

Freed-Hardeman University R.U.S.H. September 12-14, 2008

everyday

Matthew 5:2-12



Freed, meet Mac.



iKnow
www.fhu.edu/iknow

Welcome to R.U.S.H.!

On behalf of the FHU administration, faculty, staff and students we would like to welcome you to campus. We hope you have the opportunity to meet our FHU family while at R.U.S.H. The office of Admissions is located in the Gardner Center and will be available to answer questions or assist you during your stay.

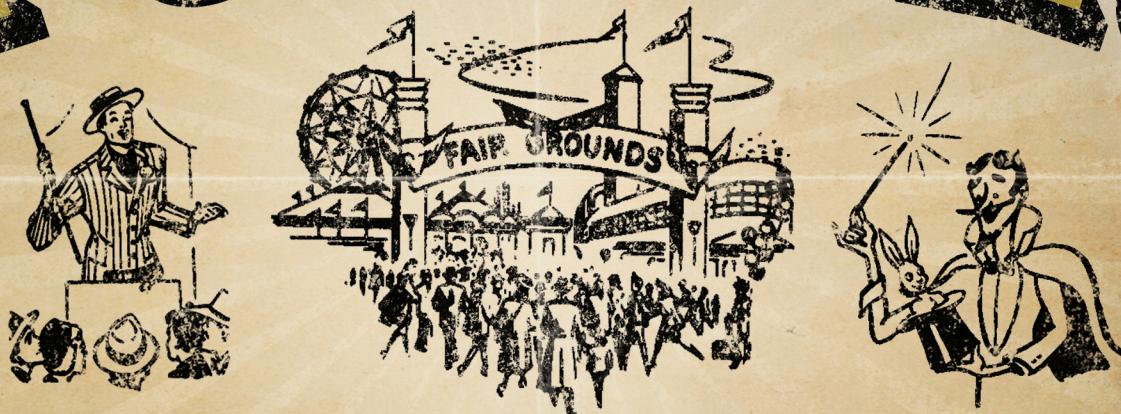
R.U.S.H. is a weekend built for middle- and high-school students. It's all about growing closer to God and growing closer to other Christians. Each fall, students like you break away from your ordinary schedules and find yourselves on the campus of Freed-Hardeman enjoying a variety of unforgettable Christ-centered events. You'll be joining more than 1,500 students who are interested in living the dynamic lifestyle of a Christian.

This year at R.U.S.H. you'll find plenty to enjoy. You'll discover dynamic lessons, uplifting worship and memorable classes, and you'll also have the chance to meet new people. Get hypnotized by Jim Wand. Enjoy a concert on campus. Drop in at the new coffeehouse. Step away from the grind of your daily life and find yourself at R.U.S.H. 2008. You'll leave prepared and stronger for every day ahead of you!

Your Admissions Team



SIGMA RHO PRESENTS FUN FAIR



Sigma Rho, one of FHU's social clubs, annually sponsors Fun Fair, a campus-wide fundraiser. This year, Fun Fair will benefit missionaries in the Dominican Republic. This miniature carnival includes a silent auction, dunking booth, inflatable joust, obstacle course, face painting, jewelry making, three-on-three basketball tournament, great food and more. Take advantage of these complimentary tickets and support Sigma Rho in this year's Fun Fair.

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SIGMA RHO PRESENTS
FUN FAIR
ONE TICKET

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SIGMA RHO PRESENTS
FUN FAIR
ONE TICKET

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SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

- 5-8 PM Registration
- 6-10 PM Activities in the Commons
- 10:30 PM Devotional
- 12 PM Curfew

SATURDAY

- 9 AM Singing & Keynote
- 10 AM Class Session
- 10:50 AM Class Session
- 11:40 AM Lunch (Green) or Class Session (Red, Blue, Orange, Brown)
- 12:30 PM Lunch (Blue, Red) or Class Session (Green, Orange, Brown)
- 1:20 PM Lunch (Orange, Brown) or Class Session (Red, Blue, Green)
- 2:10 PM Fun Fair in the Commons
- 3 PM Class Session
- 3:50 PM Class Session
- 4:30 PM Dinner (July, October)
- 5 PM Dinner (March, May)
- 5:30 PM Dinner (December)
- 6:30 PM Dessert on the Brown-Kopel Lawn
- 7:30 PM Singing & Keynote
- 8:30 PM Dr. Jim Wand, Hypnotist in Loyd
- 10 PM Devotional
- 11 PM Fireworks
- 12 PM Curfew

SUNDAY

- 8:30 AM Worship & Praise



5 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. **2** And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: **3** Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **4** Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. **5** Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. **6** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. **7** Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. **8** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. **9** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. **10** Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11** Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. **13** You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. **14** You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. **17** Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **18** For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. **19** Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20** For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **21** You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. **22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, You fool! will be liable to the hell of fire. **23** So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. **25** Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. **26** Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. **27** You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. **28** But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery

with her in his heart. **29** If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. **30** And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. **31** It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce. **32** But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. **33** Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn. **34** But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, **35** or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. **36** And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. **37** Let what you say be simply Yes or No; anything more than this comes from evil. **38** You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. **39** But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. **40** And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. **41** And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. **42** Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. **43** You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. **44** But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. **46** For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47** And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? **48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

6 **1** Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. **2** Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **3** But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **5** And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **6** But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your

Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **7** And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9** Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. **10** Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **11** Give us this day our daily bread, **12** and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. **14** For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, **15** but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. **16** And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **17** But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, **18** that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **19** Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **22** The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, **23** but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! **24** No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. **25** Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **27** And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? **28** And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, **29** yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? **31** Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? **32** For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. **33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. **34** Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

7 **1** Judge not, that you be not judged. **2** For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. **3** Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? **4** Or how can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, when there is the log in your own eye? **5** You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. **6** Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. **7** Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. **9** Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? **11** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! **12** So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. **13** Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. **14** For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. **15** Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **16** You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? **17** So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. **18** A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. **19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. **21** Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **22** On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? **23** And then will I declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. **24** Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. **26** And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. **27** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. **28** And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, **29** for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

CLASSES

“Your Words Can Change the World”

Matthew 5:33-37

Joe Brumfield • Loyd Auditorium • Capacity 2000

The words we use can tear down or build up. We make commitments and send a message about the types of people we are by the way we follow through with them. God expects the works of His children to stand for something. He expects us to let our ‘yes’ be yes and our ‘no’ be no. Our communications, the decisions we make and actions we take can have a profound affect... Everyday. Our words affect us and the people we come in contact with, both now and for the rest of our lives. It is imperative to take a stand everyday to be lights to the world we live in.

“The Actions We Make Everyday”

Matthew 6:1-4

Philip Jenkins • Sports Center Main Arena • Cap. 250

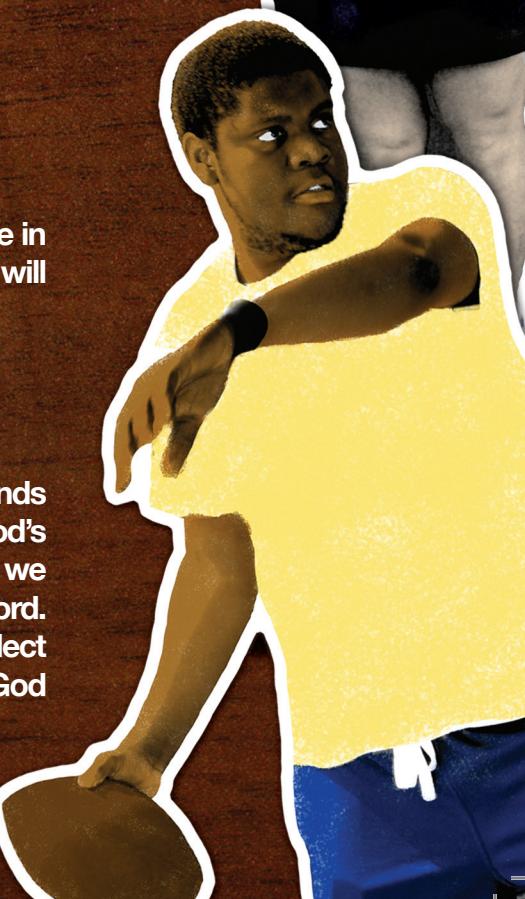
Our everyday actions can be public actions for all to see or private actions that only God sees. But, working together even the small and seemingly unimportant acts compose a very important portion of the Christian living quilt. We will have an exercise that illustrates how these small pieces can be collectively unstoppable.

“New Songs Class”

Ephesians 5:19

Phil Waggoner, Blake Beckham • Old Chapel Hall • Cap. 300

One of the great things about being at an event like R.U.S.H. is the opportunity to praise our God with so many other voices. During this time you'll not only be able to praise God with other Christian young people, but you'll also have the chance to learn some new songs you may or may not know as well. You'll leave encouraged, refreshed and you'll be able to go back home to your youth group with something new to share.



"Our Everyday Search"

Matthew 7:7-12

Brad Montague • Ayers Auditorium • Cap. 250

Movies...television...websites...This class will help you look at media in a whole new way. Living in this modern world of Youtube and blogging can seem so far from the world that Jesus describes in Matthew. You'll see that though the cultures may have changed the truth remains the same. We'll take a closer look at the films that resonate the deepest with us, the stories that connect with our lives and you'll see a God that is incredibly real and closer than you may have ever thought. You'll never watch a movie the same way again.

"Prayer of the Everyday Heart"

Matthew 6:5-14

Greg Ashmore, Grayson Holt • 2nd Floor Sewell Lobby • Cap. 100

Olivia Bradford, Britney Brush, Jennifer Gerhardt • Clayton Chapel • Cap. 100

A part of our everyday lives should include a strong prayer life. We should be in constant communication with God. He sees everything clearly and our lives will be more like Jesus's if we allow that clarity to guide our path.

Class: "How to study Everyday"

Jason Brazier; Ben McAnally • BK lawn • Cap. 100

It is hard to know what to do and say if we are only allowing our Christian friends and leaders to speak for God. The diet is unbalanced if we're not reading God's word first hand. The study of God's word can be an overwhelming task and we want to empower people with the ability to find personal meaning in the Word. Through the course of our daily lives we can meditate and study on a select verse or verses one day at a time so that we can better understand what God wants from us.

Facebook and Plastic Tarps

Seeing God in the Everyday

by Jennifer Gerhardt

I have to admit that when I read the theme for this year's R.U.S.H., I thought someone had made a mistake. The English teacher inside me pulled out an imaginary red pen and scribbled a slash between the words "every" and "day."

Certainly, the bright minds behind this event (and there's no sarcasm there, they really are bright) knew the difference between every day and everyday. "Every day" conveys consistency and fortitude. "Everyday" is different. It means, as my computer dictionary puts it, "having no remarkable feature to set it apart." Everyday is a word you use to describe routines and chores and checking your email. That did not seem, at first glance, like an appropriate theme for teaching teenagers about an incredible, remarkable God.

At second glance though it seems perfect. I'll use an admittedly weird personal example to illustrate:

Three years ago I lived a very normal life by most accounts. I had a house in the suburbs, a dog, a husband and a teaching job.

I'd recently graduated from college but even that small accomplishment contributed to my being "normal" in a college town full of well-educated people. My bright red couch was perhaps the most abnormal thing about me.

The truth is that I was living a spectacular life, a life bursting at the seams with blessings. But I didn't see that so much. I

saw the mortgage payments and the tests to grade and the barking dog and the long commute. I know now that every day of that life was packed with evidence of God's glory. Yet amidst all the stuff of my routine, I often missed the glory.

One day, driving home from class, I stopped at a red light I'd stopped at every day for months. Out of the corner of my eye I saw something sparkling and swaying, like it was dancing to a song.

It was a 30-foot tall black tarp covering up the mess of a construction project not yet finished. It was a plastic tarp. Yep, I said a tarp. And for some reason—believe me I know it sounds weird—I was captivated. I couldn't take my eyes off it. It was so peaceful and beautiful, the way the plastic caught the wind and the sunlight. It was like the tarp was showing me the beauty of two things I'd never have been able to see clearly otherwise. Like the tarp was a display case at the museum and wind and light were the featured exhibits.

Okay, I know this may sound weird to you. You may be thinking, "Hey lady, we're kids. You'd better make this interesting quick." Okay, here's the point. One day, I saw something and it made me see other things that are basically invisible but always present and always amazing. I just hadn't noticed because they're pretty much invisible and it takes something being affected for you notice the thing that's affecting it. It took the tarp dancing and glittering for me to see the wind and the light.

And I realized driving home that day, thinking about a tarp, that I'd been missing all kinds of beautiful-but-invisible things—God things—because I hadn't noticed the dancing and glittering all around me.

You see, I'd been taught, like you probably have, that God does not work in miraculous



ways today but that He works through something much harder to understand: providence. And because providence is so hard to understand we can't always nail down exactly when and where God's working in our lives. While it is true that God doesn't intervene miraculously in our lives today, and I guess it's true also that understanding how He works is complicated, it's simply not true that we can't see Him working. And I think that's the assumption I'd been living under: If we can't see God in the world, why look for Him?

The truth is that God is in every day, and if we look we can see Him moving the tarp.

Just consider the following passages from the Psalms:

- "I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." Psalm 27:13
- "Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf!" Psalm 66:5
- "The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory." Psalm 97:6

Over and over the psalmists talk about seeing God—not seeing miracles or God's actual physical presence, but seeing God in His creation, in His goodness, and in His working on man's behalf (which basically just means in the good stuff He does for people). James 1:17 says every good and perfect gift is from above, suggesting that in every gift we should see the Giver. Matthew talks about our needing to be lights so that others can see God in us.

In us.

It seems wild, but we can even see God in ourselves and in Christians around us.

While I'd been living a normal life, that normal life had been full of abnormal happenings: stunning sunrises, overwhelming generosity from friends, unconditional love from my husband, a great job I loved, even a faithful dog. These may seem like normal things (they did to me for a long time), but they're not. They're evidence of God working in my life and they're mirrors of the beauty and love and faithfulness of God.

When we see good things happening to people around us we should see God. When we watch a spider weaving a web we should see God. When we read a great book about the power of love we should see God. And when we see a Christian offer friendship to a lonely person we should see God.

So I guess the reason I'm talking about this, the reason the title "everyday" brought me to this discussion, is that I've realized seeing God is an everyday kind of thing. God can be seen every day, and He can be seen in the everyday.

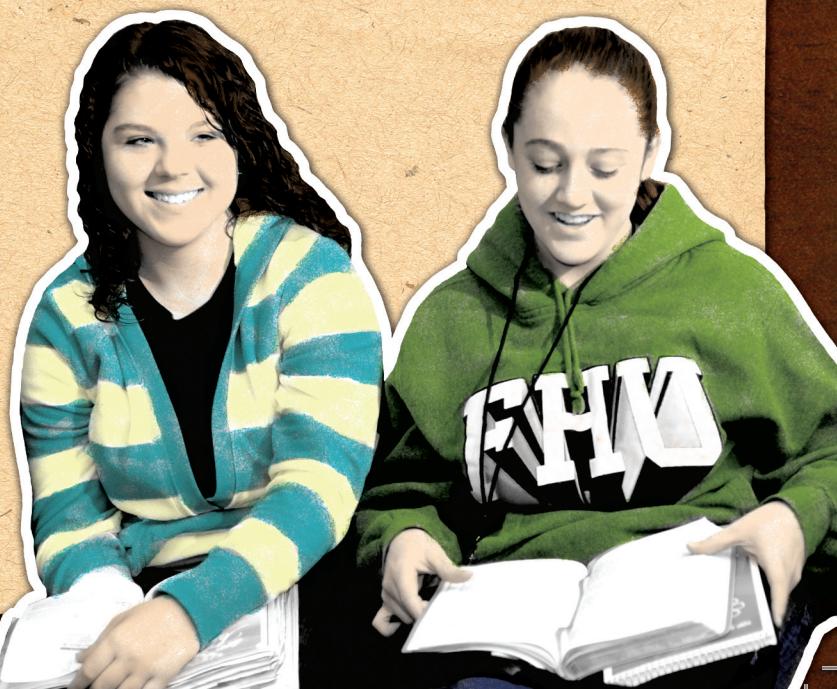
You see, your life can get really normal. You can be going to school and playing sports and hanging out with friends and spending hours on facebook, and in all the routine you can totally miss God.

But, if you're willing to look, you can actually see God in the routine. You can see God in science class looking at a cell under the microscope. You can see God in your levelheaded, patient teammates on the soccer field. You can see God in your friends, in the very fact that you have friends. You can even see God on facebook if you look hard enough.

Here's your challenge: See God in the everyday instead of allowing the everyday to blind you to Him. Look for God everywhere and you will find Him in so many places that you'll stop being surprised when you do.

The theme for this weekend is "Everyday." Make sure your day has "no remarkable feature" to set it apart because every day for you is full of remarkable things.

For you, seeing God should be normal.



in the gap

by Ed Benesh

"We are a beautiful let down, painfully uncool; the church of the dropouts, losers, sinners, failures and fools."

- Switchfoot, Beautiful Letdown

When it comes to living the Christian life in the everyday I am "in the gap." As far as my efforts are concerned there is not a day that goes by when I do not realize the shortcomings, inadequacies, inabilities and flaws. At the same time there is not a day that goes by that I do not feel the sting of spiritual sweat in my eyes and yet...here I am...in the gap. There are not many moments that pass that fail to illicit, in some small way, sparks of spirituality, which, collectively, make the flame that burns inside, yearning for spiritual growth and abundance, flare and blaze. Yet, I am "in the gap."

What is this gap? It is not that generational one or the one where you can find the latest fashions. It is the frustrating contrast between who I am and what God, in places like the Sermon on the Mount, says He expects of me. Oh! Folks love the words of the Sermon on the Mount. They will put them on plaques, hang them on walls and even modify them and make t-shirts for youth at rallies to wear around. But each and all of them live in the gap of the everyday, feeling the acute sting of guilt and pain that accompanies it. Don't think so? Wearing your shirt proudly? Consider then the following questions and see if you think differently.

Love your enemies, even those who persecute me and deliver me to death? Blinely remove the beam from my own eye? Turn the other cheek? Be the light of the world and salt of the earth when my life is so often a wreck, full of temptation, trial, failure and weakness? Don't worry about tomorrow and always seek first God's kingdom when it's a big world with lots to do? Oh! My favorite has to be "And if you right eye offend thee, pluck it out" (Mt. 5:29). In the name of honesty, even at the risk of sounding not-so-pious

or somehow spiritually deficient, the Sermon on the Mount has always seemed more

of a problem in practicality than it has pertinent advice for living. For most, it simply is not real in a way that is easily explained in the everyday life. In other words, when most read it (adults and youth alike), while it is beautiful, they walk away saying, "You have got to be joking!" Be honest now! The well-hidden secret of the Sermon on the Mount is that none of us can ever meet that mark and we are painfully aware of it, though not often ready to admit it. If that is you, then you do not understand the fullness of this sermon.

One lifetime student of God's word, a man by the name of John Stott, in his book *The Message of the Sermon on*

The Mount, said of most Christians, "As they read it, it drives them to despair. They see it an unattainable ideal. How can they develop the heart-righteousness, turn the other cheek, love their enemies? It is impossible." How can that be? Is this not the greatest sermon ever delivered? Is this not the high point of Christianity where the child of God is described in beautiful detail, beginning with his attitudes? Certainly! It is all that and more, but that does not eliminate the fact that most fall short—very short of the ideals presented in it and thus fall in the gap. But, that is not the real challenge. The real challenge lies in answering the question of why that is and how we can overcome it.

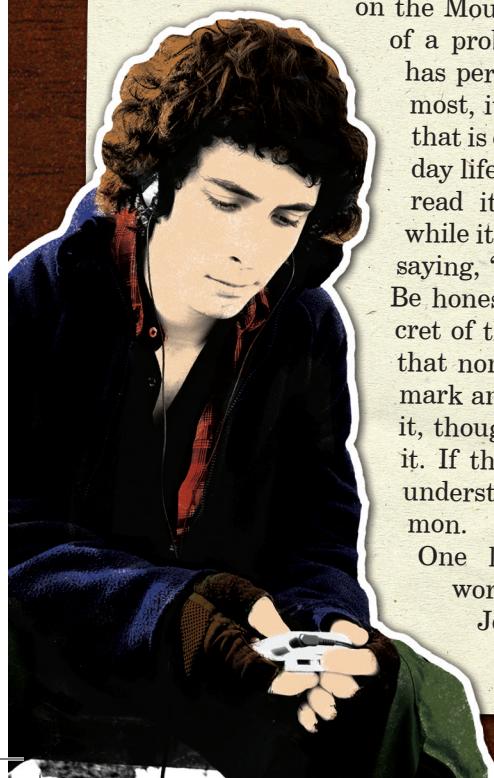
The Plans of Men

How do we overcome the gap? How do I get to the place where I am what the Lord says that he wants me to be? How do I refuse the drugs, alcohol, premarital sex, covetousness and being a slave to coolness?

Some would simply say, "Learn more...study harder." You know, there are a lot of churches in this world that are simply in the business of spiritual or biblical education. They, through various means, have set about a course of teaching that is designed to do nothing more than get as much of what they feel is the right information into your head as possible. They are learning institutions, but little else. There is no real expectation for change because we never hold anyone accountable for how they live.

Old brother Grumpy over there has been—well—grumpy for over the last 30 years. He has sat through all the sermons and classes about not complaining, being positive, not speaking ill of brethren and other related concepts time and again. Yet, he never changes. We don't expect him to, but we do expect him to know better. No one ever approaches him and says, "Brother Grumpy, when are you going to do what God says and put off your worldly ways?" Think about it. How much of your Christian life is spent just getting the right information? There is a major problem with this if it becomes our sole objective—learning is not living. "Okay! I am supposed to love my enemy," you might say. "Now tell me how I can do that!" Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever felt that there was this gigantic gap between what the preacher or Bible class teacher said on Sunday morning and what was actually possible in your life, though you were trying your best to be a faithful Christian? If you are honest, you have! We all have because most church educational plans cannot ever do what is necessary to make you righteous. We cannot give them credit for more than they are able to do—that is, educate and equip. While it is necessary and wonderful, it is not the bulk of Christian endeavor. To attempt to so narrow the definition of Christianity to mere recitation of a few verses of scripture, is to make Christianity a fairy tale.

Have you ever heard of Snow White? Great gal that Snow White, but she has quite the challenge in life doesn't she? I



mean she hides from her stepmother because she is afraid and upset, lives with seven short, emotionally-challenged guys and wanders around singing, "Some day my prince will come." Many are the Snow White Christians. They have all the information about themselves, good, bad and even their adversaries, but that's it. They just wait around for some Prince to come do it all for them—remove them from the evil, confront the stepmother, etc. They, like Snow White, are simply waiting to live!

Other folks will say that all you need to know and understand to overcome this gap between us and the Sermon on the Mount is practice, practice, practice avoiding things that are wrong. They'll tell you how many times Tiger Woods hits a chip shot and puts or how many hours Michael Jordan practiced each day to supposedly prove that if you just act spiritual more often then you will become more spiritual. Now, that sounds good and all: get the education, keep learning and then simply do more of what you have learned to do to avoid the things you know not to do. Amazing! It is so simple. Yet, it is just not completely or perfectly true. Christianity is not just a behavioral modification plan. It is not just about the chopping off of hands and plucking out of eyes. This is, to borrow some more words from the Sermon on the Mount, like saying, if the bad tree just puts out more good fruit then eventually the tree will be good. No! Good fruit comes from a good tree, Christ said. If we equated the practice of Christianity to weight loss, then this behavioral modification type of advice would fall into the "just-eat-less-and-exercise-more" category. It is obvious, but not always effective or helpful.

When Christ lived, this behavioral modification type of goodness was the norm. There was a group of rabbis that were known as the "Bruised and Bleeding Rabbis." How did they get the name? They figured, for instance, if it was wrong to commit adultery then they would avoid even looking at a woman. You can just about guess how that turned out. There they were walking down a busy street in Jerusalem when they caught sight of a beautiful woman. Instantly they looked away, but kept on walking. The result? They were constantly stumbling over things, falling and doing themselves harm.

The same thing goes on today. People think that the righteousness described in the Sermon on the Mount can only come by not engaging in forbidden activities. They see God as this severe despot with a checklist of behaviors he hopes to catch you in. This is what Christ pokes fun of when he says, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away." Is the eye really the problem? No! If we really did this, simply thinking that this behavioral modification is the key, then we would all have to roll into heaven as mutilated messes or we would be bloody stumps, but still have bitterness, anger, hatred and lust in our hearts. The eye isn't the problem, the heart is and no amount of behavioral modification will change that by itself.

Notice Christ's words in Mark 7:20-22. "It is what comes out of people that makes them unclean. For from within, out of people's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly." In other words,

you can change the outside all you want, but what is inside will come out and declare the behavioral modification plan foolish and vain.

God's Answers

So what is the answer? To be a Christian you must have knowledge. After all, Paul boldly proclaimed, "Faith comes by hearing the word of God" (Romans 1:17). Furthermore, you must work at it or modify your behavior. Again, Paul would say, "But be ye transformed (modified behavior) by the renewing of your mind (the right knowledge), that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, and what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2). However, "All men sin and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). One cannot fail to make every attempt to actually be a Christian and grow in not only knowledge, but the efficient and effective application of that knowledge or, some might say, wisdom. Both of these great teachings are summed up in Paul's writing to Titus, which also adds the last element we need to discuss. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11-12).

The training may be there. The action may be there. But only by adding the final ingredient and coming fully to grips with it will we ever find ourselves outside the gap of the daily rigors of Christianity, with a keen ability to fully see each day and each zealously performed spiritual exercise and trial as a blessing. The answer, as Paul said, is GRACE! I cannot do the Sermon on the Mount alone. That is part of its point. Let's say it again. The true genius, though often misunderstood, of the Sermon on the Mount is that YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE. YOU NEED GRACE. Notice the end of chapter five. "Therefore, you must be perfect as your father is perfect" (5:48). In chapter seven he even tells us the "The gate is narrow and the way is hard and few there are who find it" (7:13). How can we do it? How can we keep our sexual purity, conquer our destructive quest for cool, put down our pride and live above life's difficult circumstances. Again, it is grace.

All throughout the Sermon on the Mount, though the word is not used, it is hinted at. Take, for instance, the second beatitude. "Blessed are those who mourn." The blessedness of Christianity begins with mourning and being blessed by it. What an odd combination. It is like saying, "Man, I am so happy to be sad." The mourning here is over sin or poverty in spirit or, to put it another way, the reason I don't deserve happiness. The blessing is God overcoming my sin through grace.

to create meekness (controlled strength) so I can "hunger and thirst for righteousness," be "merciful," "pure



in hearts," and get through the trial of persecution to love my enemies.

So, how do you, to illustrate, love your enemy? Because God says so? Because you have practiced well to avoid hatred or your enemy altogether so you won't overtly hate them? No! It is because you realize grace in your soul and then extend grace because, though you are a sinner, that is who, at the core of your being, you are.

When all is said and done, the Sermon of the Mount does not make sense and is not practical unless we realize first just how far short we really fall and just how far God reaches to lift us up through his graciousness. What can close that gap for me and you is grace in the everyday, not just trying harder and not just getting more information. You see, grace is what defines us, it being a function of love or self-sacrificing benevolence. The world can build buildings, have meetings, feed the poor, heal people's wounds, give comfort and even satisfy most needs. But, the one thing they cannot give is grace in its truest sense. That is why so much of the Sermon on the Mount is so contrary to man's typical way of thinking. Christianity defies the human condition and extends grace. Love your enemy? That, my friend, is grace!

Unfortunately, for far too long we have ignored the simple, fundamental truth of God's graciousness and have thus been forced into one of man's schemes of Christianity that falls short and seem to produce only guilt and shame with no relief for either.

Ask people of the world, "What do you think of when I say the word 'church' or 'Christian'?" How many do you think will give you some grace-centered answer like compassionate, merciful, forgiving? Not many. And yet it is so essential and so fundamental to just simply living that life is meaningless and full of frustration without it.

Why this is so important

First, without a firm grasp on grace, knowing also that we all sin, we have no means by which we can find release from our shortcomings. Should we try harder when we fail? Sure! Should we learn more to help along the way? By all means! However, only in the realization of grace can we find freedom from the sins that so bind us and render us powerless by their guilt and shame. Paul would say, "Let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely and run..." (Hebrews 12:1). If you want to run unencumbered, living the everyday with renewed fervor and strength, then you must appeal to His graciousness.

Second, it is grace that gives power to things like prayer, providence and confession. When I, let's say, confess my faults, I am appealing to His grace to strengthen me and help me through. "Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed" (James 5:16). The two plans of man we have mentioned do not encourage such. For instance, the behavioral modification plan, which focuses on the outward man, would just have us feign piety and create sects of the religious elite, where sin is not dealt with, but rather caused hardened hearts and spiritual system failures.

Third, without realizing grace then I cannot forgive and I become locked in a cycle of fault-finding be-

haviors that are anti-spiritual and counterproductive. As Philip Yancey writes in his book *What's So Amazing About Grace*, "Not to forgive imprisons me in the past and locks our all potential for change (growth). I thus yield control to another, my enemy and doom myself to suffer the consequences of the wrong...we forgive not merely to fulfill some higher law of morality; we do it for ourselves...the only thing harder than forgiveness is the alternative." If we cannot forgive then we cannot be forgiven and what a burden to bear. If we find the everyday of Christianity hard then perhaps we have not come to grips with grace's demand for forgiveness.

Fourth, a kingdom that fails in grace, fails Christ. If you consider all the folks that Christ interacted with, you see a broad spectrum of individuals, from the poor and lowly to the physician and Pharisee. Christ sought relationship with them all, but it was the men and women who seemed the most needy—the failures, rejects, socially unacceptable and physically challenged—who more often accepted his good news. Why? Well there are a number of reasons, but chief among them is grace. "...But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20). If we fail to be defined by it then we are not his kingdom and have no part in it.

Finally, though we have not exhausted the limits of God's teaching on grace, if you are to be light then you must impart grace. Let's face it, no going-on-40-year-old guy like me is going to make much headway with trying to convince your high school or college friends that Jesus is the answer. You will be the one with the greatest power to do that. But if you are going to do it then how do you help men see the light of the "good news" without saying things like "You are saved by grace through faith" (Eph. 2:8)? Well, you can't. Imagine how much harder, however, it will be if your life is not grace-centered. You can tell your friends all you want about God's grace, but until they see it in you, it is nothing more than a point of frustration and failing for both you and them.

Conclusion

Let me give a word of caution or danger. Everyday grace is not a license to willfully sin in the everyday, but a means to make it out of the gap and stay out. I cannot expect God's grace to reach me if I am willfully off spiritual dumpster diving in the spiritual rot of the world. I must do my part. Remember, "For the grace of God has appeared to all men, teaching..." In the everyday I must be obedient to that truth. I must be grace-driven and heaven-bound.



Living in Retrospect

by George and Jane Washington

For young and old alike, many days pass that are ordinary, routine days, days that are full of life, full of activity, and that are just typical for us and for every one of our acquaintances. We tend to do the same things each day: eat, clean, work, play, sleep and so it goes. What makes these days exciting, full of joy, a wonder to behold is when you add the word Christian to the ho hum daily living. Then you discover just how exciting life can be.

Each day when we awake, the routine of the day is filled with the birds singing, the leaves of the trees gently waving their good morning, the sun promising a glorious day or the rain showering the earth, and because we have added the word Christian to our everyday living, we know that God is in charge and all is right with the world.

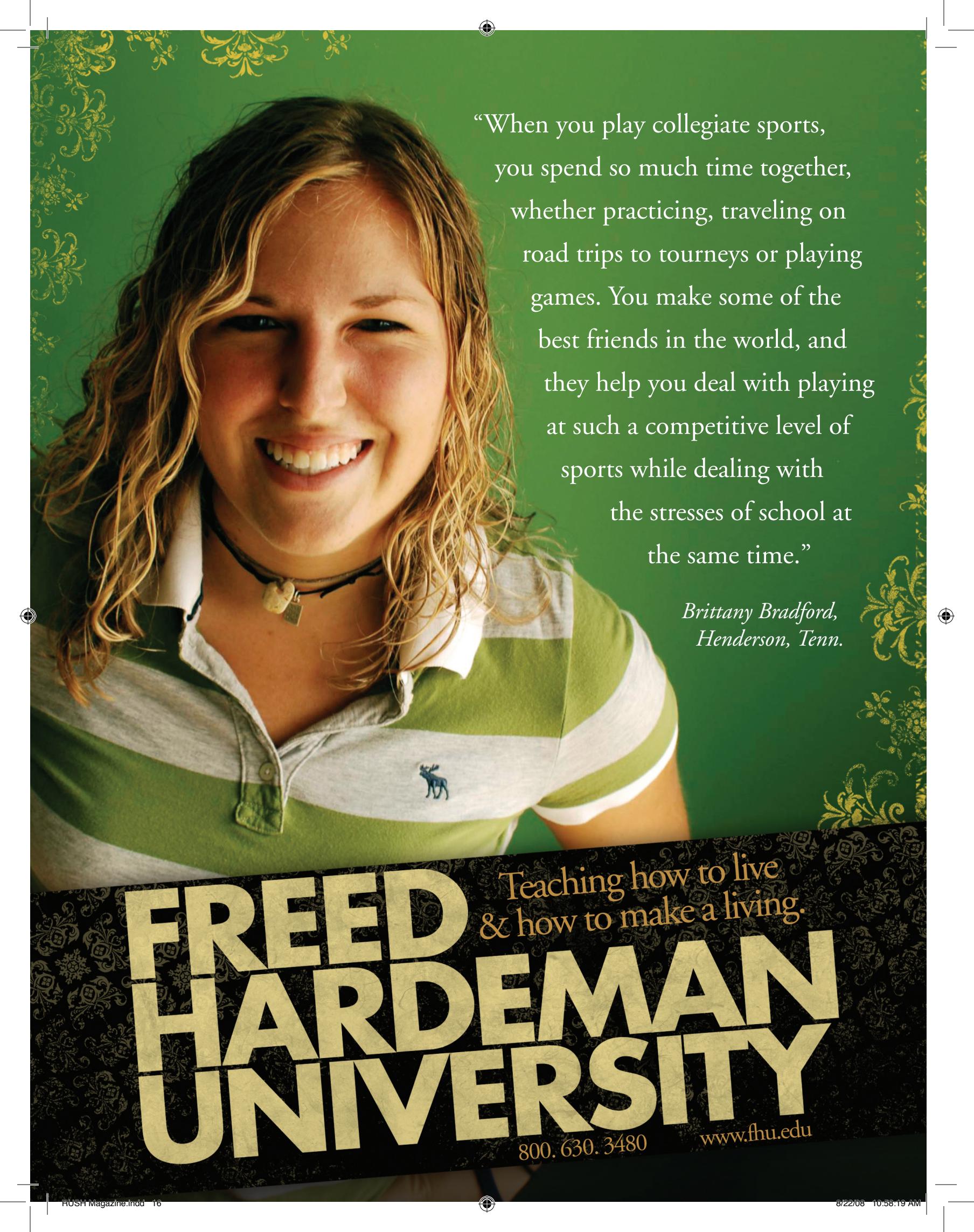
Having lived many years, we know the joy of rising to face a new day, the joy of having our health, the joy of grandchildren being taught who God is and how much richer their lives will be when it is centered on God. We know the sorrow of loss of loved ones, the pain of watching an illness take over a life, and yet we know, God is in control because we are living a Christian Life.

Age brings wisdom and understanding that without God our lives would mean nothing. We are to live in this world that has been so beautifully provided for us as a temporary dwelling, we are to enjoy God's creation. Our goal of excellence should always be that though we are here, we wish our final resting place to be heaven.

Daily living may become slower as we grow older. We may occasionally need an extra few minutes to nap, but old age and retirement does not mean we quit working. Ecclesiastes 9:1 gives advice for daily Christian living that we should heed, do it now for tomorrow may be too late.

Each day that God allows us to arise, we count it great joy to recall that "this is the day the Lord has made I will rejoice and be glad in it" Psalms 118:24.





"When you play collegiate sports, you spend so much time together, whether practicing, traveling on road trips to tourneys or playing games. You make some of the best friends in the world, and they help you deal with playing at such a competitive level of sports while dealing with the stresses of school at the same time."

*Brittany Bradford,
Henderson, Tenn.*

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