



ISSUE SEVENTY-EIGHT

# OVERWHELMED

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MAY- AUGUST 2019

STREET LEVEL MINISTRIES

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# Word on the Street

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WOTS is available in the USA on the UW-Stout, UW-Superior, and UW-River Falls campuses. We're a global magazine with versions published in Southeast Asia, Amsterdam, and the Philippines.

WOTS is Street Level Ministries' magazine. Check out how you can become a part of this global magazine by visiting [streetlevelministries.com](http://streetlevelministries.com).

Word on the Street (WOTS) Magazine is released twice per semester and has been published since 1999. WOTS Magazine is written, laid out, and printed by young adult who love Jesus and want to write about God, life, and college. We hope this magazine is helpful, challenging, and thought-provoking while also encouraging you to pursue a strong relationship with Jesus.

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WOTS IS PUTTING OUT A CALL FOR...

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## LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

### MAY

- ⇒ THU 5/2 BASEBALL VS. UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS (DH) 1PM & 4PM
- ⇒ FRI 5/3—SAT 5/4 MENOMONIE THEATER GUILD: AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF, MABEL TAINTER CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 7:30PM
- ⇒ SAT 5/4 LOW COST MICROCHIP CLINIC, VETERAN'S CENTER OF MENOMONIE, 9AM
- ⇒ MON 5/6—FRI 5/10 FINALS WEEK
- ⇒ TUE 5/7 CAST IRON COOKING BASICS, MENOMONIE MARKET FOOD CO-OP, 6-7PM, COST \$15
- ⇒ SAT 5/11 8TH ANNUAL GET IT DUNN RUN 5K & 1/2 MARATHON, MENOMONIE
- ⇒ SAT 5/11 CRAFT & VENDOR FAIR, VETERAN'S CENTER OF MENOMONIE, 10AM
- ⇒ SAT 5/18 MUTT STRUT 'N' TABBY TROT, FANETTI COMMUNITY CENTER 620 17TH ST SE, MENOMONIE, 10AM-1PM

### JUNE

- ⇒ THU 6/20—SUN 6/23 COLFAX FREE FAIR
- ⇒ SAT 6/22—SUN 6/23 LAKE MENOMIN WATER X, LAKE MENOMIN
- ⇒ SAT 6/22 ROCK THE RIVERFRONT CHARITY CLASSIC, PHOENIX PARK IN DOWNTOWN EAU CLAIRE, 7AM-12:30PM

### JULY

- ⇒ THU 7/4 FREEDOM FEST, WAKANDA PARK, MENOMONIE, ALL DAY
- ⇒ WED 7/24—SUN 7/28 DUNN COUNTY FAIR, 620 17TH ST, MENOMONIE
- ⇒ WED 7/24—SUN 7/28 RED CEDAR FILM FESTIVAL, MENOMONIE

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SUN // 10:30AM  
WED // 7:00PM  
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# DON'T SQUANDER AWAY YOUR MENOMONIE SUMMER

## WHAT YOUR SUMMER IN TOWN COULD LOOK LIKE

**S**tranded in Menomonie for the summer? Looking for more to get you out of the house? Summertime is a great time for soaking in nature, meeting new people, and not freezing while doing it, so enjoy it while it lasts. You don't have to feel stranded; there is a lot going on around this very town. Look for the opportunity to participate in a local festival, camp, or even a student group.

If you've been around the Stout campus during summertime before, then you may remember a week in June where you observed teenagers descending in droves on campus to learn about career paths in science, technology, engineering, art and math. Slightly jealous? If you love working with teenagers and like to geek out over those aforementioned subjects without pesky things like *grades* and *finals* getting in the way, then you might want to consider a job as a counselor with the **Summer STEAM Experience Camp**. You'll get paid a cool \$600 plus UW-Stout room and board to do things like assisting with planning activities and supervising a crew of 10 to 12 campers. This summer it's taking place June 16-20. Apply online through UW-Stout's CareerLink.

Explore with **Stout Adventures** or maybe just explore by yourself. Throughout the summertime, Stout Adventures provides



equipment rentals such as camping supplies. Check out their rock climbing walls, no experience needed. For rentals, a student ID or driver's license is required and reservations do require pre-payment.

Ever hear of the **Red Cedar Film Festival**? No? That's okay; it's a new event to Menomonie. This exciting film festival takes place July 24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>. The film viewings are going to take place July 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> at the Mabel Tainter Center for the Arts, Wilson Park Band Shell, and Harvey Hall Theatre. The Red Cedar Film Festival is made up of films that were submitted in late winter to be viewed and then judged on the 28<sup>th</sup>. With the requirement for the filming of the submissions to be less than a year old, viewers will get to experience current films. This event is meant to bring in lovers of films from the surrounding areas, making this a great time to meet fellow film-lovers. For more info, check out [redcedarfilm.org](http://redcedarfilm.org).

**Street Level Ministries (SLM)** is a Christian student org that meets throughout the year on Monday nights. SLM does various things over the summer, including grilling out, going swimming and playing games such as sand volleyball and around the world ping-pong.

While you travel around town, look for its mobile **Blind Munchies Coffeehouse** trailer. Don't forget about \$2 student breakfast on Saturdays at the Blind Munchies Coffeehouse. Watch some Saturday morning cartoons and enjoy a scrumptious meal. Nearly any day of the week you can pop in for a quick coffee drink and jam out to some **Burning Dog Radio** that's always playing in the background. Tune into 101.7FM anytime and you can meet the DJs when they do remote broadcasts at events such as Music Over Menomin and Vintage Blue Caps Baseball game days. Check out [streetlevelministries.com](http://streetlevelministries.com) to find out more!

Make your summer in Menomonie worth it; don't waste a bit of it, rain or shine. Step out of your comfort zone and you might find something quite epic.



# A Sweet Taste of SUMMER



## 4 WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR FRIENDS AND COLLEGE MINISTRY

Winter is over, and it's time to get moving. Put down the remote and leave Netflix in the dust. Below are four options to consider when mapping out your summer plans.

Call up your college ministry friends and plan a day journey or camping trip to Willow River State Park. Located just outside of Hudson, Willow River State Park is a scenic getaway that has all the feels: plenty of fresh air and flowers along the trails, rivers, and cliffs. Canoe and kayak rental is available, paddles included. Along with your swimsuit and towel, don't forget some water-friendly shoes to help make the waterfall experience unforgettable. If you're looking for more, tent it for the night. Who couldn't go for s'mores and hysterical laughs with good friends?

Check in and see what your college ministry is doing over the summer. Don't be surprised if there is an opportunity to catch up during some volleyball or take part in a Bible study. Revisit your contact list and give a friend who is a *Menomonite* a buzz to see what's going down. Schedule something, bring a sleeping bag, and crash on a friend's couch. If time allows, hit up the Log Jam for their breakfast specials like My Belly's Breakfast (eggs, bacon, and toast assembled the way you like it).

Start a group text. It's a good place to joke around, share what's happening with you, keep up with everyone, or ask for prayer. The Bible App (YouVersion) offers unlimited access to the Bible in many versions. Along with this sweet feature, you can delve deeper into what the app has to offer. It has a huge selection of daily devotionals put together by a variety of pastors, teachers, and authors. Just download the app, share it with your friends, and seek a daily devotional to do together. A favorite one of mine is Mark Driscoll's *Pray Like Jesus*. Then, designate a group leader to invite others and get started. The devotions are short. They start with a commentary by the author, which is followed by some Bible verses, and before you finish, there is an opportunity to comment and share with your friends about what God is saying to you today.

Don't let the list end here. Meet up with your friends at a cozy restaurant patio and have a brainstorming session. You never know what you may get into next! Maybe it's Valleyfair, visiting Lake Superior, seeing how many Dairy Queens are in an hour radius of Menomonie, or even having a day-cation at the Como Zoo. Whatever it is, make the most of it!

# One girl's TRIP STORY

A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE IS THE SOLUTION



**MANY** times I tried, but I always grew too tired. A monster deep inside me was knocking, kicking, and jumping to get my attention, always hindering me from seeing the world. My life was misled, misunderstood, uncertain, and alone in the dark, so I always held onto the papers and pens to express myself. I used to think that every effort of writing could be my last letter to make. I was ready to give up because of the uncertainties and unanswered questions life was offering me.

I was totally weak. I could paint a piece of artwork, but not literally because the story was twisted. My paintbrush was a knife. And the canvas was my wrist. I was cheerful, happy, and joyful but dead and distracted inside. Fat but hungry for acceptance. Weird but full of dreams. A comforter who didn't listen to my own advice I gave others. A perfect mold but broken inside. I have this childhood that was nothing but misery and doubting everyone, especially myself. I experienced bullying from my classmates when all I wanted was acceptance. I was a girl that could direct my thoughts and feelings to think about death or even not waking up tomorrow.

The most tragic times were the days over one week mid-February 2016 when I had a high fever. That same week my mother left our home because of another man. I felt like I was physically drowning because of my fever, and so I could do nothing to try and stop my mother from leaving.

Then, my brother came to me to share his experiences to find Christ, but it didn't mean anything yet. After that, I went to graduate from

my Junior High School and I had to make the decision about which school to enroll in for my upcoming senior years. I decided I needed to go to Leyte (Visayas), which was miles and miles from the place I grew up in for 16 years in Bukidnon (Mindanao).

Those two years of my senior years made me the person I never expected. I received Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour in my first year there in Leyte. A choice that will continue to determine the way I go in life. All I can say is that God is finding anyone in this world to share His words. I know how hard life was. It moves against all our wills because of its cruelty. Now, I tend to see the good despite how bad life seems. I try to blend the good to see the colors of life and God gave me more reasons to see the brightest moon and stars despite the dark. This life is a journey that we must take part in so He can grow us as an individual with Him. Even I was not pleased by my brother when he spoke to me about Christ, like an instrument who came to me in disguise. Life is about the Father's love and it is all starting to help me realize and understand why I am here. The fog that still sometimes hinders me makes me realize I can now go on because Jesus is waiting for me on the other side. Even though I stayed lost many times, He didn't give up on me. All I have wanted is for my life to be free, but now I know that a Spirit-filled life is the solution.

- Kesiya

# DIETRICH DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

HOW ONE MAN OPPOSED CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS TO FOLLOW GOD



**1930'S** Germany was in need of change. 15 years had passed since Germany lost WWI, and the country was experiencing a brittle and depressed economy. The people of Germany were desperate for change and leadership. A change came in 1933 when the Nazi Administration was voted into power, promising sweeping changes and prosperity for the struggling nation. Adolf Hitler was the head of this administration, and over time, a radical shift in Germany's cultural norms and values took place. Strategically, Hitler and the Nazis flipped morality on its head. They successfully changed the climate of Germany to accept institutionalized murder, prejudice, war, and genocide on a national scale. The pressures to accept this cultural shift rose as those who opposed the Nazis were publicly silenced or punished. Thankfully, not everyone kept silent, not Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

A German-born Christian, Bonhoeffer was a pastor who experienced firsthand horrors during Hitler's reign. Unlike the vast tide of people, he was not easily swayed to keep his head down. What made Bonhoeffer different than other German citizens? What made him dig his heels into the dirt and oppose Nazis instead of submitting to their ways? Simply put, Bonhoeffer feared God more than he feared any man. More than he feared Hitler. He knew that what the Nazi powers were doing in Germany was not right. An idle man could have easily opposed the Nazis in secret, but do nothing to actually help stop the atrocities. But for Bonhoeffer, the cost of sitting idly by was too high.

Despite pressure from close friends, Bonhoeffer willingly returned to a hostile German nation in 1938 from the safety of America. He returned to preach, serve, and ultimately to help locals survive. By 1941, the Nazis began opposing Bonhoeffer. They went so far as to ban and forbid him from public speaking

or printing anything for distribution. Bonhoeffer was bold, and kept preaching the truth of Christ anyway, stating things such as, *"One act of obedience [to God] is better than one hundred sermons."* Bonhoeffer stuck to the truth and promoted obedience to Christ above all other authority in a climate where most were too afraid to speak up, let alone speak biblical truth. To speak against anything that Hitler and his Nazis propaganda teams were pushing out was a death wish. The Nazis forced Bonhoeffer to regularly check in with police to monitor his actions, but by this time, Bonhoeffer was involved with allied intelligence agencies. These groups were dedicated to toppling Hitler and dismantling the horrors of the Nazi Regime by any means necessary.

Bonhoeffer's dedication to God, the truth of obeying Christ, and fighting the injustices he faced led to his eventual demise and martyrdom. In 1943, the Nazis imprisoned Bonhoeffer, but even from his cell he wrote letters and continued to teach and preach. Eventually he was sent to Flossenbürg, a concentration camp. In April of 1945, as the Nazis were nearing their end, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was publicly hanged.

In an increasingly violent and hostile Nazi climate, it would have been easy to shut up and not cause trouble. Fear has historically caused many to go against what they know to be true. But an even greater fear, the fear of God, propelled Bonhoeffer to be bold, stand up for righteousness, and speak the truth. The pressures and expectations of the culture were no match for Bonhoeffer's dedication to Jesus Christ. What's the cost of following God to you? Would you follow Him to your death even in as volatile a nation as Bonhoeffer's Germany?



To endure the cross is not tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ  
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer







## From the newsletter of Albert Allema (The Netherlands)

### LITTLE MUSIC BOAT

On a beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon after eating fresh stroopwafels at the open air market, I cycled home. When I crossed a bridge where a lot of people were gathered, I joined them. The reason for them standing on this bridge was the musician, Reinier Sijkens, who was passing by. He makes music from his little boat. It was a gorgeous serenade. The whole day, I reflected on this wonderful spectacle, however God had placed another thought in my mind earlier that day: “Albert, you are going to talk to a German guy this evening.” This thought was so specific; it could only have come from God. It was my free evening but I listened to the voice of God and went to the hostel.

When I arrived in the hostel, I saw a guy playing guitar. Starting a conversation with an artist is always easy. After some cows and calves (Dutch saying for small talk), he asked me some heavy questions and underpinnings about my faith. I found it amazing to see that God gave me the words to say in this sometimes-complicated conversation.

### IN A DARK CITY LIKE

**AMSTERDAM** *it is awesome to see God doing miracles and turning sad moments into beautiful blessings. God uses battles to motivate. The other day I had a hard day because of a spiritual battle. It was a big struggle, and I wasn't myself; the enthusiastic Albert was gone. I had to speak with my manager because it was quite obvious. She is really gifted to help when people are struggling with these kind of battles. She handed me "the story jar" and I had to read the stories. Oh, I will explain what this jar is. Staff workers put encouraging stories from*

*the hostel in the jar in order to encourage each other. But it turned out that I was actually the only author of the stories. When I was reading the stories, I noticed some tears begin to well up (this was one of the only times that I have had tears because of my writing skills) because it was very special to see that God was working in me and I realized that God still is willing to do that. I read my Frisian Bible and went to pray. It was amazing to see that I was reborn again. After this, I could have a great conversation with a girl from Asia. It was really great to see God working through my struggles.*



In school I studied photography, but after my graduation I didn't really know what the next step would be. During a service at my church, where I was taking photographs, God led me to the front of the stage where prayer was available. Normally I am not drawn to receive prayer when I am photographing. But during this prayer, beautiful words came from the mouth of this person. He asked God if He would bring people to my path who would tell me what God's next step is for my life. In miraculous ways, God brought to light the plans for my future; two people told me to think about working at the Shelter and I decided to apply.

Now I am aware of the fact that God is in control and that I don't have any reason to worry about anything. Not about my finances, not about the way people look at me, not about my future. God will provide, for sure! I like it so much here in Shelter. Every day is full of surprises. Every day I have opportunities to drink coffee and share about life and God's love with beautiful people from around the whole globe—isn't it amazing?! I spend my free time as a bird photographer. When I go into the fields in the early morning, I don't know which birds I will have in front of my lens that day. But I know I will see awesome things because it is another day with God! I think that is applicable for our lives as followers of Christ. He is continually blessing us—enjoy it!



# *The Power of* **WEAKNESS**

**TRUSTING JESUS WITH *EVEN THAT***

**“E**

mbrace your strengths!”

“Overcome your weaknesses!” These are common mantras, and they’ve infiltrated everything. When you’re

in a job interview, for example, you’re supposed to list your weaknesses by turning them into hidden strengths: *“Yeah, I’m not really a person who is good at talking to groups of people, but it just means I’m excellent at listening and paying attention to details!”* It’s not very often that we are told to accept them, or better yet, to exploit them. But this counter-cultural idea is what God wants. To Him, our weaknesses serve a specific purpose and are not to be covered up or ignored. Otherwise, we’ll end up wasting His plan for them.

God gave us weaknesses partly to keep us from becoming prideful and conceited because it means we have to rely on Him instead of upon ourselves. “God opposes the proud, but favors the humble” (James 4:6, NLT). He also gave us weaknesses purely so He can demonstrate His strength. Rather than resenting Him for the weaknesses we have, it is imperative that we recognize that they’re meant to be used for His purpose, not our own. After all, you can’t experience the strength of God until you are willing to be weak. We have much to learn about that from the Apostle Paul:

*“Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.*

# “GOD WANTS US TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR WEAKNESSES WITH HUMILITY.”

*And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:8-10, NKJV)*

God doesn’t expect us to just glibly accept our weaknesses. After all, that’s not what the Apostle Paul did. He struggled through it, with God. But when He understood that God had a purpose for them, he accepted it as His will. Understanding that your weaknesses are part of His unique design for you is incredibly freeing. And while He can and may take some aspects related to your weakness away, He may also choose to not take anything away at all as He did with Paul. In the end, there are reasons that God made you the way you are that you might not be able to understand at the moment, or ever.

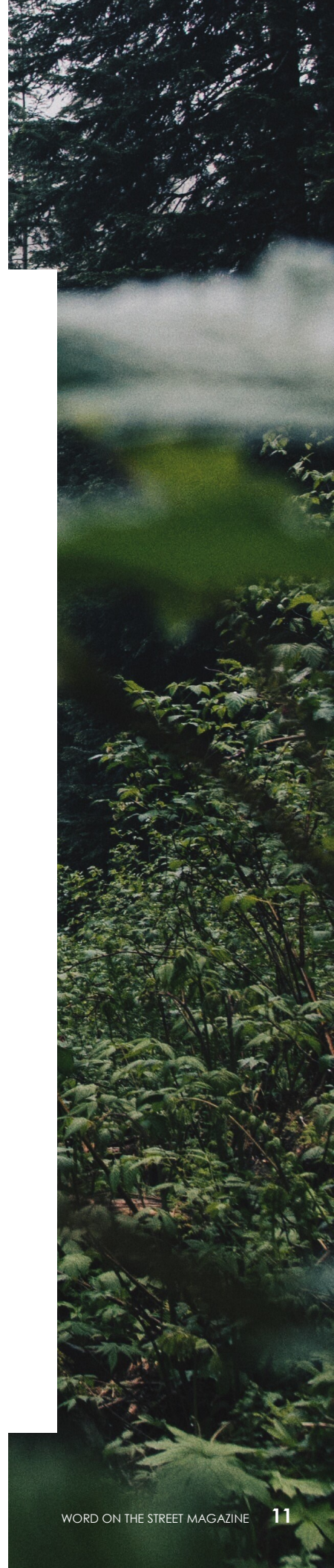
God’s perspective is far different and more complete than our own (Isaiah 55:8-9), and He never makes a mistake. That helps to explain why He uses people who trust Him with their weaknesses rather than those who think they can take on everything by themselves i.e. their motto being *grin and bear it*. That’s because by using the weak and lowly things, He is able to showcase His power and wonder in a way that confounds the status quo of the world. Take the example of Nick Vujicic<sup>1</sup> who was born in Australia with no arms and no legs. He

struggled with his physical limitations greatly while growing up, even to the point of being suicidal, but today he’s a global traveler spreading the hope of Jesus Christ and the power that comes from Him, not himself. It’s encouraging to look at the life of a guy who, for all intents and purposes, shouldn’t be doing what he’s doing. He is a living, breathing example of what it means to live life for the glory of God.

Instead of dwelling on what we can’t do, we are to do what God specifically designed us for, which will always include things we’d rather not do. Despite a constant “thorn in his side,” Paul demonstrated acceptance of this limitation when he moved forward in the ministry he was given. Even though he was told no by God when he asked for it to be removed, Paul remained faithful to his mission and relied on Jesus to meet him with the strength he needed. Paul’s weakness was a constant reminder that he needed to depend on God for everything, and that’s the point. Jesus calls us to recognize His power and take hold of what He’s asking us to do because without Him, we “can do nothing” (John 15:5).

The world tells us that only the strong survive, and value is placed upon those who are self-reliant. We are taught to look to strengths as a source, and not to disclose our weaknesses to others. But God wants us to acknowledge our weaknesses with humility because He always comes through in ways we can’t imagine or even understand right away. So rather than trying to hide your weaknesses behind your strengths, aim to know and walk with the Creator who made you, knows you, and has an amazing plan for what you consider a weakness. Here’s the thing: it’s actually the catalyst to showing the world His power.

<sup>1</sup> [lifewithoutlimbs.org/](http://lifewithoutlimbs.org/)





# OVERWHELMED BY

## DECISIONS

### GOD'S SPECIFIC PLAN AND OUR ROLE LIVING IT

**W**hat should I eat for breakfast? How am I going to spend my Friday night? Where should I live? Should I go to church? Which church? Who should I marry? Should I even get married? Am I in the right major? Which job should I take? If you feel like your head is more full of "what-ifs" and "now-what's" than it is full of clarity, you're not alone. Columbia Business School professor Sheena Iyengar did a survey of 2,000 Americans and learned that the average number of choices made throughout a typical day was about 70.<sup>1</sup> She also conducted an experiment using jam displays in a grocery store that demonstrated that we're easily overwhelmed when presented with too many choices. When people saw six varieties of jam, they stopped less often to investigate, but also bought a jar six times more often than when there was a display of 24 varieties of jam.<sup>1</sup> Talk about a real "jam" in our decision-making process!

#### HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

When facing a decision, people often do one of two things. Some make decisions with little thought at all. In haste, we can end up making rash decisions we come to regret later. Making quick decisions also doesn't leave time to consider how our decisions affect the people around us. Quickly making decisions seems like a nice idea in the short term because it makes us feel confident and in control, but ignoring the consequences of our actions generally leads to **nothing** good. Your parents may have warned you about this, and we'd venture to say they were probably right on this one.

On the other end of the spectrum are people who feel that decision-making can be paralyzing. Because it feels so overwhelming, there's a tendency to turn on the auto-pilot, go about their days without thinking too deeply, and hope for the best. Even when the urgency of a decision is recognized, they can be afraid to make the wrong choice and just freeze up. If they're not careful, they can spend weeks, months, and even years waiting for a clear answer.

The problem is, when we refuse to make committed decisions in our lives, nothing gets done. Months go by, and one day, a nagging discontentment has

<sup>1</sup>Sheena Iyengar at TEDSalon NY2011, "How to make choosing easier" [ted.com/talks/sheena\\_iyengar\\_choosing\\_what\\_to\\_choose/](http://ted.com/talks/sheena_iyengar_choosing_what_to_choose/)

caught up with us. We may end up feeling bitter towards the way things are because our lives aren't the way we hoped they'd be. Sometimes life doesn't go the way we thought it would because of circumstances out of our control. Sometimes though, life isn't what we hoped because of our own negligence. When we were given an option to act, we chose not to. The good news? In the middle of our decision paralysis, God is holding out the sweet promise of Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV), which says, "I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

### A GOOD GOD

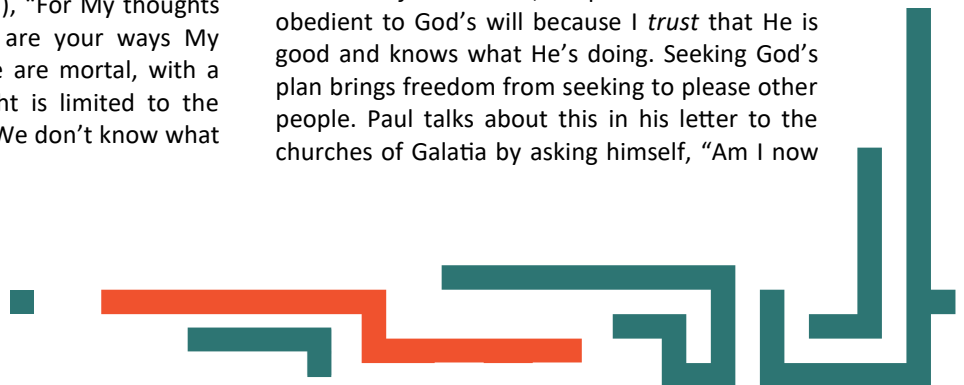
I remember being a high school senior and talking with my parents one night about which college I should go to. I had the choice narrowed down to two when my dad suggested I pick the university closer to home. It seemed like a good enough deciding factor, and a few months later, there I was as a first-year college student. While I am happy with my choice of university, I was not searching to know God during this time in my life, and because of that, I made decisions based solely on logic, what I wanted, and whatever was convenient for me. Until we realize our need for God's direction in our lives, we will make decisions based on whatever feels right at the moment. The Old Testament tells of a time, not unlike today, where "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25, NKJV). They left God out of the picture altogether, and did what they wanted. Keep in mind that these were people who *knew* God, yet they chose to do what *they* deemed right instead of following what He determined was the way to go.

Part of making wise decisions is accepting that, in many cases, we *don't* know what's best for us. God says in Isaiah 55:8 (NKJV), "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways." It's no secret that we are mortal, with a start and end date. Our sight is limited to the moment we have right now. We don't know what

the next 60 seconds will hold. When you think about it, following God because He knows the future is the best thing we can do.

How awesome it is to follow a God that knows exactly what you should be doing every moment of every day! That gives true purpose. Living out the plans God talks about in Jeremiah gives us the deepest sense of belonging we can possibly imagine. If you've ever experienced it, there's nothing quite like knowing you are exactly where you are supposed to be. The summer after my sophomore year of college, I knew God was asking me to stay in my college town for the summer so I could be more involved in my local church community there. My parents weren't expecting this, but I shared what I felt God wanted for my summer. Deciding to stay was one of the tougher decisions I had made up until then because I would have rather been comfortable at home. Plus, it's what my parents wanted, but both of these factors were in direct conflict with what God was asking me to do. Looking back now, I see how making that decision taught me about the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit for peace and looking to the Bible and my local church community for guidance. When we are in God's will, we can rest because we are where God wants us to be, doing what He wants us to do. We're no longer toiling over what God's will is. Instead, we're actually experiencing what it means to take a risk and trust God with the outcome.

Six years later, I am still in that college town living a life full of rich friendships and experiencing the love and power of God. The uncomfortable moments of tough decisions I went through to get here are all worth it now. The discomfort of going against what other people expect of me, or even how I *feel* about it, are powerless when I am obedient to God's will because I *trust* that He is good and knows what He's doing. Seeking God's plan brings freedom from seeking to please other people. Paul talks about this in his letter to the churches of Galatia by asking himself, "Am I now



seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10, ESV).

### MAKING WISE DECISIONS

As Christians, we can find some consolation in our decision-making when we remember they are opportunities to trust God. Many of us incorrectly assume God is asking us to guess at His will as if we are supposed to determine the future. This isn't the case. In his book, *Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will*, Kevin DeYoung puts it this way: "God is not a magic 8-ball we shake up and peer into whenever we have a decision to make. He is a good God who gives us brains, shows us the way of obedience, and invites us to take risks for Him." God, in His faithfulness, has given us the tools we need to make decisions wisely as we navigate through our lives.

#### *The Bible*

As our Creator, the Bible says God is eternal which means He is outside of time and can see the full plan ahead. While it is not our job to see the big picture, God does want us to take steps forward to act on the commands He has already given us in His Word. In Malachi 3:6 (NKJV), God says, "For I am the Lord, I do not change." That means that what the Word of God says applies to our lives today, and His commands have not wavered. God has laid out commands for all Christians to obey. For instance, we're to love one another (John 13:34), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), and make disciples (Matthew 28:19). Even if we're not faced with any big life decisions at the moment, we can read what God has already asked us to do and start there.

#### *Prayer*

In the book of Philippians, God says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7, NKJV). We begin to make wise decisions by bringing the options we see to God in prayer. We can be confident He wants to hear about our decisions and lead us as we take a step forward.

#### *Community*

God commands His people to be a part of a local body of believers. Having other people in your life who know you well and are also hearing from God is essential to your decision-making. The local church is a multi-generational family where there are others who have gone through similar life situations. They may have practical or spiritual guidance for you as you make your decisions.

**"GOD IS NOT A MAGIC 8-BALL WE SHAKE UP AND PEER INTO WHENEVER WE HAVE A DECISION TO MAKE. HE IS A GOOD GOD WHO GIVES US BRAINS, SHOWS US THE WAY OF OBEDIENCE, AND INVITES US TO TAKE RISKS FOR HIM."**

**- KEVIN DEYOUNG**

### FAITHFUL IN THE SMALL THINGS

God says in His Word in Luke 16:10 (NLT), "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities." This verse doesn't mean you'll be presented with jaw-dropping opportunities because you're doing well with what you've been given right now. What God is saying here is that the way we follow through on what we have right in front of us determines how we will respond with what we are given in the future. When we are in close relationship with God and are obedient to Him in the "little things," we are training our ears to better listen to God's voice when faced with bigger life decisions.

The pressure of the world makes you feel like you need to do a million different things. The truth is, you can't say yes to everything *and* live the life God has planned for you. But we don't have to fear missing out on anything either because there's freedom in living the specific life God wants *you* to live. To combat your tendency to try and scoop up everything life has to offer, spend some time evaluating what your priorities are and how you've been spending your time. How are you doing with what you've been given right now? We honor God by being faithful and consistent in our day-to-day lives.

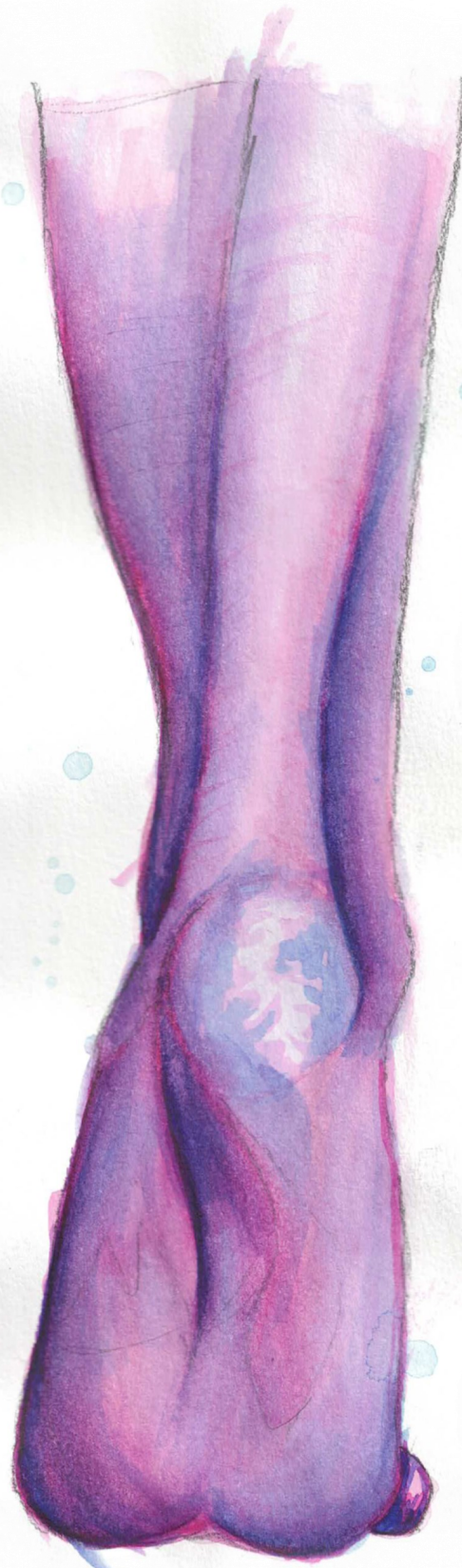
When faced with the next big life decision, follow the peace you've gained from being faithful to God in the little things and by being in close relationship with Him. Pray and take a step forward in faith because, without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Remember that God is not hiding His will behind His back to keep it from you. His Word tells us, "God is not the author of confusion but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33, NKJV), and that "God has given us everything we need for living a godly life" (2 Peter 1:3, NLT).




Your  
laws are  
wonderful  
no wonder  
I obey  
them! The  
teaching of  
your word  
gives light  
so even the  
simple can  
understand



I pant  
with  
expectation  
longing  
for your  
command  
come and  
show me  
your mercy  
as you do for  
all who love  
your name



Guide my steps by your word so I will  
not be overcome by evil - Psalm 119:129-133



# FIGHT TO REMEMBER

GIVING UP IS NOT AN OPTION

Imagine that you are walking through the woods close to dusk on a winding, wooded trail, when up ahead you notice a stray dog. You proceed with caution, but you step on a twig and the dog starts sprinting towards you. In seconds, the dog is upon you. It's relentless, but if you quit now, you won't be alive in five minutes. Fighting is the best chance you have. This is what spiritual warfare is like. Your mind and heart are at constant odds with sinful thoughts, and as Ephesians 6:12 puts it, "against the rulers of the darkness of this world (Satan)." You are in a daily battle; will you fight or flee? This is a struggle that mankind has been faced with since, well, *forever*.

For example, Job was a prosperous and godly man who

had a bunch of livestock according to the Book of Job in the Bible. This is significant because livestock and land back then were comparable to basically being a millionaire; that's how good Job had it at the time. Then Satan entered the picture and suggested to God that Job was not as faithful as he seemed, so God allowed Satan to take everything from Job, except his life. His house was destroyed, he endured a terrible sickness, and all of his children and livestock were killed. Job was left with absolutely nothing, but here's where the story takes a turn away from the cliché. Job did not just say, "It's okay, God, I trust your plan." He wrestled with a ton of fear and doubt about whether God still loved him. He held on, however, and fought to turn back toward God, not against Him.



When I forget that life isn't great all the time, and I end up feeling knocked down and lost, I tend to point my finger at God. It's funny, but I never seem to point my finger at God when things are going great. How come I get to go to college and have friends who love me? Why, God? Yeah, it doesn't work like that. Instead, if you're like me, you selfishly say, "I did that," when in reality, God was behind it all.

When you're struggling with difficult circumstances in your life, *remember* that God said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5, ESV). One of the

me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28, ESV).

## GIVE THANKS

The Bible tells us to "give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds" (Psalm 9:1, ESV). Thanking God for forgiving you of your sins lifts such a huge weight off your shoulders. True rest is surrendering to Jesus, so cry out to Him and thank Him because He created you and sustains you.

# "REMEMBERING HOW GOD HAS BEEN WITH YOU HELPS YOU TO TRUST THAT HE IS STILL THERE, EVEN WHEN IT DOESN'T *FEEL* THAT WAY OR *SEEM* THAT WAY."

greatest promises in the whole Bible says, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28, ESV). Throughout the Bible, God is so patient and gracious to His people. He knows that we forget what He has done for us, but He gives us what we need so we can fight against that: Himself.

## THINK

Think back to the last time you remember God directing your steps and guiding you. In the book of Psalms, the psalmist says, "I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds" (Psalm 77:12, ESV). Remembering how God has been with you helps you to trust that He is still there, even when it doesn't *feel* that way or *seem* that way.

## REPENT

Remembering that God is with you is important, but keep in mind that this is also a fight. You need to actively turn away from your sinful deeds, thoughts, and desires, and turn to God. Run to Him! Remember that Jesus died for your past, present, and future sins, and that He welcomes you with open arms: "Come to

## TELL

Living your life in such a way where others get to know Him because they know you is a joy. But even here, Satan is fighting against you to silence this. But the thing is, if you are truly a new creature, nothing will be able to shut you up because you can't forget what God has done for you.

God is so good to us. It's true that we can forget that and lose focus when we experience hardships, but don't stay knocked down. It's a lie to keep believing that God ever promised our lives would be perfect or go according to our plans. What God did promise us was that nothing "...in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39, ESV). So, keep fighting against your thoughts, desires, and feelings, and pursue God. There may be days where you lose the battle, but God is right there to pick you back up, if you let Him. "Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord" (Lamentations 3:40, ESV)!

# ASK WOTS:

## REAL QUESTIONS, REAL ANSWERS



### QUESTIONING MY FRIEND'S RELATIONSHIP STATUS

*Dear WOTS,*

*I'm a college student who attends Christian organizations on my campus, attends a church, and reads my Bible daily. What has been bothering me lately are my friends who claim they are Christian, but are not doing activities that I would expect them to do (read their Bible, go to church, go to a Bible study). In fact, they are doing the complete opposite. How should I address my "Christian" friends when they lead a life contrary to what Jesus calls us to?*

*Yours,  
Concerned Friend*

**Dear Concerned Friend,**

Know first that you are not alone. Many Christians go through the same struggle during college. Second, know that it doesn't only happen in college. Rather, it's the beginning, for the same thing happens in jobs, communities, and other areas of your life.

Now consider this: you will lose friends when you become a Christian. Mathew 11:19 (ESV) describes Jesus as a friend of tax collectors and sinners, but He set boundaries between unbelievers and those who He considered to be friends. He loved all people through the public ministry He undertook, but He only mentored and was close friends with a tiny group of men by comparison. The type of friendships we're called to have with others must be based fully on Christ's example. These types of friendships are full of good deeds, accountability, and declare how awesome Christ is.

Here are a few ways you can lovingly approach your friends:

First, pray. What a difference it will make when you truly approach your friends with compassion, humility, and patience, as compared to anger

and irritability (Colossians 3:12-14).

Remember to give them grace as God has given you. We can show our friends grace by mirroring what God has already done for us. That is, we are to be merciful, slow to anger, and rich in love (Exodus 34:6-7).

Second, be intentional with your relationship. Be bold enough to ask them hard questions that probably need to be asked. You could ask them a question like, "Would you say that you're in love with Jesus?" Don't take their resistance as the final word. If God has placed both of you around each other, He has done so with a purpose. But remember, ultimately, this is between them and God. Don't get in the way of that, and don't let your heart become hard or your words accusatory.

Third, the truth is still compelling. Jesus is still Lord. Share your hope and where it comes from. The natural outpouring of your walk with God should lead you to, in any way possible, share the gospel message with your friends. Love your friends in a way in which they come to know Christ. Don't attempt to be the Holy Spirit for your friends, but you can be involved in their lives in a way that continually points them back to Jesus.

*Have questions?  
Send them our way at  
wotsmagazine@gmail.com.*



# PURPOSE PAIN *for the*

**I**urging through every nerve ending in my body, the intensity of the pain threatened my sanity. Every breath was a battle. Each second drew on endlessly. The screams of someone much too close to me rang horrifically through my bones. I remember wishing desperately that they would be quiet for just a moment, before I realized that the wailing shrieks were my own.

Laying on my stomach in the dust, I thought of trying to run, but his firm hand kept me as still as I could bear. With each cut, he worked into the flesh of my back deeper and deeper. I needed him to stop. I begged him to. The pain alone was going to kill me and death was beginning to seem like a delicious relief.

Suddenly, for a moment, he did stop. I held my breath. The feeling dulled. My eyes darted each way looking for the quickest escape from him. Every muscle in my body tensed as I planned to make a run for it.

But then he spoke gently to me. I remembered what he was doing. His hand wasn't holding me down, but steadying me. I had laid down before him willingly. I was desperate for his help. My breath released. I relaxed. He began again.

As soon as he started, I forgot the relief. Pain and hopelessness were my only companions. Warm liquid trickled off my

back and pooled around me. I wondered how there could possibly be any blood left in me. I tried to focus on his hand, but I could only feel the knife.

After what seemed like hours, I decided I was going to fight him off. I flung my own hand onto his and dug into his flesh, inflicting as much pain as I possibly could. I shouted horrible things at him. I wanted to be left alone.

Another hand grabbed mine and stopped me. It was attached to a face that I knew. It was the face of a friend. Her eyes pierced into me and I instantly felt guilt for my attack against him. She turned to grab something behind her and I could see a jagged scar cut into her own flesh. I remembered the pain had a purpose. She turned back to me and wrung out a rag full of cool water onto my face. It dripped down into my mouth and I instantly felt refreshed.

I was filled to the brim with gratitude for her. Then I realized that he had directed my friend to help me. I was filled to the brim with gratitude for him. I laid back down and bared myself to him again. I still wanted to run, but I wanted to trust what he was doing for me more.

The pain never stopped, but I wasn't focused on it anymore. I knew my friend couldn't stop him, and I knew that I didn't really want him to stop either. I wanted him to keep working. I wanted him to save me.

She stayed with me and held my hand. Whenever I started to scream he would direct her to dip the rag in the water and refresh me. Every time she turned I saw her scar. He kept cutting, but I had hope. Hope can get you through anything.

Then I woke up. I wasn't on my belly in the dust. There was no blood. There was no pain. My family was smiling around me in the hospital. The doctor leaned in triumphantly. He had cut the tumor out. It had been much, much worse than anyone had suspected, but the surgery was successful. I was going to live.

**"HOPE CAN  
GET YOU  
THROUGH  
ANYTHING."**



# QUARTERLY MUSIC BEAT

AN UPDATE FROM OUR FRIENDS AT BURNING DOG RADIO



**A**s you read this, a radio station in Menomonie is playing music. What kind? It varies. Depending on the day and the time of day you may be reading this, there may be a live show, a live concert, a broadcast of a church service, or, you guessed it, a song. We've been called eclectic, indie, alternative, and the list goes on. After years of having the most variety of genre in Dunn County, we have often forgotten, perhaps taken for granted, what our station means to us. We are serving God by running this station, providing good music and Biblical truths through our programming, but how does it change the way we live? How do we want it to change the way you live?

It's simple. We want you to listen differently.

The world shouts profanities, slurs, and horrific slogans across anything it can. Music is a big culprit. It's not music's fault; music is technically just vibrations traveling through the air. The culprit is a whole lot of sinful hearts. However, listeners take in nasty lies about themselves, others, how to live, love, and we all know where it can lead to. When we listen to anything, we absorb the message like a sponge. Whether or not we are able to appropriately wring out the nasty stuff is up to the priorities set beforehand by the individual. How have they chosen to listen?

We challenge you, listeners of anything: podcasts, radio, Spotify, overheard conversations on the bus, and elsewhere, to listen differently to the world around you. Is it pointing

you to God's goodness? Or is it pulling you away? Is it pointing you toward the lie of "self-care?" Just because you listened to a song with profanity in it doesn't mean you're doomed for eternity. Just because your favorite podcast has a political segment doesn't mean we're labeling you a Democrat or Republican. We want listeners to be intentional about how they listen so they are able to flourish as the person God made them be, including how they think and act as a result of it.

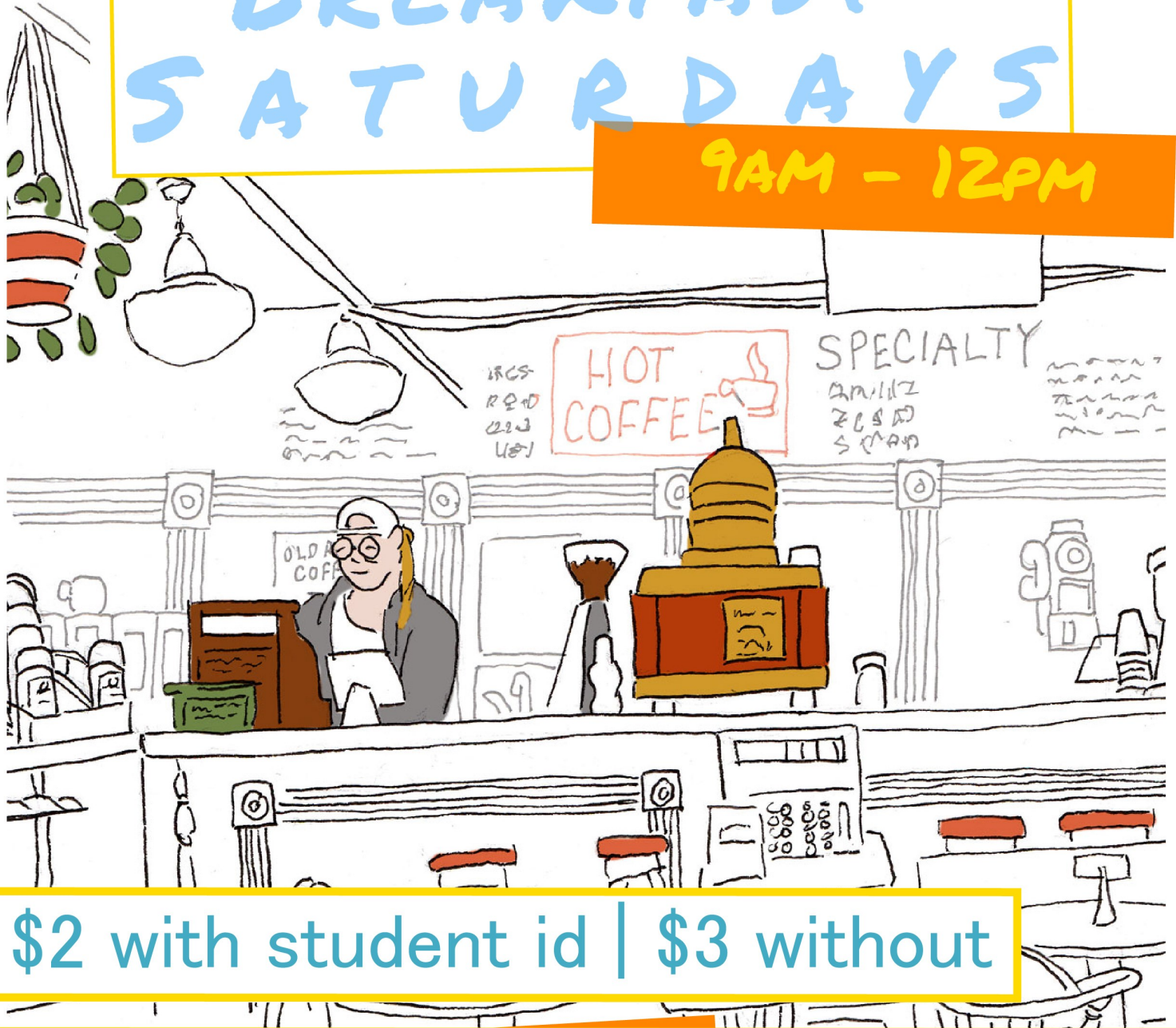
We play music we believe points people toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We share clips of Bible teachers around the country highlighting various topics from a Christian perspective. We have clips from TV shows and movies to give people a giggle after a long day at work or to make sure they're still paying attention. We do this with the hope you listen intentionally to our programming. We do this so we continue to be intentional in how we listen. We all must decide.

We are Burning Dog Radio, a non-profit station in Menomonie, WI. You can listen at 101.7 FM in town.



# \$2 STUDENT BREAKFAST SATURDAYS

9AM - 12PM



\$2 with student id | \$3 without

your local non-profit coffeehouse  
**The Blind Munchies**

621 wilson ave menomonie, wi  
[www.theblindmunchies.com](http://www.theblindmunchies.com)



# A DAY AT

# MIDTOWN GLOBAL MARKET

An internationally-themed public market featuring fresh and prepared foods, restaurants, and a selection of arts and crafts from around the world

920 E. Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN



## CAFE FINSPANG

### SCANDINAVIAN FOOD AND GIFTS

Located not far from one of Midtown Global Market's entrances, this small stand is full of bright colors, Scandinavian history, knick knacks, and plenty of "uff-das". If that doesn't draw you in, their front display has assortments of pastries, cheeses, canned fish and Kalles (creamed smoked roe), which very well looks like a tube of toothpaste. Now the Kalles probably is an acquired taste. We had the chance to try some kolache, which is a light pastry filled with fruity goodness and topped with sugar crystals. We tried the raspberry and cream cheese. If you find your sweet tooth unsatisfied, an assortment of truffles or custards is right around the corner.

## SAFARI EXPRESS

Safari Express is a Somalian American inspired, a la carte restaurant nestled in the center of Midtown Global Market. Think Qdoba with a little more flare. They serve a variety of options that could please a variety of people including camel burgers, chicken sandwiches, and build your own bowls with rice, veggies, meat, and sauces. The friendly staff didn't leave us time to imagine and were quick to offer flavorful samples. Behind the counter was Fathiya, our smiling server who said, "My favorite part about working here is that although I'm really introverted, when I come here, I'm forced to interact with people. It's made me more outgoing. My favorite dish would be the goat because my mom makes that at home!" If you have the slightest bit of adventure in you, we recommend you stop by.



## HOLYLAND

### RESTAURANT AND GROCERY STORE

Don't have two weeks or the thousands of dollars it takes to visit the Middle East and Mediterranean? No problem! Visiting Holyland restaurant and grocery store within the Midtown Global Market will fool your senses into believing you're actually there because of their fragrant teas, spices, and oils. You can purchase steaming hot meals to go or peruse the grocery store for fresh ingredients that can be prepared at home. Give them a try and you'll feel like a world traveler without stepping foot on a plane.



## HOT INDIAN FOODS

What do you get when you mix Chipotle with an Indian food buffet? Hot Indian. This food truck turned Global Market establishment started with the owner's dream to make Indian food more than just a buffet experience. With so many options, such as their Indian take on the burrito and their numerous rice bowls, it is hard to decide, although the knowledgeable staff can help narrow down the options based on your preferences to help give you a well-rounded dish.



7 AM



9 PM

# DAILY DEVOTIONS ON BDR // THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

**BURNINGDOGRADIO.COM**

101.7FM WRJF-LP MENOMONIE, WI



STREET LEVEL

# INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY



STREET LEVEL INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

FIND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

## NICK THE HICK

Another rant from your favorite redneck

## IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD



Keys, wallets, knives, sanity, homework etc. All things I've lost in my travels. That's why I have so many questions when it comes to air pods. First off, where does the "air" in air pods come from? Are they made of mainly a mixture of oxygen and nitrogen? How about "pods." Do they congregate and form a group? Are they an elongated seed vessel? Is there air inside the pod? At any rate, back to losing things. I'd like to try a couple sets out to see how I like 'em. I am all for fewer wires, however, I'm scared that I will end up with two left-hand air pods in the end. At \$160/pair for Apple air pods, it's no wonder folks get wound up when you startle them on the sidewalk abruptly causing a violent head shake and one of the "buds" to fall out. Ain't like it fell down the storm drain, besides if it gets a little wet it'd just be like a built-in synthesizer anyhow. There is a little bit of confusion regarding the case that holds the pods. Unfortunately, on more than one occasion, I confused the case for breath mints and without thought popped it opened threw them back and gagged until, well that's enough for now.

STREET LEVEL MINISTRIES



LIFE IS MEANT  
FOR GOOD  
FRIENDS  
— a n d —  
G R E A T  
ADVENTURE

UW-STOUT // MONDAYS

Dinner 6:00pm // Bible Study 7:00pm  
STREET LEVEL HOUSE // 1009 6TH ST E MENOMONIE  
streetlevelministries.com // streetlevel@uwstout.edu  
715.235.4977

UW-RIVER FALLS // TUESDAYS

Dinner 6:30pm // Bible Study 7:00pm  
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streetlevelministries.com/riverfalls // riverfalls@jfbelievers.com  
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JOIN THE ADVENTURE

