

“We train disciplemakers...”



What is peace?  
— p. 2



Where is our hope? .. pp 3-4

# Update from Kansas Communities Ministry

## The Challenge of Discipling Children

We start a new series Jan. 7, 2023, featuring Ryan and Leah as they share ideas about discipling their children.

[Making Disciples Naturally Podcast](#)

Men, mark your calendars for our Spring Men’s Retreat **March 31 - April 1, 2023** at **Crosswind Conference Center, Hesston, KS**

Read about the inspiring story of a lady with severe hearing loss who gave God the glory.

[See the article on page 2](#)

Because he lives, we can face tomorrow.

[See the article on pages 3-4](#)

## You can (and should) make disciples!

In early December, about 40 disciplemakers gathered in Derby, Kansas to participate in a different kind of conference. Jack McQueeney, on staff with The Navigators © since 1982, led the roundtable and large discussion groups as he shared “The Apprentice Approach.” He reviewed with us many of the results of a Navigator-sponsored Barna research study (entitled *The State of Discipleship* from 2015).

Some of the interesting facts from this study were:

- \*Only about 1 in 5 Christians are involved in discipleship.
- \*The top barrier to spiritual growth (as noted by individuals) is the general busyness of life.
- \*About 11% of people say they are not growing spiritually because their friends are also not interested in spiritual things.
- \*36% of Christians say they are almost to where they want to be in their spiritual life.
- \*38% of Christians say they are happy with where they are in their spiritual life.
- \*When churchgoers were asked “Have you heard of the Great Commission?” an astonishing 82% did not know what it was.

Two of the major points made at this conference were that discipleship should always be a **relational** event or process — not a solo event. We need each other to grow in our faith! Secondly, helping someone else grow in their faith is something **ALL** of us can and should do (Jesus commanded it!), no matter our level of training. Would you like to know more about how to help someone grow in their faith? Contact us at [office@kansasnavigators.org](mailto:office@kansasnavigators.org). (Also, see [TheApprenticeApproach.org](http://TheApprenticeApproach.org) for more info.)

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“But exhort one another each day, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ that none of you may become hardened by sin’s deception.” Hebrews 3:13 (NET Bible)

# Sue Thomas F.B.Eye

Again we stumbled upon a very inspiring movie, this time about Sue Thomas. Ms. Thomas sustained total hearing loss at age 18 months. She relates her life story in a movie on Redeem.TV. As a child, she says that she was looked at as being “dumb” because of her severe hearing loss. Throughout this time she maintained and grew in her love for Jesus.



At age 7 she became the youngest Ohio State Champion free-style skater. Despite her profound hearing loss, speech therapists helped her develop her very understandable speaking voice.

Ultimately she obtained a college degree and began a career with the FBI reading lips to help solve crimes. She even had a TV series modeled after her life called “Sue Thomas F.B.Eye.” Her life story is very inspiring as she persevered through so many trials, yet grew closer and closer to the Lord.

She tells a poignant story about, as a child on her mother’s lap, being able to “feel” the vibrations of her mother’s voice as she sang “Silent Night.” She learned that song and Sue sings this carol in the movie despite her handicap. Throughout, she gives glory to God for her life and challenges she faced. She passed away in December 2022 at the age of 72.

Read more about her life here: <https://suethomasfbeye.com/> or watch the movie and TV series on [redeem.tv](https://redeem.tv) (a free service).



## Goads and Nails

By Richard Spann

“Peace is not the absence of problems; it is the presence of the Lord.”  
—Vol. 3, pages 9-13

*(This is a very brief excerpt of this blog. Please see “Goads and Nails” Volume 3 for the complete version.)*

For most of us, peace seems to be fleeting and elusive. It comes and goes depending on the circumstances in which we find ourselves. The presence or absence of real or imagined trouble with our families, neighborhoods, work situations, and issues involving our government or even the world at large seem to determine our peace. Anything that may potentially disturb our security or significance becomes a threat to our peace. Our peace seems many times to be based entirely on the world around us. This type of peace, however, is not what God desires for our lives. The peace that the world gives comes from walking by sight, not by faith. II Corinthians 5:9 reminds us that “we walk by faith, not by sight.”

It is in times of distress and difficulty that we supremely need to know that the LORD is peace. It was during such a time in the life of Israel that we first see the name Jehovah-Shalom. (The LORD is Peace) During the days of Midianite oppression the nation was finding caves and mountain clefts in which to dwell. Food was scarce and what they had was often taken from them. Gideon was found by the Angel of the LORD while threshing wheat in a winepress to avoid detection by the Midianites. After the discussion with the Angel, “when Gideon realized it was the Angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, ‘Ah, Sovereign Lord! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!’ But the LORD said to him, ‘Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.’ So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace.” (Judges 6:22-24) It was the knowledge of the LORD as his peace that enabled him to tear down his father’s altar to Baal, sacrifice a bull from his father’s herd, and subsequently destroy the Midianites by the hand of God with only three hundred men. His peace was found in the LORD, not in his circumstances.

In Christ, Richard Spann

■ “We train disciplemakers...”

## Because He Lives by Richard Spann

It was a very festive occasion. My wife and I along with other members of our church had been invited to a retirement party for one of our pastors. We met and conversed with a number of those we knew and we were looking forward to the program which was to celebrate his years of service. Despite the upbeat atmosphere, however, I was suppressing a gnawing concern about a biopsy that was performed two days earlier. The results were to be available the next morning. I kept telling myself that there was only a slight elevation of the PSA and the likelihood of having prostate cancer was slim. As different speakers talked about the service and life of the pastor I forgot completely about my health concerns, that is, until the soloist began to sing one of Bill Gaither’s songs.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,  
Because He lives, all fear is gone.  
Because I know He holds the future,  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives.

Despite the fact that this was one of our pastor’s favorites and had been a request of his for the program, the Holy Spirit immediately impressed me with the following thoughts. “This song is for you as well as for the pastor. The biopsy is positive for cancer, but you can face tomorrow, because I live and I will be with you.”

His presence did sustain me through the surgery and has sustained me since. The scriptures often remind us of His presence as in Isaiah 41:10. “So do not fear, for I am with you.” He holds the future firmly in His grasp as He tells us in Psalm 139:3 (LB). “You chart the path ahead of me, and tell me where to stop and rest.” And in verse 5 (LB), it says the following. “You both precede and follow me, and place your hand of blessing on my head.” Why is life worth the living just because He lives? The fact that He is resurrected and lives today firmly establishes the fact the God was satisfied with His sacrifice for us. In Him we have pardon and peace. He lives to give His life to us so that in Him we have His purity, His power and His purpose. Life is worth the living because He lives in us to manifest His love to us and through us!



In the years that followed, the Holy Spirit continued to enlarge my understanding of this song, not only of the chorus, but of the stanzas as well.

How sweet to hold a newborn baby,  
and feel the pride and joy he (*she*) brings;  
But greater still the calm assurance;  
this child can face uncertain days because He lives!

(Continued on next page)

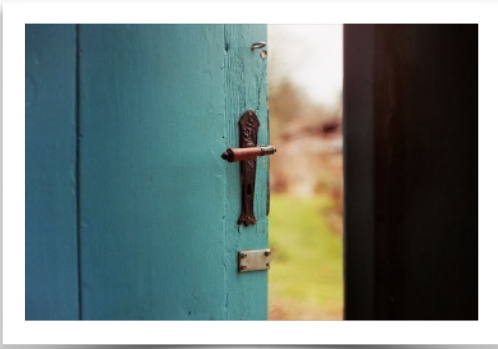
“Open identification with the person of Jesus Christ — that is the essential characteristic of a disciple.”

— Navigator Jim Morris, Founder of the Kansas Communities Ministry, from the talk “Primary tool for discipling” found at <http://turret2.discipleshiplibrary.com/J137B.mp3>

“We train disciplemakers...”

## Because He Lives (continued from p. 3)

I remember clearly holding our first daughter the day she was born in a Rochester, MN hospital. The pride and joy that I felt then I still feel today. That pride and joy grew and grew as she followed Christ throughout her life. She married a godly young man and started her family eventually having five children. When the youngest child was but four years of age, however, she was diagnosed with inoperable cancer. She faced many uncertain days of pain, nausea, weakness and side effects of chemotherapy over the next five years. She faced these days, however, with calm assurance until the day the Lord took her home 15 months ago. She knew that the Lord held her future in his hands. Because He lived in her and through her, life was worth the living just because He lives.



*And then one day I'll cross the river  
I'll fight life's final war with pain;  
And then, as death gives way to victory,  
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives!*

Last year, I held my wife's hand as she crossed the river. She had fought life's final war with pain. Death gave way to victory. As I was looking at her, she was looking at the lights of glory! Before long I will join her in beholding those lights. I have had four surgeries, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy for recurrent bladder cancer over the last seven years. Whether the Lord calls me home this year or waits many years is uncertain. What is certain, however, is His love for me. “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39) It is because of this love that I continue to sing the chorus I heard that night twenty years ago!

*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow  
Because He lives, all fear is gone  
Because I know He holds the future.  
And life is worth the living,  
Just because He lives.*

In Christ, Richard Spann



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“God will never betray His faithfulness. He covenants to care for us. Psalm 89:33: But I will not remove my loyal love from him nor be unfaithful to my promise.” — Navigator Kirkie Morrissey, from the talk “A Hope that Never Tires” <http://discipleshiplibrary.com/pdfs/T0496.pdf> Recording found at: <http://turret2.discipleshiplibrary.com/T0496.mp3>