work for a cable company in our region near Reno, Nevada. The job had great benefits but was tough to do. I had to walk door-to-door selling cable services to residents. It taught me to faithfully persevere each day.

Recently, through a long-standing work relationship, I was just offered a new job. I'm excited about the new company and the people with whom I will be working. This is more proof to me that trusting God in all things works.

*David Magill is a business development manager for a national staffing and recruiting organization.*

## PRAY

*Lord, sometimes you call us to situations where we must vulnerably trust in you. Please give us the courage to always act righteously.*

## REFLECT

*Do you trust the Lord enough to be courageous in your truthfulness and to take risks?*

## DISCUSS

*Where are some opportunities you have to share God's faithfulness and mercy, revealing the Lord of second chances to others?*

*Dan Deblasio has had a long career in high-tech enterprise software sales, channel management, and marketing. He and his wife have been married for 50 years.*

## PRAY

*Thank you Lord for your provision and protection in all times, whether bad or good. Help us to be faithful and trust in you, 24/7.*

## REFLECT

*Where do you muster the strength to persevere when times are really tough? What has prevented you from just giving up?*

## DISCUSS

*How has God provided when you have encountered crushing adversity and severe challenges in your work life? What advice would you give to others?*

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

# Good Troubles

By Bruce Olson

*May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.*  
(2 Thessalonians 3:5)

Some dreams can get you in trouble, but it can be a "good trouble."

The dream I had to open my own business came to fruition after years of working for others. A friend and I started a coffee roasting business and ran it together for five years. I eventually bought him out and almost immediately the economy went into a recession, we lost our best account, and another customer went out of business leaving us in the lurch for \$40,000. Big money for a small business deeply in debt.

The inexperienced people I had hired created more work. I was behind in paying suppliers and payroll was always a white-

knuckle adventure. I was hard pressed to see all this as good. I had a hard time sleeping and was obsessed with managing all the problems in the business.

Through it all I learned to hear God's voice. Actually, he would simply whisper in my heart, "It's going to be OK, you are a good man, I am with you, I care about your business, and I really care about you!"

At first, it took a long time for me to believe that it was the Lord whispering to me, and that he meant what he said. My small self had undermined me for a long time, not built me up. It took time but we corrected our problems, made things right with customers, and slowly dug out of debt.

I endured and prospered by grace. The "good trouble" refined me, made me more his man, and deepened my faith. This is good, because the pandemic has introduced me to a new "good trouble." The whisper in my heart is God's whisper. Even though things can look dark, God is with me, believes in me, and delights in helping me.

*Bruce Olson owns True Stone Coffee Roasters in St. Paul, Minnesota. He's been a long-time member of a WorkLight Small Group in the Twin Cities.*

## PRAY

*Open my ears Lord to hear more clearly your whisper in my heart when trouble comes my way.*

## REFLECT

*How have the difficult and dark times brought "good trouble" into your life?*

## DISCUSS

*Listen to one another's stories about how trials and troubles have directed your heart into God's love and Christ's perseverance.*

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE



*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."*  
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

### Perseverance in Strength and Weakness

What image comes to mind when you think of perseverance? Maybe it's an ultra-marathon runner in the last mile of a three-day race. Or could it be an aging Christian caring selflessly for their disabled spouse for decades at a time? Perhaps you

imagine Jesus carrying the cross against indescribable physical pain and suffering.

This month we invite you to read and meditate on remarkable stories of modern-day perseverance. WorkLight's own Bryan Beck describes the challenge of going deep in discipleship and understanding. Board member Dave Mazanowski speaks to the courage in Christ that allows us to face fear. Small Group Consultant Dan Clites shares about commitment to evangelizing as described in Luke 10. As we are reminded in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

As always, this Flame's reflection stories are written to encourage you to

share your own stories of Christ in the workplace. Whether in a Small Group, a Chapter meeting, or one-on-one with a mentor—we pray that all of our stories might come together through this movement of the Holy Spirit. This month we come together to reflect on workplace struggles, vulnerability, trusting in God's faithfulness, and finding good trouble in the roller coaster of business cycles. Let us pray for Jesus to be with us as we persevere toward the momentous task of building his Kingdom. Glory be to God in the highest!

With you in Christ,

Wes

# Lean Into Fear

By Dave Mazanowski

We all need to fight the temptation to quit. General George Patton and Coach Vince Lombardi are renowned for the statement: “Fatigue makes cowards of us all.”

We live in a time of great fatigue. It appears the very fiber of our nation is being torn apart. Social media gives everyone a voice but often the voices are filled with division and hatred. Depression among adults has tripled since early 2020 affecting one in three adults. The suicide rate has increased 35 percent from 2018 to 2020.

How do we approach this as a child of God?

*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. (Isaiah 40:29-31)*

As a business owner, uncertainty about the future hangs over my head and

causes me to worry and be afraid. Satan is always whispering in my ear to give up. “You have worked hard and deserve to take it easy and relax.” The last two years have been particularly challenging. Inflation, labor pressures, and customer loyalty challenges are inescapable. But what does Jesus say about the future?

*“But seek first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:33-34)*

The Lord continues to encourage me to lean into my fears and doubts and persevere. There is a temptation to step away from the mess, but the Lord continues to say to us: Lean into the mess, bring light into the world and build my Kingdom.

One of my coworkers said to me that I was fearless. I laughed, saying, “That’s an

illusion.” I actually struggle with fear and doubt all the time. It’s not the absence of fear that makes you fearless but rather not letting it control your actions. When I’m afraid, I lean into the Holy Spirit for strength, courage, and confidence to press on building the Kingdom of God.

Anyone can persevere when things are going well. To persevere is the mark of the true believer. We don’t persevere because we believe in ourselves but because we believe in the king of the universe, who can do all things. Perseverance stems from a deep hope and belief in Jesus. He has invited us to participate in building his Kingdom and promised us the power to do so. We do not labor in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Perseverance is hard if our vision is unclear. A friend of mine who recently gave his life to the Lord asked me a question. “Isn’t being a Christian about getting to Heaven? I surprised him when I said no. Getting to Heaven is a consequence of being a disciple of Jesus. Being a Christian is about building God’s Kingdom on the Earth.” This is an amazing invitation from the creator of the universe.

We will persevere by frequently calling to mind the magnitude of the calling, boldly believing that Jesus said we would do greater things than he did.

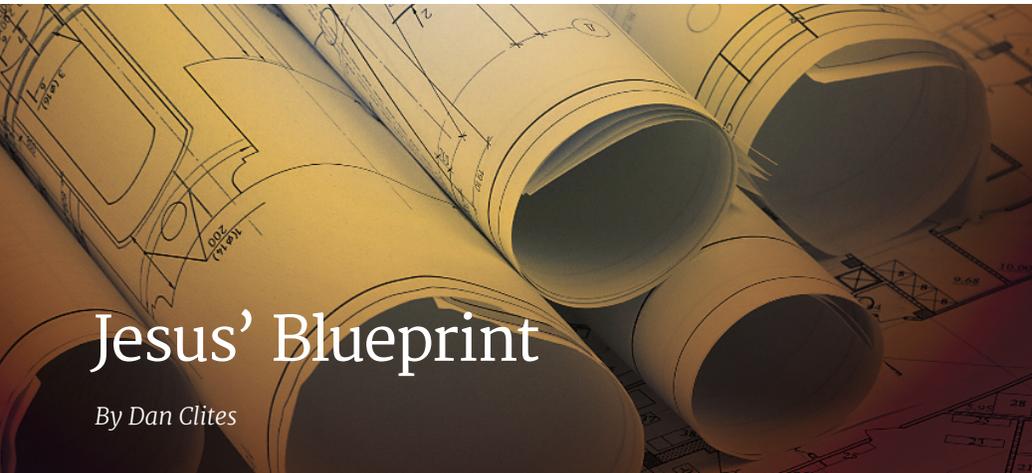
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*Dave Mazanowski is the co-founder of Mainscape, Inc., a commercial landscape and maintenance firm based in Indianapolis, Indiana. He is a member of WorkLight’s Board of Directors.*

## FORWARD >>

### a spark

If a Spark Reflection reminds you of someone, that’s a Holy Spirit nudge. Forward it on and ignite a movement of the Holy Spirit in their life.



# Jesus' Blueprint

By Dan Clites

In Matthew 28, Jesus commissions his followers to *“go and make disciples.”* Yet most Christians aren't sure how to start. Wouldn't it be so much easier if God were to just lay out a clear blueprint for influencing our workplaces with a kingdom mindset?

The good news is, God has. Luke 10:1-9 is God's clear blueprint for evangelizing and discipling within the marketplace, empowered and delivered to humanity from the very lips of Jesus.

I have written about the power of disciple making within the daily workforce and I've shared some deeper teachings on discipling with several WorkLight Chapters by focusing on four steps from Luke 10:1-9.

**“Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’” (Verse 5)** Jesus is calling us to initiate a daily prayer life of speaking out blessings instead of blasting. By boldly rolling the name of Jesus off our tongues wherever we step, we are supernaturally wiping out demonic darkness by Jesus' light.

**“Do not move around from house to house.” (Verse 7)** With dark hurdles knocked down by step one, Jesus is now inviting us to develop trusting, long-term relationships so folks are intrigued by our faith-based lifestyles.

**“Heal the sick who are there ....” (Verse 9a)** Sickness manifests in many manners: physical, motivational, financial, and relational. The worst, though, is spiritual sickness. Yet, with new momentum of speaking peace

and developing relationships—people begin asking for real healing hope.

**“...and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” (Verse 9b)** Finish strong by declaring that the surrounding marketplace miracles are coming from a new kingdom mindset. Again, this is God's blueprint for his transformational impact, and since God is the architect of all kingdom movements, shouldn't we all lean into Luke 10 as his direction for abundant life?

You may now be thinking, “But I'm retired, and I don't have influence in the workplace anymore!” You may be retired, but you're not fired! As long as you're alive you have God-ordained spheres of influence to practice Luke 10:1-9. For example, when you walk into a store, or club, or ballpark, a friend's home or even your church, make it a missional habit by first blessing and speaking peace in Jesus' name. Then expect that the Holy Spirit is preparing you for the next three steps. It's a constant transformational preparation for becoming alert and active with the contagious hope of Jesus.

*Dan Clites has been an ordained pastor for nearly 30 years, serving WorkLight as its missional coach for the last seven months. He lives in Savage, Minnesota, serving as the SW Metro Director for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.*

## Ever Deeper

Continued from page 1

book *With*, we may live our lives under, over, for, or from God, but miss that the end goal is life *with* him. Be with him. Be like him. Ever deeper. It is from that depth and because we belong to him that we followers of Christ respond as the hands and feet of Jesus.

We can't do it alone, though. Any coal will go out if removed from the fire. For the last 10 years (and before joining WorkLight), I've been involved in an ecumenical small group. We call ourselves “Chapter 7” and we want to be like a book that doesn't just repeat its early basic chapters but moves on into spiritual meat. We talk about our roadblocks to following Jesus—the snowbanks and blizzards of life.

We want to be more like and with Jesus than we were last year. We challenge each other that loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength means denying yourself and giving up on culturally significant idols. We sharpen each other (Proverbs 27:17) to think about truly loving our neighbors—even the person or group that fills you with visceral disgust. We thrive off each other's vulnerability and authenticity and push each other deeper.

Don't let difficult circumstances be a reason to settle for never going deeper with God. Find your community. The commitment is worth it.

*Bryan Beck is WorkLight's administrative operations manager who joined the team in December 2021. He and his wife, Karissa, live in Fridley, Minnesota.*

### WORKLIGHT OPPORTUNITY:

Did your Chapter or Small Group get to work with Dan Clites earlier this year? Whether you're looking to continue or starting fresh, reach out to [dan@worklight.org](mailto:dan@worklight.org) for information on ongoing support.

# NEWS

## NATIONAL CHALLENGE WEEKEND

For the first time in the 40-year history of Christians in Commerce, we will be gathering for a National Challenge Weekend this fall. Stay tuned for more details as we pray and plan for our largest-ever gathering in Arizona. We will be revisiting the roots of our ministry's first Challenge Weekend in 1983 while renewing the mission toward the next generation of Igniters. Come Holy Spirit!

## HOME STAYS FOR NATIONAL CHALLENGE WEEKEND

Looking to save some money on this fall's gathering? Or perhaps you enjoy the community of accepting hospitality from a Christian host family? Our brothers and sisters in Christ from around Phoenix

have generously offered to open their homes to any couple or individual traveling to Arizona for this fall's event. Send an email to [nationalchallengeweekend@worklight.org](mailto:nationalchallengeweekend@worklight.org) with your name, dates of travel, number of guests, and any details you wish considered in matching you with a host family.

## 500 IGNITERS BY 2025

You may have heard of our ministry's objective to gather 500 mid-career Christians on Challenge Weekends by 2025. Did you know that you are key to achieving this goal? God has someone in each of our lives that could be a WorkLight igniter for Christ. Are you retired? Not to worry. Igniters can be discovered not only at work but in your neighborhood, church, gym, library,

local park, or even within your own family. Pray to the Holy Spirit to guide you. It could be your dentist, plumber, neighbor, cousin, friend, colleague, or even an adult child. Come Holy Spirit!

## CHALLENGE WEEKENDS AT FRESNO, SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA

The month of May began with a super-weekend. Not only did 36 men from Salinas and Santa Cruz gather at the historic mission of San Antonio de Padua, but 21 women gathered at the same time in Fresno for the first women's Challenge Weekend of the year. First time Challenge Weekend participants that weekend ranged in age from 23 to 94. Hear testimony of how the Spirit is moving by clicking [bit.ly/WkLtYouTube](https://bit.ly/WkLtYouTube), our YouTube channel. Glory be to God in the highest!

## TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD THE KINGDOM

I attended my first Challenge Weekend in 1990. For the last 32 years, WorkLight has been my primary ministry. I have yet to witness a better program for transforming lives. Future generations should have the same opportunity to grow in their faith, so I have committed to planning for WorkLight in my will. I hope you will consider doing the same.

Learn more about legacy giving at  
[WorkLight.org/KingdomBuilder](https://WorkLight.org/KingdomBuilder)

**Tim Rowland**  
Phoenix Chapter

# 2022

## JUNE

*"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 strong brotherhood and sisterhood
- Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives

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