

Personal Interview with John MacArthur

Selected Scriptures

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RICH: John's studies have been received with such great enthusiasm and we have received so many requests for information about our teacher and the church he serves that in response we are presenting today and tomorrow a personal talk with John MacArthur so that you, the listening audience, can get better acquainted with him.

I guess the best way to start, John, is by asking you how old you are.

JOHN: Well you had to ask that, didn't you, Rich? My little daughter announced to me a week ago that I was forty and she came popping in to the room with her little present for me. So she was right, I'm forty as of just a few weeks ago.

RICH: Some of the listening audience have asked about your name. Some think that maybe you're related to General MacArthur, can you tell us a little about who you're related to and what about the name?

JOHN: Well, of course, MacArthur is a great Scottish name. We have our own clan and our own plaid and all those things. A recent visit to Scotland on my part reaffirmed where my roots come from. But my family came originally from Scotland. I'm a fifth generation preacher. Men in my family go back to ministries in Scotland and Canada, even in Australia. I am distantly related to General Douglas MacArthur. I understand that I am a fifth cousin. So it's quite a distance, but nonetheless we are related.

RICH: And how about of your education, what kind of educational background have you had?

JOHN: Well, I pretty much was raised in the Southern California area and so I attended school here. I spent my time in college, early in my college years, two years at Bob Jones University and then completed my college education at Los Angeles Pacific College. That college has since gone defunct, I hope not due to anything that I did, but that's where I finished my work. And from there I proceeded to Talbot Theological Seminary and completed my seminary training there.

RICH: How about your personal background, your goals in early life, for instance. Have you always wanted to be a preacher?

JOHN: Because my Father was a preacher and a pastor, and still is, and because my grandfather was a very wonderful man was also a pastor, I really grew up with the pastor's heart and a pastor's mentality. And, of course, I saw all of the functioning of my father and my grandfather and I guess I felt like I understood what it was to be a pastor. I felt like I knew how to do that because I had learned

from my father because he always shared with the family so it was very natural for me to desire that or to look to that. And from the time I was very small, even five and six years old, my parents have told me I would stand up in the backyard on a soapbox and preach to my sisters, or anybody in the neighborhood that would listen.

I guess in a sense I always kind of assumed that that's what I would be. But as things change, you know, I came to college days and I became very involved in athletics. And in the times that I was involved in sports, I received a tremendous measure of fulfillment and thought for quite a while that I'd like to be a professional athlete. I did have some opportunities to play professionally both in football and baseball. But by the time it came to the crisis point of making the decision, by then I had affirmed in my heart that God wanted me in the ministry, so I chose seminary over an athletic career.

I can't ever remember a time I didn't believe. And I never had a time when I rebelled. My parents, wonderful Christians, and, of course, they still are and always set a tremendous example for me, they love the Lord with all their hearts. There was nothing in Christianity that I could see that was objectional. It was all very affirming and wonderful to me, so I accepted openly everything about Christ.

I remember one incident where I got into a little trouble. I was traveling with my father, he was doing a revival meeting in the midwest and a little boy in the neighborhood, we were about seven at the time, had said he had a little plan for us one afternoon. So while my father was staying in a home in the town and preaching every night, we went down and vandalized the local public school, overturned some desks and a sandbox and poured out some ink wells and did some bad things. I used to tell myself it was bad company that influenced me, but now I know it was just plain depravity. But anyway, as a result of that I began to feel very guilty.

A man came to our house and wanted to know, of course, if I had been involved because somebody had seen me in the area. My father said, "Oh no, our son would never do a thing like that." Of course, I sheepishly stood in the background.

Later that night at the meeting I went forward and I felt like I had to tell my father and I had to tell the Lord what I had done. So that incident really crystallized for me the moment of commitment to Christ, even though I was very young.

I went away to college and although I was willing in my heart to do what God wanted me to do in a general way, there was some areas of my life that were not really submissive to Christ. And so I chafed a little bit under the direction, although I was sort of resigned to it it wasn't a joyous anticipation for me and I was somewhat rebellious. The Lord knew that and He knew there needed to be some further refining.

So, driving across the United States with five other young people in the car after my freshman year in college, the Lord worked out a very special plan for me. The car got involved in an accident. I was thrown out of the car, slid along the highway over a hundred yards. Of course, I wound up with severe burns and friction problems and scars everywhere and wound up in a hospital and then in bed for nearly three months. And it was at that point in time that I made the total commitment of my life to Christ. I was just 18 years old, really, at the time and I said, "Lord, I can see now that my life really is in Your hands and You have absolute control of my...not only my eternal destiny but my time

here in this world." And He spared me and every other person in the car, even though it rolled at 65-75 miles an hour.

I could see God working so I committed my life to Christ. I spent those three months drawing close to Him and reading His Word and reaffirming my commitment to do whatever He wanted me to do.

RICH: Did you know at that time that you were headed for the ministry?

JOHN: Well, I always thought that, but then after that I changed schools to pursue an athletic career and in the midst of that athletic career I reconsidered a childhood dream to be a professional athlete. I opened myself to that. I was scouted by some professional teams and I talked to them and I went to the Washington Redskins football training camp...I went through a lot of those kinds of things again, but at that time I really was open to what God wanted. I considered those things but when I really knew that God wanted me in the ministry, I was ready.

It all kind of came down to an incident where a girl was shot through the neck by her boyfriend, severed her spinal cord. She was lying in a hospital and I was just finishing my last year of football in college. And someone said, "Would you go over and talk to her about Christ?" And I did and I introduced her to Christ and she was wonderfully saved. To this day she is, of course, quadriplegic but at that time I said to myself, "This is what matters. Running around with a piece of pig under your arm across a white line, you know, to the cheers of the crowd is not really what life is all about. Taking Christ to somebody like this is what life is all about." So at that point her life intersecting with my life confirmed to me the priority.

RICH: Have you been able to realize those dreams and desires in regard to athletics even within the ministry itself?

JOHN: Well, of course, in college I was able to realize a lot more than I ever dreamed I would. I had always wanted to participate in sports for the sheer thrill of it. But then I was honored in many ways, you know, by participating in sports. All the things I ever wanted and more the Lord was gracious enough to give. I think God is like that. I really believe that God gives us ability and then if we are obedient to Him in the exercise of that ability, there will be a fulfillment in it. And God was so gracious to me and, of course, opened up opportunity for me to speak and to represent Christ. I can remember going to service clubs and they would select me as "Player of the Week," or something and I would go in and just tell them about Christ. And I was able to work with athletic teams. To this day I have Bible studies with the professional teams. I just completed some with the baseball teams in Los Angeles and, of course, during the football season I work with the Los Angeles Rams. So all of that background the Lord has seen fit to use.

RICH: That's tremendous. Let's get a little into the church history. The history of Grace Church. When you first came to Grace, how old were you then?

JOHN: Well I ought to back up a little before that, Rich. When I left seminary I was working with my dad in a church and I was teaching at Los Angeles Baptist College. I had in my heart the desire to systematically teach the Scripture, but I wanted to preach too. I knew that I needed experience in preaching if I was going to be effective. Like anybody's skill, it needs to be refined. And so before I really got into a church, I wanted to preach.

So I taught in the college on a part-time basis. I worked with the youth group in my dad's church and did some other things. But I traveled a lot and I preached at youth conferences and special meetings and I just preached and preached.

And then I went on the staff of Talbot Seminary. I had two and a half wonderful years there preaching all over the country as sort of a faculty member at large, kind of a thing. I preached an average of 35 to 40 times a month for two and a half years. I refined, I think, to some extent. I don't quite think it's refined the way it ought to be even now, if ever, but I really had an opportunity to work on my preaching ministry.

So I was then at the end of that two and a half years asking God to open a door for me. Now that I had preached I had a hunger for a flock of people now to use this gift with...and so I just asked God in my own heart to draw me to a situation where I could have that opportunity.

At that time the pastor of Grace Community Church had died of a heart attack and he was the second one who had died of a heart attack. I think by that time they were saying, "We don't care if he's good, just get him young." You know, we don't want to lose him again. So I was asked to fill the pulpit for Grace Community Church and I came and I preached on a Sunday night.

A group of men came up to me and said, "Would you be interested in candidating?" Well, in a way this was an answer to my prayer and yet I had never anticipated that here. And so I said, "Well, I'll pray about that." As a result of that I came and at the time I was 29 years old. I had been out of seminary by then for about five years, graduating when I was 24. During those five years I had taught, I had worked with my dad and done some administration in the church and then I had preached. I felt like the Lord had taken those years as a training period to prepare me for coming here.

RICH: What was the size of Grace Community Church at that time?

JOHN: Well, I think we probably had 450 or 500 people even then. You see, the church had two wonderful pastors and it was strong in terms of personal relationships and love and there was good leadership here. In addition, there was a wonderful youth program and there were just kids everywhere. And so that, in a way, is catalytic. So the church was an exciting, energetic and wonderful church even then, though there were not nearly so many people.

RICH: Could you give us an idea of a typical day? I think a lot of people have an idea that the pastor does such-and-such during his week. Could you give us an idea of what you were committed to do and what you ended up doing in those days?

JOHN: Well, when I first talked to the elders about coming, I said I wanted them to give me at least 30 hours a week to study. And at first they were a little, you know, concerned..."Well that seems like a lot of time." I'm sure they thought, "He must be rather a slow learner." But I said I want that because I believe that if I read Ephesians 4 properly, pastor-teachers are given to the church for the perfecting of the saints. And the perfecting of the saints comes about, according to Paul's letter to Timothy, through the Word of God. "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God that the man of God may be perfect." So the tool is the Word and I had to spend time in the Word. So I set apart

basically 15 hours for each of the two messages that I would give on Sunday.

Remember too, I was starting from ground zero, in a way. I had to prepare each one, no former pastorates, in fact that's still true, I've been here ten years and everything I know I've told them so I have to keep coming up with something new every week, you know. But I went on on that basis. Of course, feeling in my heart maybe the other 10 or 15 hours would be with some visitation with people in the hospital or so forth and so on. And I was limited to that if I was going to study that way.

Well it was wonderful because the men said, "We'll take care of the visitation because James says visitation is pure religion, everybody does that." So we all kind of carried the load together. But as you well know, what you may anticipate and what really happens are two different things. I found myself being called to the hospital and being called to homes where there were deaths and counseling people. I used to set up the tables and the chairs for the women's meetings and I used to clean out the bathrooms on Saturday, preparing for Sunday and making sure the windows were clean and were the ushers ready...so many things. So in those early days I would still study 30 hours, I never sacrificed that. The other ten or fifteen that I anticipated turned in to another 30. And so it became a lifetime.

RICH: I think people think things have always been about the same at Grace Church, you've had the dynamic leadership, etc., that God has blessed with here. What is your philosophy in building a church? How have you seen it built and what do you understand God's Word to say in building a church?

JOHN: A reporter asked me one time, Rich, he said, "Do you have a great desire to build the church?" And I said no. I said I have absolutely no desire to build the church, that's not my job. I said Jesus said, "I will build My church," and I would rather not compete with Him. See. So I'll let Him do His job and His job is to build a church. I simply want to allow Him to do that through me in a small way in some one location.

So having said that, I see my calling, first of all, is to know God. In my life is a pursuit to know God. I frankly do not study the Bible to get a sermon. If I ever do that I find myself contriving the Scripture to get my sermon.

RICH: How do you approach it then?

JOHN: I approach the Scripture this way, I have that insatiable hunger to know what the Bible means. If my father gave me any one thing among many, it was a sense of integrity about living according to Scripture. If the Bible says it, then that's the way it is. And so I had to know what the Bible said and what it meant by what it said so that I would know how to live to glorify God for myself. And so, to me the ministry is simply a tremendous gift which says, in effect, "Here, John, take your life, you don't even have to work at a job, just spend your whole life finding out what the Bible says." And all they ask of me is at the end of the week when I've discovered the truths that have been there I get to share it with them. To me that isn't work, to me that's a ministry out of the overflow of the relationship that I have with the Lord that comes from the study of His Word. As that overflows from my life, it touches the lives of the people in the congregation. And the Word has the impact of effecting them as it effects me and together we grow. And as we grow together, out of that comes the nurturing of leadership.

RICH: This then is where the leadership comes from, right from within the church itself?

JOHN: Well that's right. We have, I think, somebody told me the other day we have 30 people on our pastoral staff...30 people in pastoral ministries, apart from supporting staff and others. And all of them, with no exception, have come from inside our congregation.

RICH: Can you give us some examples?

JOHN: I believe, first of all, that if you can't develop leadership in a church, you're probably not doing what you ought to cause that's what it's there for, to mature the saints. So the idea of musical churches, you know, play the music and everybody keeps moving until they find a church and they stay three years and then find another church, isn't really the issue. Just training pastors and leaders around the churches is not the issue, we must grow our own, we must develop our own leaders. So that's what we endeavor to do here.

For an example, you would be a good example, Rich. You came to us in a time in your life when you were looking for a certain ministry and a certain opportunity, you became one of us as a lay person, really. You were teaching school at the time and you ministered among us with great blessing from the Lord. And I remember one day going to you and saying, "Rich, I can see in the future you becoming a part of our staff." Others had also said that to you and little by little as your ministry developed, it wasn't an issue of hiring you to do the job, it was simply a matter of supporting you in a ministry you already developed in the body. And that's the way it's been.

I can think of Norman Speer who handles our radio ministry. Norm comes out of a background of business and television and things like that. He says to me one day, "I want to give some time to the radio." I said to him, "Wonderful, let's see what happens." He begins to develop the radio and it grows into a full-time ministry.

I think of Dr. Fred Barshaw who was a key man in the L.A. Public School Systems, a man with a Doctor's Degree and a man who was principal of a school in a strategic area of our city. He began a ministry among the families at Grace Church and pretty soon it was apparent that he couldn't keep his job and develop his ministry. So we took over his support.

So Acts 6 has been the key to me. It says there that the Apostles said...Look, we know that the widows need care and we know that the folks must be fed, but we will give ourselves to the Word and to prayer, you people choose out people who will handle this. But what always interested me is that they didn't have to start a ministry for some people, the ministry began first then they simply went in to help that ministry function better. So as a person develops a ministry here and as it grows, we move in then and say, "Boy, God's blessed your ministry, we want you to give your full life to this so we'll take over your support." So we really support people whose ministries have developed.

RICH: So your growing leadership instead of producing programs, is what you're saying...

JOHN: That's exactly right. Most churches what happens is a pastor who is an aggressive thinker and a creative person or his staff think of new programs and then they try to mobilize people and get them into the program. There's several problems with that. One of the problems is you may not be

doing what the Holy Spirit wants you to do...the other one is, the people may not really be motivated for that, rather they may be intimidated into doing it or feel obligation. So we would rather just pray that God will raise up ministries among the people themselves. And He's done that.**RICH:** One time you said, "We are concerned with the depth of our ministry and God gives the breadth." God has given a tremendous depth in the ministry of Grace Church, could you elaborate on that?

JOHN: Here at Grace Church you asked me earlier if I had realized the dreams and desires that I had for the ministry...that doesn't even begin to touch it. It's far beyond anything I conceived of. I never ever conceived of anything like this, but as we've gone deep and poured the Word of God richly into the lives of the people...and I don't mean just myself, but all of the people in the ministry here...and God has given us this breadth.

RICH: Did you ever envision a church of over 7,000 in attendance on Sunday morning?

JOHN: Of course no, that's to me...even today I don't comprehend that. As I said to somebody the other day, I said, "I keep coming here on Sunday to preach and all these people show up." And I frankly don't know why. And it isn't something you can reproduce. You know, we have men coming here from churches all over the world every day to study and to learn from us, and I really don't know what to tell them. We know basically biblical standards to tell them, but there's nothing you can say that can guarantee you can produce this somewhere else. This is something God has chosen to do...far beyond me. Ephesians 3:20 used to be somewhat of a mystery, "Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think according to the power that works within us," I used to say I believe that, I just don't understand that. And now I understand that. I never dreamed or conceived this. I thought...Lord, if we can just mature the ones we've got. When I first came we had about 500, maybe everybody could win somebody else and we could maybe have a thousand people here some day. I never said that to anybody...I don't think it was really even a prayer, it was just a thought. And here we have what we have today and it's just to His praise.

RICH: You know, John, last Sunday's total attendance, morning and evening, reached about 10,000 and it wasn't even Easter or Christmas. With an attendance like this, where do we go from here?

JOHN: Well that's the question we've been asking ourselves for ten years, Rich. As you know, you're a part of our staff and you pray and struggle with these things along with us, but we don't know from one day to the next where God's taking us. Now we plan but it's kind of like man plans his ways and the Lord directs his steps. We lay out our plans and I'm not sure we always know exactly where we're going.

RICH: What kinds of things do you see for the future?

JOHN: Well, we have some goals. For example, we have just gotten on the ground floor of establishing what we call Shepherd's College. You know, we've had such a tremendous demand from pastors, they want to come and learn and they want to see how it's done. We aren't a gimmicky ministry. We have biblical integrity, I believe, and they believe the Bible and they say, "How do you build a church? How do you let Christ build His church in a biblical way?" So we decided to develop Shepherd's College. This is a program where a pastor can come here for a brief stay, he can gain some input, some basic content then he can return to his own church and he can study through a guided curriculum the principles and ideals that can bring to bear on his ministry the blessing of God.

Now we've learned a lot in ten years that we can transfer to these men. They can come and they can select say out of twenty different categories where they might feel weak or need help in their ministry, we'll give them a guided curriculum to bring them some real conclusions about how that ministry ought to develop. So Shepherd's College is very exciting and we've just begun and there are some men already involved in it. By the way, if there are any pastors listening, or any of you who are listening want to tell your pastor, let them know about Shepherd's College. They can write for a brochure and find out how they can enrich their ministry in that very way.

Also along that line, next year in 1980 some time toward the end of the winter or early spring, we are planning a Pastors' Conference here to invite pastors from all over America to come and be with us for a part of a week to expose to a full Sunday here at Grace and to seminars and fellowship and many other things.

I'd add one other thing, Rich. We are developing some community Bible studies. We have in ten years training a tremendous amount of leaders. We have a hundred young men right now in seminary. With all of this man power, it's time for us to move into the world and so we have now taken a computer, divided up our valley where we are with 1.5 million people and we have developed little units within every single neighborhood where we're going to begin evangelistic Bible studies to reach out. And so that's something that you folks can be praying about, that God will bring to pass this community outreach program where we can take Christ right into the community. We can't keep piling people into our facilities, we're already taxed, but we can certainly go out and take Christ right into their community and use homes, as they did in the early church.

RICH: Because of the base that has been set at Grace Church, there are some tremendous demands made on you as an outside speaker, I'm sure people wonder how much time you can devote to the local church when you're an outside speaker, when you're involved with Grace To You and all of these other things? Where do you see your priorities?

JOHN: Well, when Grace To You first began, I said that the only way we could ever do it if tapes were used that I had already preached because there's no way that I can continue to teach the Word of God, to be the pastor of the flock God has called me to and also produce a daily radio program and do it with any kind of quality. Something would have to go. So that's what originated the concept of using the tapes from the church, and that's why I came up with the thought, "Grace To You," because it really brings Grace Church to the listener, and then it's kind of a pun in a way because it is God's grace also. But that was the first thing.

Secondly, in terms of outside involvement, and outside speaking, I had to set some priorities. Naturally there are needs everywhere and I guess maybe I feel like the Apostle Paul sometimes. Paul said, "In my heart I long to come to you, I wish I could, but sometimes I can't." And my heart is like that, too. I don't just see Grace Church, I see the body of Christ around the world and my heart longs for those places. I have longings even for the regions beyond and yet I have to struggle on a daily basis in my own heart as I pray to the Lord to give me wisdom to what to do and what not to do. But I limit it so that it doesn't impact my ministry here.

RICH: John, I'm afraid we've run out of time for today. We want to thank you and what we'll do tomorrow is to go into the tape ministry a little bit, and Grace To You and see how God is working in this particular ministry.

JOHN: Well thank you, Rich. I think this has been a great opportunity for me to just share some of my own heart with folks. We're grateful to God for what He is doing in our midst, and believe me, we are spectators at best at what God is doing. Certainly not the innovators.

RICH: Yesterday we took the time to get to know John MacArthur the man, his personal background, his goals and dreams, how he committed his life to Jesus Christ, how he came to Grace Community Church, his philosophy of ministry and how Grace Church has grown in ten years from attendance of 500 to about 7,000. We never got an opportunity to talk about how the tape ministry began and how eventually Grace To You got started.

John, I wonder if today you might refresh the people about the philosophy of ministry here at Grace and perhaps you could share with them how the church administrator came on staff.

JOHN: Well, sharing about how our church administrator came on staff is a tremendous story. It's really a part of sharing about our philosophy. So let me start with that story and then from there expand into the philosophy.

(The story of how Sam came to be the administrator)

That is a simple illustration of how everything around here happens. The Word is central and I teach the Word, and you, too, Rich, teach the Word, and all of our staff does, and as the Word creates an environment, it creates an environment of growth. It's kind of like a closed environment in a hothouse...the plants are here and the Word saturates them with the right environment and in that they are nourished and they flourish. And as they begin to develop, we find that as believers grow, they begin to overflow. So ministry comes as a natural result of growth. It's like taking home a little baby and at first the little baby does very little, other than lie around. And pretty soon as growth takes place, movement increases and you watch your little child and at first she crawls and then she walks and then she runs and so forth. So we see that happening in the church. As the church grows the people begin to stir and begin to move and ministry develops. As that ministry develops under the feeding and the saturation and the nourishment of systematically teaching the Word of God, the overflow of all of that is highly productive. As everyone begins to minister, out of the plurality of all those people maturing and ministering, certain people rise to levels of leadership which indicate that God has uniquely appointed them to serve the body of Christ in leadership. And it's our belief that as we recognize those people and take over their support and free them from having to make tents, or something, we give them the ability to maximize their ministry.

So the philosophy then could be boiled down to a simple truth...we teach the Word of God to perfect the saints so they can do the work of the ministry. And once God has anointed them and put His hand on them and their ministry begins to proliferate, we're willing to support them financially so that they're free to do that. That's really been our emphasis.

Just to add a footnote to that. What that means is that my role and your role and the other pastoral staff changes very little. Basically we are here to give people biblical input. We feed them the Word of God. You know, in John 21 Jesus said to Peter, "Feed My sheep, feed My lambs, feed My sheep." He said "feed" three times. And in the Greek you only use two words, the first time and the last time

he used the word bosko which means simply to feed. The middle time he used poimaino which means all that's involved in shepherding. So He alluded to the fact that feeding the sheep involves shepherding on a general basis, you know, warning them and caring for them and meeting their needs. But primarily He emphasized the giving of the food, the content. And that's really where the primary emphasis is with us. And so, after ten years the philosophy of Grace Church, a biblical one, I believe, hasn't changed, we continue to feed the flock of God as we have been instructed and they mature and develop their ministry.

RICH: In such a vast ministry as Grace Church, a multi-million dollar situation here, it takes a lot of money to operate the church. What do you see as the philosophy of raising money at Grace?

JOHN: Well, let me say this to begin with, Rich. I never concern myself with that. Since my Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills, He owns everything there is in the universe, if He's got a project in mind, He can finance it. So I'm never really concerned about that. And I remember one time a salesman who was selling some business equipment or something, he came to our elders and he said, "I want to present this opportunity to all the elders, though I know the pastor has the final say." And one of the elders said, "Oh no, that's not right. Our pastor is here to feed us the Word of God, we'll take care of the business." And that's really right, see. I don't know anything about that. You know, I was raised in a pastor's family and my dad taught me the Word. I went away to seminary and I learned the Word. I don't know anything about running a business. I don't know anything about a financial organization and I would rather not get directed into that because of my lack of information, plus it's an infinitely greater priority for me to teach the Word of God. So I leave that with other people.

But I do believe there are some biblical standards that need to be applied and so the people in our church ministry who care for the finances are people who are submissive to the Word of God. In fact, I've always felt that it's very interesting that a church our size still has a treasurer who is a layman who is in responsibility for that area because it's a part of the eldership.

But, having said that, we have endeavored to teach our people that God is able to finance anything He's in. And so what our task is is to first of all know that God is in it. And secondly, to let people know that He's in it so that they can be a part of it. That's why there's kind of an ambivalence. On the one hand we don't believe in gimmicks and all kinds of things like that to induce people to give for whatever reasons. But we do believe that we ought to say, "People, do you know what God's doing and would you like to have a part?" Cause I think that's right. If God is doing something and somebody comes to me and says, "The Lord is doing this, would you like to have a part?" Boy, I respond. Now I have some friends in missionary work and so forth and sometimes they'll write me and say, "John, the Lord is doing this and we're seeing wonderful things happen, I wonder if you'd like to have a part." Boy, I can't write a check fast enough, you know, because I want to know that. But when somebody writes a letter that comes in a kind of appeal fashion with a little bit of a veiled approach and maybe a kind of gimmicky thing, then that doesn't really reach me because I just want to know what God's a part of and I want to be a part of that.

So we've tried to teach the people that that's the right perspective to have. Find out if God is in it and if God has placed His hand of blessing on it. And then be encouraged to be a part of it.

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