

January hope

NHCC MONTHLY NEWSLETTER || JANUARY 2024

There Are No Shortcuts —Pastor Josh Huisman

Matthew 4:8-9 (NIV)

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

Shortcuts can be so enticing.

Proverbs 14:12 tells us there is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to destruction, and destruction often awaits at the end of shortcuts. God's plans and timing is perfect, shortcuts are our way of trying to speed up God's timing and control the process.

Several years ago I was on vacation

with my family in Orlando, FL. We had dinner reservations at a restaurant in Disney Springs called T-Rex. I parked the car in a garage that was closest to the restaurant because there was a torrential downpour. I mean the rain was coming down sideways! Now, I have always prided myself on having a strong sense of direction. In my family I'm known as "the

human compass". But on this day my compass would fail me in an extraordinary way.

When we came out of the parking garage and stood under the canopy,

the pouring rain presented us with a decision. We could run out into the rain



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and go straight on a walkway that was ahead of us, or, we could take an immediate right turn and choose a walkway that appeared to head in the wrong direction. How did I know it was the wrong direction? Well, I could clearly see the T-Rex smoke stack on the other side of some stores, and the walkway that was laid out straight ahead of us clearly led to the restaurant. So I made the decision for the family, "Let's go straight ahead!" "But dad!" One of my Children shouted, "The sign says we should go to the right!" It was too late. I already started running straight into the rain and my family had no choice but to follow.

In my arrogant mind I had found the shortcut! This decision immediately became a disaster as the once straight walkway was now filled with twists and turns. At one point we were running in the opposite direction of the restaurant! What should have been 10 seconds of running in the pouring rain now became a five-minute expedition of screaming and yelling at each other! We eventually made it to T-Rex but by that time we were absolutely drenched. To make matters worse, the restaurant was *freezing!* When we were seated the family just sat in angry, shivering silence. The shortcut was a disaster! As we left the restaurant we chose the

walkway we should have taken in the first place, and wouldn't you know it, that sign by the parking garage was right. The walkway that went to the right would have taken us to the restaurant in less than 10 seconds. Ugh!!! It was a shortcut that seemed right to me, but in the end led to destruction.

The devil will often present us with shortcuts that seem right. Consider the ramifications of the temptation that was presented to Jesus in our scripture for

today. Satan took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. "All this I will give to you if you will bow down and worship me," he offered. Think about this for a moment. The people of Israel believed that their Messiah would come and bring peace as a conquering King who would rule on an earthly throne. His reign would end all oppression and His majesty would have no

end. The devil was offering Jesus a shortcut that would give the people exactly what they wanted their Messiah to be. Here you go, Jesus. A straight path to a throne that will cause people to love you, worship you, and become the king they've always wanted. All you need to do is deviate from your Father's plan and bow down to me. This may be the greatest shortcut (temptation) ever presented. Remember that the next time



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you think Jesus doesn't know what it feels like to face temptation.

In essence, the devil was offering Jesus a path to an earthly throne that didn't include scourging, a crown of thorns, being spit upon, beatings, a cross, and NO DEATH! It's the shortcut dreams are made of. The only problem was the shortcut wasn't God's way, and when it's not God's way it's the wrong way. I'm so glad Jesus didn't take shortcuts. His response to Satan is the perfect example for us: *Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"* Matthew 4:10-11 (NIV). Jesus knew that his purpose and mission was to be rejected, bruised for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, and that his path to an eternal throne was through a death that would lead to resurrection!

Are you quick to look for shortcuts? Our desire to take shortcuts are often a sign of impatience and questioning God. The temptation to "go there" and "get there faster" is strong. My friend, I pray that you will resist this temptation. There are no shortcuts. They only appear to be, but the decision to try one will most likely leave you stranded in the rain.

—Pastor Josh

CONNECT GROUPS

Guess what? IT'S NOT TOO LATE for you to get connected to a New Hope Winter Connect Group! Right now – people have already gotten plugged into a Connect Group here at New Hope. They are already meeting new people, growing in their faith and discovering God's plan for their relationships, and their future. We want you to have the same opportunity. You can sign up easily today by visiting our church website, where you can find detailed information about each group we have available.

You might still have some hesitations...work gets hectic; you're not sure if the group will be right for you, and you're just afraid that you don't know what a Connect Group really is. Well...I want to encourage you to be bold and step out in faith! It's just a short-term commitment (1 1/2 hours per week), with a long-lasting, and potentially eternal impact. It's a place where you can meet some great people! So, check out our available groups and find one that fits your schedule.

Groups start meeting Sunday, January 7th and only last twelve weeks. And...if you join a group, and it's not the right fit, you can switch to a different group. If you have any questions - or if you are having a problem finding a group that works for you - reach out to me and I'd be glad to help you find a group that would work well with your schedule.

Growing together,

—Pastor Austin

SPOTLIGHT ON MISSIONS



Welcome to the Missions Spotlight for January. As we brought 2023 to a close, we want to thank everyone at NHCC for their participation in the Angel Tree; we requested 80 children, yet our congregation responded in a big way and supported a total of 166 children! Praise the Lord. The team sincerely appreciates everyone for their selfless generosity.

In addition, the Missions team has been receiving updates from many of the ministries which NHCC supports. This month, we are featuring two ministries: **First Priority Nashville**, a local ministry led by Steve Cherrico, centered on youth leading Christian clubs in schools to spread the gospel, and a brief note from **CRU Athletes in Action in Ukraine** led by Andrey and Yulia Sheplenko, focused on soccer events to introduce boys and girls to Jesus.

Many of our missions find themselves still in the midst of war, profound poverty, or political unrest, and we will be presenting other updates over the coming months. Finally, we continue to pray for these ministries, that God empowers them, blesses them, and turns His face towards them as they do God's work each and every day.

—New Hope Missions Team



What a year it has been! Because of your prayers and support, First Priority Greater

Nashville has seen tremendous growth in 2023. The time and resources that you provided have allowed for us to impact students on school campuses across Middle Tennessee. We have hired two full-time Area Directors, Jacob Sharp and Ryan McMichael, who are our "boots on the ground" in Davidson, Rutherford, Williamson and Maury Counties.

In 2023, our team saw hundreds of students trained through FP Clubs to share the gospel with their peers. We also saw an increased partnership with the local Church as we built networks of local support for those on school campus clubs. We held our annual Pray4Students Weekend in early August where over 2,000 Christ followers gathered and prayed in the name of Jesus on local campuses for the students, teachers and administration. What a difference it makes to be able to start the school year off with united prayer over a school campus! (John 17: 20 & 21)

My favorite story from this past year comes from a school that our team has led prayer over for 10+ years during the above mentioned Pray4StudentsTN. In that time, we have not only prayed for the school and its leadership, but also that a group of students would grab hold of a burden for their classmates. This year that high school launched their first ever FP Club with 7

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student leaders. As of the writing of this letter, we are seeing over 50 students per week at the club, and 14 students have made decisions to put their hope in Christ!

As always, my family and teammates appreciate your prayers. We still have a lot of work to do for the sake of the gospel and students. Thank you for partnering with us.

—Steve Cherrico



God gave me opportunity to leave Ukraine in October 2023 and to see my family in Budapest and attend an Athletes in Action conference in Albania. I have shared about situation in our country in front of our leaders, and they prayed for us and Ukraine. Just me, Yulya and Anya our good friend and AIA staff, had possibility to leave Ukraine and to be here. All others our leaders couldn't get permission from Ukr. government to leave

country. Pray for them and for us. Thanks for "prayer walk" with us through good and bad times. Thank you very much for your support, prayers and love for us and Ukraine.

We are really grateful and thankful for you being with us and with the ministry of AIA in Ukraine! We are so appreciated to God for our team of Parents with whom we can stand firmly for Gospel even during the war. May God multiplies your blessings this new year especially!

Love and hugs,
Andrey and Yulya



January Middle School News



Happy
New Year!!
Praise God for
his new
mercies every

morning! I was reminded of these verses from Lamentations recently as I listened to a dear one in my life in another state telling me about her broken marriage and her broken heart. *"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."*

(Lamentations 3:22-23). Her heart is broken, and yet she can say with confidence to her children, "We're going to be okay. God is going to take care of us." God's Word is her lifeline.

When we memorize Scripture, the Holy Spirit brings it to mind when we need it most, because it is living and active. It comforts us and counsels us in our time of need, even if we don't have our Bible with us. I am going to be giving the middle school students monthly passages from Scripture to memorize, and it's going to be good for me to memorize the passages as well!

As we go forward into 2024, our students need to be armed with truth so

that they can fight against the enemy's lies, deceit, and temptations. Ephesians 6 reminds us that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. It also reminds us to put on the full armor of God. One of the weapons God gives us is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Another of the weapons is the belt of truth. Are you arming your children with truth and God's Word? I often fail, but I want to encourage both of us, that even if we haven't had time, it's never too late to help our children set habits and learn Scripture that will be a solid foundation for them forever. Start today, and if you fail, start again, and again. His mercies are new every morning. I recall something I read by Pastor Tony Evans that said he wondered if any of the devotions he read

with his family were getting through to his children. It didn't seem like anyone was listening. Today he can testify that his grown children were indeed learning from God's Word through those devotions. God's Word did not return void. (Isaiah 55:11)

There are seasons of life that absolutely rock our world. I shook and



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wept as I sat at my lifelong friend's funeral a few weeks ago. But I will see her again. Her children will see her again, because she and her husband made Jesus, his Word, and the church, their first priority. All of them have that hope. Thank God!!! This life is temporary, but the afterlife is forever. "Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God endures forever." Isaiah 40:7-8

Let's plan in 2024, to make God's Word our first priority, and show our children that it's OUR first priority, so that when their world gets rocked, our children will know EXACTLY where to turn! The Bible! Watch for monthly passages that I give to them to memorize. Happy New Year to you and your families!

—Sarah Huisman

"The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord." Lamentations 3:24

Ladies!

Please plan to join us for a luncheon directly after the worship service on January 14th. You can sign up online using the QR code below, or visit the welcome counter to sign up in person. Please let us know soon, so we can get a headcount for the food. Looking forward to fellowshiping with you!



hope ^{at} home

Our new Hope at Home Ministry launched one year ago and ***whether you are single, married with or without children, or grandparents,*** we want to walk alongside you as you live out the faith inside the home. **We do this by making it easy, likely, and giving a clear path.**

Make it Easy

We make it easy for families to teach the truth of God, by providing life-season pointers for the different stages, struggles, and challenges of life at our Hope at Home wall.

Make it Likely

We make it likely for you to succeed by providing intentional monthly faith-filled activities for marriages and families to do at home using our Hope at Home Idea cards.

Give a Clear Path

We give families a clear path, with age specific Faith Path packets as they nurture their children's faith inside the home.



All these items and a Home Appraisal can be found at **our Hope at Home Wall**. We also update the wall monthly, providing you with fresh materials and even holiday guides for any relevant celebrations. **This month, check out our Easter guide!**

Home Appraisals are designed to help you evaluate faith in your home. We ask that these be filled out anonymously and returned to the Hope at Home wall **so that we can know how to better serve you and your families.**

Hope at Home Visionary Leader:

- Lauren Cochran
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NEW HOPE

STUDENTS

This past year has been a great year for our high school group here at New Hope. From summer camp to pool parties to bonfire nights, we have had a lot of time to build relationships between myself, the students in the youth group, and the new volunteer team that we introduced this last year.

Our youth group has seen a lot of growth, and in more ways than one. This growth is not just in the numbers of students here, but we have seen real growth in their relationships with Jesus. I am extremely proud of our students for their commitment to growing their relationship with God, as well as their commitment to each other and helping each other in their walks with Christ. They have also done a great job in stepping up and bringing new people to church so that they can encounter Jesus!

This past summer, our numbers for the high school group went down a little, as they always do in the summer. We still had a good amount of students, but getting them to all show up at once gets a little difficult due to sports, vacations, and things of that nature. So, I gave them a challenge: By the end of the year, I wanted them to get 50 high schoolers here at New Hope in one night. This was a huge challenge, but in October, *they did it!* We had about 30

new students here that had never been to New Hope before. One new student even ended up giving their life to Christ! Our average high school youth group numbers have jumped up about 50-60% after this night.

Every time we are on our month-long break from Sunday morning small group, I have had students step up and offer to lead small group for that month. I could not be happier to see our students take the initiative to grow in Christ together, outside of our scheduled meeting times for youth group.

Like I said, this has been a great year for our high school group. We have had multiple students get saved, as well as multiple students get baptized this past year. We have seen new faces get brought into the youth group, and even some old faces come back into it. I have a new, amazing volunteer team that does so many wonderful things for the youth group. Most importantly, we have seen our students grow in a real, intimate relationship with God.

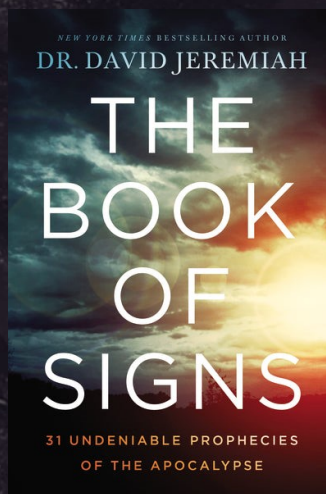
I believe that God has a lot of good things in store for the high-schoolers over this upcoming year. I pray that God will continue to do great things for this group of students and that He will continue to meet them right where they are.

—Gavin Booser

A Book You Should Read

I have been studying and preparing for a series of messages on the end times, and this book by Dr. David Jeremiah has been one of my main resources. Many Christians struggle to understand the Book of Revelation. "The end times." "The apocalypse." "The day of judgment." These terms are both fascinating and frightening – but what do they really mean? Drawing from decades of study, Dr. Jeremiah explains every key sign of the approaching apocalypse and what it means for you, including international, cultural, heavenly, tribulation, and end signs. With his engaging writing style and clear analysis of how current world events were foretold in the Bible, *The Book of Signs* is an encouraging guide to the Book of Revelation.

—Pastor Josh



IMPORTANT!

Re: Giving Statements

Giving statements are coming soon! Please take note of this important information: You will likely receive **two statements**, because earlier in 2023 we switched from one software system to another, so some information is recorded on both. Additionally, statements will NOT be mailed via USPS, and instead **will be emailed** (assuming we have a good email for you.) Please take time to **review your contact information** in Planning Center, and **update your email** if needed! If you need a hardcopy of your statement, please email the church office at admin@newhopechurchtn.org to request one.

2023 was an exciting year at New Hope. We were able to take care of some much needed renovations for our youth ministry and Fellowship Hall Kitchen. Both projects were completed in the Fall and are now in use for church events.

