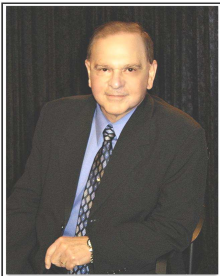


# the Informer newsletter



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PCAI & PCAI CLERGY ASSOCIATION  
PARAGON CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL  
APRIL 2018 – ISSUE 4

## STAY AWAKE—BE ALERT—KEEP WATCHING!

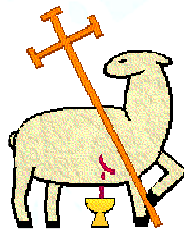


(A Commentary Note on Matthew 26:40)  
By Dr. Henry A. Harbuck / PCAI General President & Int'l Overseer

And He came [back] to His disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “What is this? Are you so weak [and lacking in strength] you couldn’t keep watching with Me for one hour?”

It was a common practice for all Hebrews to stay awake on the evening of Passover and discuss with their friends and family how God miraculously delivered their ancestors from the taskmasters of Egypt. Readers may likely misunderstand the meaning of the phrase here: “Keep watch—keep watching—stay alert—stay awake!” It doesn’t mean the disciples were to be on the lookout for trouble or something out of the ordinary to take place. Instead, Jesus is challenging them to honor God by staying up late on this particular night to discuss the Passover story of deliverance, reminding one another of the goodness of God. If

Jesus meant for His disciples to “stay awake and watch for trouble,” would this be of any value to them or to Him? Notice here, Jesus is praying about “the cup” and His road to the cross to shed His blood for the new covenant—Jesus Himself, becoming the sacrificial Paschal Lamb—the Passover—”For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed— [that is, slain] for us.” (I Cor. 5:7; KJV - parentheses and italics are added) By sleeping and not staying awake, the disciples were dishonoring Christ and His mission and the Passover. Next, Jesus says to His disciples, “Keep watching with Me.” He wanted their thoughts to be centered on the ancient Passover and its significance, and His mission as the Passover Lamb.



The occurrence here is similar to the events of the parable found in Mark 13:34-36, where the master of the house takes a journey and commands his slaves to “be alert” as doorkeepers

(guards—porters) until He returns. Slaves and servants were sometimes commanded to be “doorkeepers” —“to stand watch” as stated in the parable. Probably, Jesus is saying to His disciples, “Stay awake—be alert—keep watching!” ♥

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OFFICE HOURS :  
9:00AM to 4:00PM

# Your Very First Victory can Explain Everything Ascribed to Your Future Destiny

By Pastor Lynn Burling / Christian Faith Church Senior Pastor

We all move in circles of predetermined events that reveal things to us—unfolded things, that looking back seem orchestrated. When we are actually in the event we are in awe and wonder and we ask ourselves, “how did I get here?” Where we are spiritually today or where we **are not** should motivate us toward finding out! God comes to inch us along to choose the best. Your one choice didn’t get you here—it was a series of choices—to measure our seriousness. Destiny deals not only with what is drawing you, but the various pieces of your life that God puts into place—that when you arrive at your destiny—they all fit together. All things fit together, work together for good. It’s a positioner decision that weighs in the balance of time in our generation to influence something...that changes someone’s history or maybe even ours. It is not a one-time event. It’s a lifetime of events and the sooner we get the church to accept the challenge, there’s no telling what impact we’ll have on this generation or your sphere of influence—Yours and the church’s spiritual growth.

Collectively, God thinks generationally and in terms of Kingdom possibilities and He thinks in Divine Purpose and overall strategy. What good is it if God has power and no plan? The Word states **Before the foundation of the world, everything about you was settled in God’s mind for your destiny**. It’s built in...it’s

baked in. God is going to work His plan. Look back over your life. We grieve and cry over the things we lose in this life when all the time “they” did not pertain to your destiny. *When God is ready to promote you, He will move you from the background to the foreground like David*. After Samuel anointed him saying, “Behold your future King!”, David didn’t go and hire a P.R. firm to do T.V. or direct mail or put up billboards.” Stop promoting yourself and wait! Too many people are involved in false advertising for themselves portraying something they’re not. “**You’re not,**” until God says you are. Let God move things around! If we don’t know our purpose in Him then we cannot do what God called us to do! God brought David from obscurity to the forefront by an attack on an uncircumcised Philistine/Goliath that He couldn’t swallow anymore. David separated his head from his body. 1 Samuel 18:6,7,8 (KJV) “*And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet David with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ASCRIBED unto*

*David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?”*

**ASCRIBED Means:...ALREADY CREDITED TO DAVID, CHALKED UP HIS FUTURE VICTORIES BEFORE THEY EVER HAPPENED, PROPHETIC!**

Your first victory can change your direction and your destiny forever. It is **ASCRIBED** to your many future victories. It was the way the victory was won that brought him into prominence. That first victory was prophetic by pronouncement as to his future victories. See, when somebody gets ready to attack you, God is just showing you off... “have you considered my servant Job?” We can’t remain neutral when the enemy shows up. We have to resist. (David was not neutral.) Samuel told David, “You’re going to be King”, but it didn’t mean *today*. When you receive a prophecy, you can’t make it come to pass...*today!* Remember how the prodigal son got something that was his...*too soon!* “Give me the portion of goods that belongs to me.” They were his. (It’s mine!) ***But timing is everything, you can’t handle correctly what you don’t know the value of or “its purpose” for your future.*** What you’re used to winning with is probably how you’ll defeat the next giant. Now we get to the meat. David, our subject, after coming home from many victories was not greeted by



tambourines, music and dancing as the first time. Once he was with all his friends and Ziklag was on fire. David was always cool with his friends...(Pause, a Selah moment.) Ask yourself...***what did God know...and when did He know it?*** God allowed him to be put in a position of destruction/stoning. But David encouraged himself in the Lord, he called for the oracles of God. ***David heard all the songs about him killing his ten thousands when he had only killed one man and 2 predator animals.*** He pulled from those prophetic assertions many times in battles and that surely did come to pass. Can you, Saint of God, like David understand what God has **ASCRIBED TO YOUR LIFE** and ministry? We never have to force it because He said in Isaiah 46:10, “*Declaring (His Word) the end from the beginning, and from ancient times.*” (before there was time.) Even the things that are not done yet, not yet performed by you, that are **ASCRIBED** to you, saying, “MY council shall stand and I will do MY pleasure?” Today celebrate what has been **ASCRIBED** unto you! Every person you’ve met and prophesied to, preached to, was an “**ASCRIBED** for” in time and place to you even to the persons involved. ♥

# Ten Things VBS IS and IS NOT (Source: Share Faith Ministries)

VBS started out as simple week of Bible training for children that over time has become a carnival ride theme and live interactive learning; but let's strip away method long enough to consider bare bones objectives that will help us stay on course with the purpose for which we have been called. People in the community may see it as a chance for free babysitting, but we have been given the directive to provide substantive and truthful answers to little minds that inquire, and the sobering reality is that we are accountable for every moment given and every resource afforded. As you make plans for your church's Vacation Bible School, please take the time to do a little soul searching and consider VBS: What It is and What It Isn't.

1. **It is not entertainment.** Throughout the years many VBS programs have made flashy graphic, eye-popping decorations and silly games the focus. While none of these things in and of themselves are bad, they are definitely not the focus of VBS. VBS is about revealing God to children, not 5 days of entertainment.

**VBS is an opportunity to reveal God.** Deut. 29:29 says that "the secret things belong to God but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children..." We are entirely missing the point of the VBS exercise if the children put in our care walk away without taking home at least one revelation of who God is. We have all of creation and His written word to work with, so there is no excuse.

2. **VBS is not just a theme.** Every VBS comes with an overarching theme. This helps bring continuity to each day, teaching, and activity. But the point of a VBS theme is to build a bridge to sharing the Gospel with your kids. It is always important to remember that your VBS theme is a tool to accomplish your ultimate goal which is sharing the Gospel.

**VBS is an opportunity to present the Gospel.** Matt. 19:14 says, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Children love to ask questions, and the more they learn, the more they desire to learn. Statistics show that an overwhelming majority of Christian first became followers of Jesus between the ages of 4 and 14; after that, numbers drop off exponentially. Behold, today is the day of salvation.

3. **VBS Does Not Hide Scripture.** One way to view VBS is like the spoonful of sugar that helps the medicine of Scripture go down. But Scripture is not something that needs to be hidden. Instead, the truth of God's Word should be the centerpiece of every VBS activity, craft and teaching. The surest way to drain your VBS of life is to hide Scripture behind the spectacle of skits, graphics and decorations. The key is finding a way to teach Scripture in a way that brings God's Word to life in new and exciting ways!

**VBS is an opportunity for children to memorize Scripture.** Only good things can come from hiding God's Word in these little hearts. The Bible teaches that His Word protects against sin and provides the moral compass to guard against destructive habits. It is God's Word that sustains us

and breathes true life beyond just mere physical survival and it is God's Word that reveals the secret to true and lasting success. Don't let them walk away without tucking away in their minds as many essentials as possible.

4. **VBS is Not a Cotton Candy Event.** Cotton candy looks amazing, but the moment it touches your mouth, it disappears. Instead, VBS should be like a juicy steak where kids are presented with life-changing Biblical truth that they chew on for the whole of VBS week and take with them long after VBS is over.

**VBS is an Opportunity to Lay a Foundation of Truth.** A structure built on faulty presuppositions will crack and eventually collapse, so too, a child may receive the good news with gladness, only to fall away when trials come. Here is your chance to help build a framework that will aid these kids in interpreting the world around them; something sturdy enough to build everything else in their lives upon. It is a battle for the mind that we should do everything we can to protect them from losing.

5. **VBS is not About You.** With the spectacle that is VBS, it can be easy to focus on those hosting the event rather than on those the event is actually for. VBS is not about showing how well we can decorate, organize games or perform skits. VBS is all about reaching children with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**VBS is Outreach to Children.** There should always be a clear intent to share the Word of God to our children and make impacts in their lives. But parents ARE looking for safe places to drop off their kids during the summer months for work or a break, so the set of objectives carefully crafted by VBS leaders might look completely different than the parents, but both perspectives are worthy of consideration. After all, the position held by both parties essentially achieves the same thing; they bring a young audience for instruction, modeling and care.

6. **VBS Does Not Replace Parents.** The primary teachers of children are their parents. Too often, children's ministry sees parents as competition rather than partners. The very best VBS program intentionally creates opportunities to connect parents with the content of VBS.

**VBS is Outreach to Parents.** Keep the parents involved and this isn't just about utilizing skills, gifts and abilities either. It is about encouraging them in their call to be ministers in their children's lives. To encourage parents to reinforce the biblical truths presented throughout the week. Consider having a kick-off meeting at the start of VBS and invite the parents to attend. You can also host a party at the ten celebrating the week and reviewing all that was learned. Make an effort to let parents know you are there for them as a church, through kids and family ministries and events, as well as extending any other family resources you have available.

7. **VBS is Not Behavior Modification.** It's important that the application of your VBS is always Gospel-centered. So rather

*Continued on page 4*

## Ten Things VBS IS and IS NOT *continued from page 3*

than teaching kids they need to try harder and do better, the practical teaching of VBS should always lead children to the forgiveness, redemption and salvation found in Christ alone.

**VBS is an Opportunity to Teach Ministry.** Here's where you help kids convert the things they learned about God into good practical use. It is the "How to be God's hands and feet" portion of the week. Help them realize a greater understanding and appreciation of what others are going through to open their eyes to act in compassion and love. Nurture the inherent concern that children have and help them find ways to serve. Perhaps you could schedule some kind of outreach during the week or share practical ways they can take home what they've learned in order to serve the people in their own lives.

8. **VBS is not a Performance.** VBS is not a show where leaders pretend to be perfect Christians and Encourage kids to become like them. Rather, VBS is a time for leaders to be real and open with the kids. The more leaders share their struggles and God's triumphs, the more kids will be drawn to the Gospel. Never underestimate the power of testimony. The Bible tells us that we overcome "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony."

**VBS is an Opportunity to demonstrate Christian life.** Share what God has done in your life and what you've seen God do in the lives of those around you. Give kids the opportunity to share what God has done for them. Be living examples throughout the week of service, love, discipline, preparation, and organization. We need to lead by example so these children can also grow up to see the value of being good role models to others. The Apostle Paul was able to encourage Timothy to follow...my teachings, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, steadfastness, persecutions, and sufferings because he was, himself, devoted to live Godly in Christ Jesus.

9. **VBS is Not Mechanical.** There are two ways you can look at VBS: 1) it is a big machine that you need to keep running at the expense of personal relationships, 2) it is an organic time of family and friends that needs to adapt so that relationship building always comes first. The latter is the only way to look at VBS. If the focus of VBS is not growing in our relationship with God and each other then we have missed the point.

**VBS is an Opportunity to Build Relationships.** Fellowship is as important for the little guys as it is for us. It is in childhood that many habits are formed, both good and bad. Teach them to contribute to each other's lives, to encourage each other, and to help each other grow. VBS week is a great time for teachers and leaders to form friendships too.

10. **VBS is not a 5-Day Lecture.** While teaching is an important part of VBS, so is the reality of what you are teaching. If you are teaching your kids about the joy of the Gospel, then that joy should be evident throughout VBS week. If you are discussing the excitement of following God, then that excitement should permeate every game, craft and activity. Instead of a theological lecture, VBS should be an interactive and immersive event where the Gospel is taught and experience.

**VBS is a Great Time for Fun.** Children learn best by actively doing, versus just sitting and listening the whole time, especially if the activity is fun. Put extra care into creating an environment where kids can enjoy learning and making life applications. Whether you use games, puzzles, acting out stories, dressing up or singing relevant songs to reinforce the lessons, the experience will be more memorable when there is participation and interaction. And the leaders should have fun too! Joy is contagious and it's a great way to let the kids know you love God and love ministering to them.

## CHURCH/MINISTRY TAX DATES TO REMEMBER

**April 17**—Federal income tax and self-employment tax returns by individuals for calendar year 2017 are due by this date.

Last day to file an amended federal income tax return (Form 1040) for calendar year 2017 (unless you received an extension of time to file your 2017 return).

**April 29**—Churches hiring their first nonminister employee between January 1 and March 31, 2018, may exempt themselves from the employer's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes by filing Form 8274 by this date (nonminister employees are thereafter treated as self-employed for Social Security purposes). The exemption is only available to churches opposed on the basis of religious principles to paying the employer's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes.

**April 30**—Churches with nonminister employees (or one or more ministers who report their federal income taxes as employees and who have elected voluntary withholding) must file an employer's quarterly federal tax return (Form 941) for the first calendar quarter of 2018 by this date. Enclose a check in the total amount of all payroll taxes (withheld income taxes, the withheld employee's share of Social Security taxes, and the employer's share of Social Security taxes) if these taxes were less than \$2,500 on March 31, 2018.

Keep good records!  
Dr. Jan Harbuck - PCAI Office  
Need Help? Call 1-866-268-5600

