

## Thread by Thread

By Steve Becker

Everything seemed complicated and overwhelming. This was unfamiliar territory with a lot at stake. It was April of 2022 and we had received confusing phone calls from Carolyn's younger sister who was in the hospital. Judy was single and living alone in the family home. We would have to travel 1,200 miles to North Carolina to figure out what to do.

From the beginning, the Lord made clear my focus for going forward. I was to walk alongside Carolyn and these would be her decisions to make. My background and personality makes it natural for me to figure things out and make decisions. He wanted my approach to be different. I was there to show his love to Carolyn and her family and put them first. But how? There was so much to figure out. Where was the balance? I would soon find out.

Medical care in small towns and rural North Carolina is very different from urban areas and Judy needed multiple specialties and healthcare providers. Carolyn had authority to manage Judy's health care, but the information was disconnected, conflicting, and confusing.

During that first week a breakthrough occurred. It would radically transform the way we let the Lord guide us going forward and take each step into evolving uncertainty.

Judy had returned home. We made dozens of phone calls with no progress. In the middle of the week, she began to take on fluid again. We drove her to the closest hospital that was 30 minutes away. Dozens of people filled the waiting room and it would be half a day before they could get to her. We chose to return home and decide in the morning.

I woke up early to pray. The image that came to mind was of a tangled bundle of threads. I said, "Lord, just show me which thread to pull on." Within a half hour, I got a return phone call from Duke Liver Center in Raleigh, one of three healthcare facilities we had been trying to contact.

I expressed frustration about reconciling multiple specialists and getting her the right care. The person on the phone said, "Well, you can admit her to the emergency room at

*Continued on page 5*

### INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

## Your Will Be Done

*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)*

On Palm Sunday, Jesus sent two disciples to fetch a donkey. While anyone could have done that, at that moment, there was nothing greater for them to do. They were being obedient. Every task we do, great or small, can be done in this obedience. There is nothing greater than obedience to Christ.

How do we know if we're doing what God wants? Often, we're afraid of making a wrong turn, a bad choice, missing the boat. It's more about trusting God and responding to the choices in front of us.



The biggest hurdle is a heart oriented to what God desires. The critical part is wanting his will over our own, making the effort to seek it, and choosing that when it becomes clearer.

It would be nice if the choosing part was more automatic. This side of the fullness of the kingdom requires humility and our surrender. Let us pray this month, "Father, I surrender my will to you, so your will reigns in me. Let me live in your divine will."

**December Reflections: Pages 2-4**

## REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

## Renewal

By John E. DeSanto

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by renewing your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)*

During my seven decades of life in this broken world, I have often struggled with knowing and then surrendering to God's will—doing what God wants me to do, rather than what I pray for and hope he wants me to do.

At no time has this struggle been more difficult than during the last year or two. I have worked for the past 50 years in the courtrooms of Minnesota—36 as a prosecutor and 14 years as a trial court judge. Let's just say that I love my courtroom job! It has been a gift from God for which I constantly thank and praise him. By his grace and mercy, I have continued to be blessed with the good health necessary to do this work.

For several years, my dear wife of 44 years has asked me to consider a change in location (closer to children and grandchildren), which would mean, yes, the "R" word. Retirement!

So, during much prayer and petition—conversations—with God, I have asked him what he wants me to do. Romans 12:2 has been very meaningful to me in this effort to conform my mind to his desires and then choosing his will over mine. And Philippians 4:8 has also been extremely helpful: "...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." What is his "good, pleasing and perfect will" for me? What course of action is most "noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable and praiseworthy?"

I accept that doing God's will requires humility and surrender. During my daily morning prayer time with our living God, I specifically surrender myself and my dear ones to him, knowing that by surrendering all to him, my Lord Jesus will take care of everything. I am recognizing that God's will includes the dreaded "R" word in the near future.

**John E. DeSanto** lives in Duluth, Minnesota, with his wife Lana. He has been a member since November 1984 when he attended his first Challenge Weekend with his twin brother, Will, and their father.

## PRAY

*Father, I surrender my will to you, so your will reigns in me. Let me live in your divine will.*

## REFLECT

*How can my actions and decisions be noble, pure, admirable, or praiseworthy in God's eyes?*

## DISCUSS

*How can we best discern the difference between God's will and our wants and desires?*

## Our Nine to Five Podcast is back!

Each Monday, audio is available for each week's reflection from *The Flame*™. Subscribe where you get your podcasts.



## REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

## Radical Transparency

By Mike Maslow

*And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber... (Romans 13:11)*

Spiritual blindness causes us to miss what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives. The older I get, the more convinced I am that we have an incredible ability for protective self-deception. It allows us to continue to make peace with Satan's lies, our hidden sins, and our unwillingness to change.

One way I've found to foster radical transparency is to tell God what is on my mind and heart. This is the person God desires to meet and relate to in prayer.

Being more transparent has led me to a significant change in how I see

my job. I was unhappy with my job, my coworkers, and my bosses. In my morning prayer, I acknowledged how I was feeling.

He asked me two questions. "Are you planning to retire anytime soon?"

"No," was my response.

"Are you planning to look for a different job with a different company?" he asked.

"No, Lord, you keep telling me this is where I have planted you to build the kingdom."

Then the Lord said, "Stop grumbling and complaining about your job. Your situation is my will for you. Be content and present there."

So every day I brought this issue to prayer. The funny thing is that I am now joyful at work in a way I have never been before in my life. God taught me in my prayer time that peace and joy often come from being present to a situation you can't change.

good people. We know and recognize evil people. It is the people sitting on the fence who are in the most danger and are the most dangerous. They do not know that the fence is owned by Satan and doing nothing just makes evil stronger."

I don't know about you, but I don't want to pass onto the next life sitting on the fence.

I joined Christians In Commerce about 25 years ago and about two years later, I went on my first Challenge Weekend. It was then that I became baptized in the Holy Spirit and received all his gifts.

It took me until I was 46 to say "yes" and awaken those gifts in me. We are meant to be Jesus' disciples. Heal the sick, feed the hungry, release the captives, preach God's Word, spread God's love, joy, and peace. We have been given marching orders. Are we marching? Are we ready to activate God's gifts in us?

**Mike Maslow** is a director of initiatives and sales for a large metropolitan newspaper. He lives in Burnsville, Minnesota, with his wife, Kathy. They have seven children.

## PRAY

Lord, help me be more honest with myself and especially with you in prayer. Let this spill over to my relationships with others who are supporting me in my walk with you.

## REFLECT

What are the hard things that I'm reluctant to face and share with others who are supporting me in my walk with the Lord?

## DISCUSS

How can we bring our lives more into the light in our Small Groups? How can we help each other see more clearly what God is doing in each of our lives?

## REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

## No Going Back

By Cathy Glover

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. (1 Corinthians 12:4)*

Once you release your idea to God and Jesus about how your life is going to run, what your life is going to look like, what your achievements, goals, and successes are going to be, there is no going back.

That reality is scary but necessary if we are rooted in Christ Jesus. We must turn our lives over to God.

When I heard Jim Caveziel, who plays Tim Ballard in the movie, *The Sound of Freedom*, talk about how his life has changed since playing Tim, his response became a call to action for me. Jim said: "We know and recognize

**Cathy Glover** is a realtor in the Phoenix area. She was a member of and prior president on the CIC Women's Board. She is married to Ric, mother of three, and grandmother of six.

## PRAY

Lord, help me to awaken your gifts in me and turn my life over to you.

## REFLECT

How am I using the gifts of the Holy Spirit in my work life, home life, and community?

## DISCUSS

Am I sitting on the fence and not engaging in the important issues surrounding me? What gifts of the Holy Spirit can I use to get off the fence and answer God's call?

## REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

## What I Needed

By Samantha Alcosoba

*In fact, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted... (2 Timothy 3:12)*

Recently, my career journey led me to a position in vocational education at a trade school. My primary responsibilities consisted of recruiting potential students and explaining the different areas of training in hands-on technical skills.

Much to my dismay, I learned the job involved enrolling as many students as possible through emotional manipulation. I rebelled against the industry culture by treating all potential students with integrity, understanding, and grace. My goal was to empower students to achieve success from our programs and to improve their lives.

Eventually, business slowed down and my supervisors began to question my performance. Management provided less

guidance, and I was feeling lost. Despite these developments, I reached out to friends and colleagues experienced in this field and explored many online resources for support. But most importantly, I looked to the Lord for wisdom and guidance: "If this is not where you want me to be God, give me a sign!"

A few weeks later, I was let go without any warning or explanation. Taking away the opportunities to change lives was more heartbreaking than my termination! Having the opportunity to see students succeed and create incredible careers showed me that God's will is more powerful than our own will. "Why did God want to take this away from me?" I thought to myself. With diligent prayer, God showed me that the constant pressure to "sell more" violated my personal values and desires to help students find their pathways to success.

This unexpected outcome gave me the opportunity to reflect on my own priorities and personal relationship and faith in the Lord. I was trying to do it alone according to my own will. As I prayed and reflected, I understood that

God was giving me what I needed rather than what I wanted.

*Samantha Alcosoba is a salon artist, educator, dog lover, CIC member of the Fresno Women's Chapter, and an active member in her parish church.*

## PRAY

*Lord, teach me how to discern your will in my life and accept disappointments as opportunities to grow closer to you.*

## REFLECT

*When faced with challenges and conflict, what can we do to help us choose righteousness rather than choosing according to our human desires and ego?*

## DISCUSS

*What does it mean to be free in God's will?*

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE



*My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes delight in my ways... (Proverbs 23:26)*

### God's Will Today & Forever

I would have loved to meet John Mooney.

John helped start Christians in Commerce when I was learning to walk. He was called home to the Lord before I knew of CIC/WorkLight. Yet countless brothers and sisters in Christ continue to share how John was known for reminding so many people that they are children of God, siblings of Jesus, and vessels of the Holy Spirit.

These attributes of the Christian life and identity are unchanging, even as the world around us spins, dips, and

seems to entirely lose its balance at times. In good times and bad we are invited to give our heart to God our Father. When we do so our eyes can delight in the ways God's will is unfolding around us.

Hope for the future can be a blessing. But through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we are called to hope right now. The Holy Spirit is at work in some ways we might witness and in a million more ways we can only imagine. God's plans are unfolding in the present moment. His will is being done right now.

2023 has been a remarkable year of growth and momentum. One hundred first-time Challenge Weekend attendees and counting. Over 700 people in more than 50 Small Groups. Half a million Spark emails

sent. Twenty-four Chapters, nine of which brought together igniters and re-igniters by hosting weekends of their own. The future of WorkLight has never been brighter, and God's encouragement and equipping is already underway.

We don't have to wait for a future moment to be hopeful. We are saved. If we choose to surrender our hearts, perhaps our eyes will be open to seeing what God has in store for us right now. I can lament never meeting John Mooney in this life, or I can celebrate today and every day—knowing that he and I are unified with so many brothers and sisters through Jesus for all of eternity.

With you in Christ,  
Wes



# Our Personal WorkLight Experience

By Matthew Rafeedie

For me, this year has been full of worldly setbacks, disappointments, letdowns, and frustrations.

Each month in 2023, my wife and I have been spiritually and emotionally challenged. She and I have fought toxic work environments, financial hardship, unemployment, health challenges, and family struggles of all sorts.

We persevered through the year with the help of the Holy Spirit and our Lord. One of the ways in which the Lord blessed us this year was by connecting us to WorkLight, an outreach of Christians in Commerce. The ministry and its leaders met me in April and ever since, I can confidently say I have been supported and loved.

As we approach the end of 2023, I am reflecting on the incredible impact that WorkLight has made this year, thanks to the support of people like you.

Together, we have:

- Hosted over 260 individuals at Challenge Weekends, where participants have experienced transformational change and discovered new meaning and purpose in their work and lives.
- Supported over 700 individuals through Small Groups, where members have grown in their faith and developed deep relationships with other believers.
- Sent out over 400,000 *Spark* emails, providing daily reflections and

inspiration to help people live their faith at work.

- Reached over 3,000 people through *The Flame* newsletter, with stories, testimonies, and weekly reflections on living a life of faith in the workplace.
- Supported 24 chapters across the country, providing opportunities for Christians to build brotherhood and sisterhood at work and in their communities.

This is just a snapshot of the many ways that CIC, now WorkLight, has made a difference in the lives of Christians around the world. And it's all possible because of your support.

As we head into the end of the year, I am inviting you to join me in supporting WorkLight's year-end fundraising campaign. Your gift will help us to continue to equip and empower Christians to be a light in the workplace and in their communities.

No matter what amount you can give, please know that your gift will make a difference. Together, we can shine the light of Christ in the workplace and in the world.

As a 25-year-old, in a world reeling from an isolating pandemic and the chaos of the early 2020s, I did not realize how much I and my family needed WorkLight. That is why, despite our hardships this year, I have tried my best to support WorkLight in every way I can because it did that for me this year.

And as we close out the year, I hope we can all support this important effort with our donations and God's gift so that our ministry can do what it did for me for many more others in 2024!

*Matthew Rafeedie is co-chair of WorkLight's Fundraising Committee and lives in Florida with his wife, Jensen. He is originally from California, was born again in 2020, and has joined WorkLight. Matthew is a vice president at Morgan Stanley.*

## Thread by Thread

*Continued from page 1*

Duke Raleigh and all those are available in one place." While Raleigh was an hour and half away, it suddenly became clear it was the thread.

After seven days in Raleigh, we had a much clearer idea of what we needed to know and the next short-term steps for us to take. Going forward, it would be a crooked road and Judy would have other complications that would affect her physical and mental health.

The situation is still complicated with many uncertainties. We know that while we have to take everything step-by-step, it is the Lord who lives outside of time and space and who can guide us through. In each moment, we can only ask him, "What is it you want us to know and what is it you want us to do?" He has faithfully and consistently shown us the thread we are to pull each time.

It has been a transformative experience that while hard and uncertain, has deepened Carolyn and my love for each other, our shared trust in God's faithfulness, and a real sense of caring for one another's interests.

*Steve Becker and his wife Carolyn continue to live another "full" life in Burnsville, Minnesota, with four adult children, six grandchildren and their families living close by.*

# God's Bigger Plans

By Lynn Bahta

My life has been a series of letting go and trusting God. I've experienced situations both personally and professionally throughout my lifetime that were inconceivable in my youth.

I used my likes and dislikes as guidelines for my decision-making process, and always strived for perfection. These were also the conditions I put before the Lord, not realizing that God had bigger plans for me.

I have always loved God, so I thought perfection was the only option for me and applied the Lord's expectations according to my own criteria: No teaching, no working with children, and no sending me overseas. But I soon discovered that God's plans for me would not fit my blueprint.

I started my nursing career in a hospital setting but found that working with adults made me want to quit. It wasn't long before God moved me into working

with children, which changed my perception from dread to joy. My work in a pediatric trauma ICU evolved my nursing skills and my character, from technical nursing to crisis care.

Ten years later I found myself in Khartoum, Sudan. This came unexpectedly after completing my nursing degree and serving as a clinical trainer. Half of my career was serving as a nurse for children and the other half was teaching, training, and consultation. The Lord had changed my heart so that I learned how to say "yes" to him even when I had once told him "never."

In Sudan my experiences enabled me to deeply understand a unique richness among those who lived in poverty, sickness, and with little means to survive. Although I trained medics and tried to fill in their training gaps, they taught me much more in ways that were non-traditional and very different. It was

humbling and grew my understanding of how God loves all souls.

Coming home, I took a job in the ICU at the University of Minnesota hospital, due to my previous connections with a local leadership training consortium. But my heart had changed, and I knew where I needed to be. My new calling was public and community health nursing doing health prevention and advocating for those with diverse experiences.

After six years at the U of M, I found the job that moved me into public health nursing where I've stayed and grown—both professionally and spiritually. A part of that transition was a consulting job in a national nonprofit organization that afforded opportunities to build national partnerships and relationships. And from there I went into state service where I honed my knowledge and empathetic skills.

During the 25 years of working in community health I learned to make decisions from an intellectual viewpoint while combining its application to address the concerns and needs in our community.

In looking back at my life and my goals, I learned that grace is always present and through cooperating with God's grace, I grew into a new comfort zone with him. When I take on what he has given me and dwell in his grace, my life becomes a joy rather than a burden, even when it is far beyond the plans I had for myself.

*Lynn Bahta is a public health nurse working at the Minnesota Department of Health.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

John 1:1-9

## NEWS

## YEAR-END FUNDRAISING

Did you know that over 25% of all donations to nonprofit organizations happen during the month of December? While WorkLight is blessed with donors who give all year, there are special opportunities for surrender, conversion, and participation as we approach Christmas. At the time of publication we are well on our way to our budget target of \$160,000 from individual donations. If that goal is reached before Christmas, there will be a special opportunity regarding the John Mooney Memorial Campaign. Check out the most recent updates and join the movement at [worklight.org/shine](https://worklight.org/shine). Come Holy Spirit!

## 500 BY 2025, TWO BY TWO

As 2023 comes to a close it's a blessing to look back at nine Chapters that played host to over 300 brothers and sisters on Challenge Weekends. By the grace of God and local volunteer leaders, we are on our way to 500 igniters by 2025. Praise God! But let us be attentive that each of those 100 first-time igniters trusted someone

enough to say "yes" to WorkLight. Luke 10 is a wonderful reminder of how we are all sent forth two by two to spread the Gospel and serve Jesus. Have you been a re-igniter this year? It's never too late to find your igniter and keep building God's Kingdom one relationship at a time. For more information: [worklight.org/events/](https://worklight.org/events/).

## DID YOU KNOW?

The *Spark*, formerly known as *Workday Reflection* emails, plays a key role in the lives of our brothers and sisters every workday morning. Whether you've been an active member for 40 years or you just learned about WorkLight today, the *Spark* is a gift of encouragement full of stories of Christ in the workplace. In what year did these emails become a part of this ministry?

*Last month's answer:* The first women's Challenge Weekend was held in 1997.

## SMALL GROUP &amp; CHAPTER TOOLKIT

With increasing focus on new igniters and Challenge Weekends,

## 2024 CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

## Salinas Men's Chapter

- January 26–28 at Mission San Antonio De Padua in Jolon, California

## Fresno Women's Chapter

- April 19–21 at St. Anthony Retreat Center, 43816 Sierra Dr., Three Rivers, California.

## Salinas and Santa Cruz Men's Chapters

- April 26–28 at Mission San Antonio De Padua in Jolon, California.

Check out these events and more at [worklight.org/events/](https://worklight.org/events/).

our Small Groups and Chapters are more important than ever as the destination for ongoing community and relationships in Christ. Whether you are looking to start a Small Group or reinvigorate your longtime Chapter, we pray that the updated Small Group & Chapter toolkit might be a blessing to your efforts. For more information: [worklight.org/toolkits](https://worklight.org/toolkits).

# LET'S SHINE THE LIGHT

Christmas is the time to celebrate the light of the world – Jesus. "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:4–5). Help us spread the light of Christ to more workplaces around the country by giving financially to WorkLight before Christmas Eve, December 24th.

**We can do this – together!**

[WorkLight.org/shine](https://WorkLight.org/shine)

WORKLIGHT

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

*Galatians 2:20*

## DECEMBER

**WorkLight.org**

## 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** Christians in Commerce (DBA WorkLight) is an ecumenical organization committed to:

- Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
- Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
- Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives

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