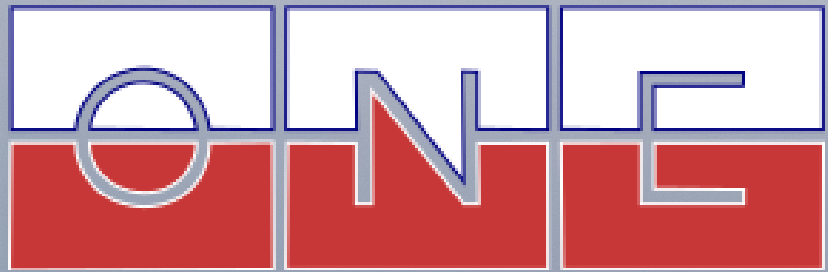



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A Publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance  
January 2023



**“ALL THAT THE  
LORD SAYS,  
WE WILL DO.”**



Ellis County Ministerial Alliance

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### Editor's Note:

The start of a New Year is often the time we reflect upon our lives. This month we asked our writers to tell us about the "best advice" they never took and the impact that decision had on their lives. You'll also want to check out the last column in this issue on why it's so hard for us to break destructive old habits.

## ***How I Ignored Advice from Three Friends and Trusted God***

### ***Written by:***

***Brandon Nimz***

Proverbs 3:5-6 reads, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take"* (NLT).

It is a verse containing great wisdom, but it can be inherently hard to do—especially if you are like me and tend to do most things according to your own understanding.

More than a decade ago, I found myself in an odd spot. I had graduated college and was originally looking to go either to KU Medical School or Dallas Theological Seminary. After much prayer and discernment, I instead stuck around Hays to lead what became, at the time, largely a

college ministry.

While I was doing this, I got a job at HaysMed, first in Admissions and then in Patient Financial Services. It wasn't the job I had planned to get after graduation, but it was a good job, and it financially enabled me to do the ministry work that I had felt led to stick around and do.

I was auditing a class called Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, and as the speakers went through various presentations and topics, I felt nudged more and more to quit my job and do the ministry work I was doing full-time.

This was also when I learned that I didn't have the faith in God that I thought I did. You see, I knew Matthew 6:31-33 said, *"So don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing. Why be like*

*the pagans who are so deeply concerned about these things? Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern."*

If I really and truly believed that and if quitting my job to do ministry work full-time was seeking first His Kingdom (which I felt it was), then I should immediately quit. Instead, however, I had quite a bit of hesitation. The ministry I led did not pay anything. If I quit and sold everything I owned, including my car, I would run out of money within a year. Was manna going to fall down from heaven for me to eat? How would I survive? Apparently, my faith wasn't as strong as I thought.

God further challenged me in a conversation with a friend.

## ***How I Ignored Advice from Three Friends (Continued)***

She told me that she could see me many years later being just like one of the speaker in the Perspectives class. At first, I took this as a compliment, but then she explained that I'd have several good attributes of his and be just like him, full of pride.

Having previously worked through pride and insecurity issues pretty heavily, I took great offense at her words, but I also thought about them and prayed about them quite awhile. Eventually, I realized that a big part of why I wasn't willing to quit my job to do ministry work full-time was my pride.

I grew up in Western Kansas, and I was used to an ethic of working hard and "earning my own way." This ethic and understanding had led me to getting my full-time job, even though the hours conflicted with some of the ministry work I felt called to do pretty heavily. The main

sticking points I had were not trusting God enough and not being willing to ask for financial support as an in-state missionary, due to my pride.

It was at this point that I asked for wise advice from three different friends in full-time ministry as pastors or ministry leaders. Each of them gave me the wisest advice they had. Though I didn't realize it at the time, each of them was trying to talk me out of quitting my job at HaysMed because it was an unwise financial move. But all three of them added, in one way or other, "Still, if this is something that God is genuinely calling you to do, you need to listen to Him."

They all thought they were telling me not to quit my job at HaysMed, but it was the second part that resounded with me. I already knew what I was supposed to do—I just didn't have the faith to do it. As such, I had to pray like the

man who asked Jesus to heal his son "if Jesus could." His reply when Jesus challenged Him was, "Lord I do believe; help me with my unbelief."

In the same way I had to ask Jesus, "I do trust You enough to ask You to help me with my lack of trust—help me surrender the way You are asking." Ultimately, though I didn't have the strength on my own, He did answer and helped me resign my job to step into full-time ministry.

The rest is a longer story than I have time for in this article, but I thank God for His help into that critical step. Had I trusted my own understanding, it would have prevented me from obtaining true freedom in trusting Him.



*Brandon Nimz is the President of Unite Ministry in Hays.*

### ***Knowing Where We Are Meant to Be***

***Written by:***  
***Cheryl Glassman***

Have you ever heard the old saying, "God puts us where we are supposed to be"? I believe that is a good adage; however, I also believe God leads us away

from where we AREN'T supposed to be.

Many times, there are instances where we can sense a tugging--something or someone trying to turn us in a different direction. During these times, it is very easy to

ignore the subtle signs we are given.

In last month's writing, I discussed how George, the main character in the movie "It's A Wonderful Life," thought he knew where he needed to be. He was

## ***Knowing Where We Are Meant to Be (Continued)***

headed cross country, to see the world. His life's calling was not an easy one for him, and he believed he was being forced, in a way, to stay and run the family business. In my own life, there have been many times I was advised or asked to do something and I ended up not doing it. It has led me to what I believe is the place I am meant to be.

When I was 18, I worked for one of the best bosses in the world, my dad. Dad was an insurance adjuster, and he worked for several different companies. He was diligent, honest, and worked hard. I was his office manager for three years.

In those days, insurance adjusters got called out at all hours to go to accident scenes. Dad would tell me of horrendous accidents and the suffering he saw. He would take photos, call the injured, visit them in the hospital, take statements, and even sometimes had to testify in court. He also worked claims dealing with homes and cars and damage through tornadoes and other events. His work was stressful, but he enjoyed being able to help people.

I would answer phone calls, type up statements, and help as I could. We even

went on the road together to work, writing up estimates and claims into the wee hours of the night when whole communities were affected by a natural disaster. He instilled in me the desire to always be honest.

As time passed, Dad asked me if I would like to do more. I started going to people's homes and taking statements. This meant writing down, word for word, what people told me in regard to an accident or situation (we didn't have portable typewriters, or cell phones, or recorders then). Dad was impressed with my work and how I asked questions—I came up with the questions to ask the individuals.

I heard him talking on the phone at the office one day. A few days later, a gentleman called and when I told him Dad was out of the office, he said he had called to talk to me. He explained how impressed he was with my work and wanted to offer me a position with his company, which was in another town.

There were few women in managerial positions at that time, and it was quite a compliment. I explained what had happened to Dad when he returned. He was so proud of me. He told me to think about it and do what I thought

I should do. Now, having someone say you could be a trendsetting pioneer is quite a compliment. Several friends told me I would be crazy not to take the job.

I remember vividly going to church the following Sunday. I sang with the choir that day. I had a solo on a song from the old "Glory and Praise" songbook. The song was called "Like A Sunflower." The verse is, "Like a sunflower that follows every movement of the sun, so I turn towards you, to follow you, my God."

I decided that morning to let God help me figure things out. I made the decision to stay in Hays. Not long after, my sister and I followed in our mother's footsteps and began training to become nurses.

I cannot tell you how many times God has made his presence known through my years as a nurse's aide and RN. When we follow God's lead, He will always take us where we are meant to be. May you have a blessed and healthy 2023!



*Cheryl Glassman is the Director of Music at St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church in Hays.*

## ***'Good' Advice May End Up Being 'Bad' Advice***

**Written by:**

**Rev. Cana Moore**

I have always disliked cliché phrases. Certainly, they have their place, and most are not devoid of value. Often the reason cliché phrases stay in our cultural language is because they have offered some use as a tool for common or uncommon sense. However, I dislike the way that they can reduce complex situations to small, inflexible phrases.

The concept of wisdom in the Christian scriptures maintains that there is a way to live righteously, and that though good should win over evil, it does not always work like that. The wisdom texts of the Bible offer advice, narratives, and instructions on living rightly, including offering conflicting advice at times. This is because the wisdom in the text knows that every situation is different, and true wisdom means knowing when and how to apply knowledge.

True wisdom means knowing that no phrase, framework, or cliché always fits. A quote attributed to mathematician and statistician George Box says, "All models are wrong, but some are useful."

I feel similarly about advice--all advice is wrong, but some of it is useful. There are always limitations to any idea, advice, suggestion, or theory when broadly applied because there is no way to be confident that it will always apply. Every circumstance and situation is unique, and every factor that comes into play affects the usability of that advice. The same water that softens the potato will harden the egg. In the same way, some reasonable advice is helpful in one circumstance and not in another.

When I heard this month's theme, I interpreted it not as the "best advice" you didn't take, but rather the advice you made the best choice by not taking.

One piece of advice that I have never taken is the often-repeated "never go to bed angry." The sentiment of this, it seems to me, is good--it is based on a scriptural practice (do not let the sun go down on your anger), and this makes some people believe it to be a weightier matter of the law.

However, I would like to counter it with my own observation: Sometimes, addressing your anger while you are still angry is far more dangerous than sleeping it

off.

The goal is not to allow anger to simmer, to prevent bitterness from seeping in, to encourage communication and openness, and to resolve disagreements without waiting an awkward amount of time.

Those of us who have ever lived with someone (a spouse, a roommate, a friend, family members, etc.) know that sometimes the only thing to do is to sleep for a bit and evaluate the situation and the emotions in the light of a new day with a fresh brain. In some cases, there is nothing worse than bringing up a previous anger right before the end of the day for creating resentment, rehashing issues without resolution, and the like.

If you, like me, are often quick on your anger button, allow me to offer you this thought counter to the advice given--sometimes, dealing with anger in haste makes for greater problems in the long run.



*The Rev. Cana Moore is the pastor of Hays Christian Church*

## ***We Just Can't Shake Those Old Habits***

**Written by:**

**Rev. Jonathan E. McCottry Sr.**

Exodus 19:8 states, *"And all the people answered together, and said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.' And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord"* (KJV).

A New Year's resolution often is the desire to renew one's spiritual life and to walk with God from that moment forward. Around 158 times in the Bible is a phrase that states, "All that the Lord said, we will do."

How many times have we been challenged to live a better life, only to realize that we have slipped back into the habits of our old ways? And these old habits carry us away from God, rather than to God.

Even the apostle Paul expressed his problem with this challenge. *"For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do,"* Romans 7:19 (KJV).

It is an age-old problem in the struggle for right living. So many of us want to do right, but end up doing wrong. That is a constant challenge to individuals who call themselves Christians.

The desire is to follow

God. So we make resolutions every year, even while we want to do exactly what we desire in a direction contrary to the motivation of the soul. In the process of this struggle, the issue of self becomes an overwhelming factor. Divine desires are eclipsed by human activity. We call it the battle of the flesh. While there is a desire to do right, human nature takes us in an opposite direction, and it is this direction that often leads us to break these New Year's resolutions.

Spiritually this battle has three components: First, the lust of the flesh; second, the lust of the eyes; and, finally, the pride of life.

Every person is challenged with uncontrollable volcanic libido urges that just move us to desire things that are sinful. How delicious is that deep-dish apple pie compared to a celery stick. How inviting is the German chocolate cake, compared to carrots and peanuts (especially if the peanuts are unsalted and not roasted). Notice that the outcome of menu choices that are healthy are not always inviting. Other menu choices that are unhealthy are full of fats and oils and

deep-fried foods that are a challenge to the midsection of those who want to live healthy.

Despite this dilemma, we choose the fats and the oils over the healthy. These lusts of the flesh are hammered by the desire to satisfy the palate over those foods that are helpful to the body.

We must also include the thoughts of the lust of the eyes. It is always more inviting to drive a Lexus or Mercedes or BMW, instead of a small compact car. The prestige of riding in a finely crafted vehicle that has tons of resale value over a vehicle that rattles as it crosses the railroad tracks brings no comparison. The looks of the neighbors who see us riding in a vehicle that reflects status cause us to forget about practicality and car payments.

No one has to know whether we can make the payments if we display a status symbol. We want outsiders to look at us and think that we have made it in society. How many of us are driven by what people think of us, rather than where we are personally?

It is these kinds of choices that bring us to the brink of

## ***We Just Can't Shake Those Old Habits (Continued)***

bankruptcy, just so people can think that we are financially well off. These decisions are made only because we want people to think well of us, even if we are not what they think that we are.

It is these personal challenges that cause people to make decisions against their own personal well being, just because they worry about what society thinks of them.

So much for resolutions!

Breaking many of these New Year's resolutions has brought us to the point of destruction because of how we feel, how we perceive what we are doing, or what we think looks good for us. There are no practical reasons that drive us in many instances, other than personal greed and the desire to be seen and looked upon favorably by

others.

As we challenge ourselves with these New Year's thoughts, our focus should be, "All that the Lord says, we will do." Unfortunately, we just can't shake the habit of wanting to please ourselves, or satisfying our own visual perspective of where we think we should be, or to be appreciated by others.

If we can get over this one hurdle, if our thoughts were only on Christ and Him crucified, if our thoughts were only about pleasing God and our Savior, if our thoughts were not in satisfying our own personal thoughts and needs, but putting God first in everything that we do and say, our outcome might be much different.

How many New Years must we make the resolution to follow God, which is the best advice that we could

ever follow, only to find ourselves once again struggling over the mistakes of the past?

How often are we drawn to shake the habit of continued failure, aimlessly spending the rest of our lives in frustration? Rather than moving forward, we, like Lot's wife, continue to look back in frustration.

It is high time that we each determine to resolve that it is now or never. Now is the time to stop looking back and press on to New Year's success, so that we will never find ourselves moving backwards again.



*Rev. Jonathan E. McCottry, Sr., of Hays is Pastor Emeritus of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists.*

*The godly give good advice to their friends;  
the wicked lead them astray.*

*—Psalm 12:26*