Staying Fresh

By Judy Glanz

from the heart

TAKE 5 is . . .
Your five-minute refresher, a "quick read" for Network members focusing on spiritual growth, resources, and the mission of youth ministry.

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CALENDAR

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Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit; because you can do nothing without Me" (John 15:5).

The truth is, apart from Jesus we can accomplish *nothing* for the kingdom of God. But how do we keep "abiding in Christ" a fresh reality in our personal life and ministry?

One way to remember is to practice what I call "inviting Jesus to the party."

Knowing God Makes You Bold

Daniel 11:32b says, "…the people who know their God will be strong and take action."

Knowledge of God here is a description of the closest and most intimate relationship possible with the living God. Knowing God and His truth gives you confidence.

For example, in Matthew 28:20, Jesus promised to be with us always. We forget this vital truth. I challenge you to practice this by choosing a habit to remind you of His presence (after you've memorized the verse).

One way to remember is to practice what I call "inviting Jesus to the party." This can be part of "praying without ceasing." Pray like this, "Jesus, I invite you to this conversation (classroom, party, date, talk, Bible study, relationship)."

The truth is, if you're a believer, God is with you always. Acknowledging that truth in prayer is powerful for your walk with Him, for your witness and testimony, and for your next words to others or in prayer.

Persevering Faith

Faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-9). Be thankful for the gift freely given to you! Faith grows and is exercised when we choose to believe and live by God's promises.

Two of my favorite verses are 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (NASB).

Time and again, God allows me to face a task or ministry or relationship for which I feel totally inadequate. As I pour out my timidity and fear to God in prayer, His Spirit whispers these verses to me. When I choose to believe them, my faith grows as God meets me at my point of need.

A Surrendered Life

In Romans 12:1-2, Paul urged believers to give themselves completely to God. That is worship, he said. We live in a culture bombarded with ungodly stimuli that derail us from a mind set on Christ (Colossians 3:1-3). But spiritually healthy people surrender to God.

How often should you surrender? At least daily for me; and then every time I discover by the whisperings of the Spirit that I've taken control of my life again.

In Romans 12, Paul specifically said to surrender "your bodies as a living sacrifice."

Your prayer may go something like this: "Lord, I give you *my eyes*. I will look at no worthless thing. I give you *my ears* to hear no evil (gossip, including my own complaints; some news reports). I give you *my arms* to carry out your work, to give hugs of encouragement to strengthen believers and others you direct me to. I give you *my legs* to walk where you would have me walk. Protect me today from walking into places I don't belong."

continued on next page

Stay Tuned

Greg Stier, president of Dare 2 Share Ministries, one of NNYM's Cooperating Ministries, will be featured on the June 1 national broadcast of Focus on the Family. To find when the program broadcasts in your area, go to www.family.org/fmedia/radiolog/index.cfm.

Staying Fresh (continued)

This is only a beginning of surrendering yourself to God. He will lead you and show you the unsurrendered parts of your life.

A Habit of Prayer

If you don't pray, stay home. Can God work in our ministries and bless us if we don't pray? Absolutely! I'm counting on it. But He commands us to pray. Jesus modeled a surrendered life of prayer, and He wants us to participate in what He's doing by praying His will back to Him. When we pray His known will—His Word—our faith and our ministries will grow as He answers those prayers.

Listen to one example of how Paul prayed for the churches: "(I pray) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. (I pray) that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe" (Ephesians 1:17-19).

I challenge you to research Paul's prayers and to begin to pray for yourself and your ministry as he prayed.

Attending to the Important

Our only hope to go the distance in youth ministry is a close union with the living Christ.

The world has a lot to offer students to keep them interested, entertained, and feel important. Few of our church youth budgets can match the techno magic and "wow factor" of worldly media enterprises that lure young people. But as youth workers, we have so much more to offer students than entertainment and the latest media show. We have Jesus. We have relationships to offer them. John 17:3 says, "This is eternal life: that they may know You."

If we stay close to Him daily, moment by moment, and walk with Him, we'll have His strength, power, wisdom, love, direction, peace, joy and all that He promises those who love Him. Without a vital love relationship with the Eternal that overflows to others, we youth workers don't have much else to offer students that can compete with what's available to them outside the church. It wouldn't satisfy them or us, anyway! Only Jesus will truly satisfy the longings of human hearts. "Let us strive to know the Lord. His appearance is as sure as the dawn. He will come to us like the rain, like the spring showers that water the land" (Hosea 6:3).

Excerpt from Impact: Student Ministry that Will Transform a Generation.



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We want your feedback on TAKE 5. Send your comments to take5@youthworkers.net or fax to (858) 451-6900.

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