



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



Bibleway Ministries: Who Are We and What Do We Do?

A sleepwalking man woke up in a retention pond in his backyard. The pond had become home to a few alligators. Awakened by the cold water, he saw the alligators, fought them off with his walking cane and lived to tell the story!

In ministry today, we are encountering people, like this man walking in a dazed state, who need to be awakened with a fresh cup of cold water! This is our purpose at Bibleway Ministries.

From 2018-2020, [the average rate of depression](#) in America was 20%. During the same period, [the average rate of suicides](#) per 100,000 people was 14%. The graphic below from the CDC helps us put the 2020 suicide numbers in perspective.

Our headlines and news media report drive-by shootings, carjackings, rising gas prices and ever-increasing inflation. Is there a need for encouragement? Certainly there is, and we desire to respond with the perfect encouragement and hope found in Jesus Christ. People need to know the God who spoke to Isaiah and said, "So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God." (Isaiah 41:10 NIV)

The Greek word *paraklesis* used in the Bible means encouragement, comfort and consolation. When Jesus told His followers about the Holy Spirit, whom He described as The Comforter, He used a similar Greek word, *parakletos* (John 14:26). An important part of the Holy

Spirit's purpose is to encourage, comfort and console us. When we have experienced His comfort for ourselves, we can then share it with others who need it.

It is not enough to talk about this encouragement in our monthly Newsletter; we are hopeful that it is also demonstrated in our ministerial support. (We believe this stuff really works!) We have been able to come alongside organizations like Feed My Starving Children and feed thousands. Through our support of Wayside Cross Ministries, we have provided support and direction to the homeless, addicted and those newly released from prison. We also partner with BreakThrough Urban Ministries to provide hope in Chicago's East Garfield neighborhood for young men and women who have found an alternative to gangs.

When you share how you've been helped through our words of encouragement during a difficult time in your life, your feedback encourages us. As Gordon B. Hinkley stated, "One of the great ironies of life is this, he or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served."

Through your prayers and financial support, we take great pleasure in offering this small service to others. Please pray God would continue to bless this ministry as we graciously seek to be a blessing to others! - *Dr. L.W. Edwards*

In 2020:

45,979 people died by suicide in the United States.

That is 1 death every 11 minutes.

- ➔ 12.2 million adults seriously thought about suicide
- ➔ 3.2 million adults made a plan
- ➔ 1.2 million adults attempted suicide

I Want You on My Team

Texas East clung to a 3-2 lead against Oklahoma in the Southwest Region Championship of the Little League World Series. With runners on second and third base, the pitcher, Kaiden Shelton, wound up and let the ball fly.

The pitch missed its mark. Instead of connecting with the catcher's mitt, [it struck Isaiah Jarvis, the batter, near his head](#). Isaiah's helmet absorbed the impact, but the force of the misguided pitch knocked him to the ground.

After coaches helped him to his feet, Isaiah was allowed a free walk to first base.

Isaiah was okay, but as he glanced toward the pitcher's mound from first base, he could see Kaiden was not. The pitcher stood in tears holding his head in his hand.

At that moment, Isaiah didn't see an opponent who had almost hurt him. He saw another human being who needed encouragement after his mistake.

Without saying a word, Isaiah tossed his batting helmet in the dirt and walked toward Kaiden. In an unforgettable scene, Isaiah hugged Kaiden and spoke words of encouragement to him.

After the game, [Kaiden commented](#) on Isaiah's kind gesture, "I felt really bad. And so, whenever he walked up to the mound and hugged me, it really helped me. And that's when I realized that baseball, it teaches life lessons."

For a few moments, Isaiah and Kaiden taught the entire world a lesson that some things are more important than the outcome of a competition.

The Distraction of Winning at All Costs

Winning is a good thing. But it becomes a distraction when we make it the main thing. People are always more important.

As we view the important issues of our times, we may play on opposing teams like Isaiah and Kaiden. We may have different perspectives on race, politics, war, the economy, law enforcement, and a number of social and humanitarian causes. It is common for us to view "the other team" as opponents or even enemies. Once this happens, the other team becomes a problem to fix instead of a person to love. In our efforts to win, we become distracted from what is most important.

Compassion's X-Ray Vision

Beneath the issues we fight over, and on the other side of the walls we build, there are people.

People with eternal souls who need Jesus. It takes wisdom — and genuine compassion — to see what is most important. You might say compassion has X-ray vision.

Compassion sees needs and seizes the opportunity to meet them. It walks toward others. It meets them where they are. It extends a hand. It wipes a tear. It offers a warm embrace to a hurting heart. It gives freely without thought of return. It shows kindness. It combines truth with love. It proclaims the gospel.

Where compassion lives, fighting ends and walls come down.

Standing on Common Ground

Maybe your biggest challenge is not with unbelievers on the other team, but with other Christians on your team. You go to the same church or school, but have different political views. She's conservative, and you're liberal. He votes Republican, and you vote Democrat. She supports one political candidate; you prefer someone else. Or you have different tastes in worship music. He likes contemporary songs, while you prefer traditional music. She likes to dress casual in church, while you prefer more formal clothes.

How can we learn to play well together in the Body of Christ if we are so different?

The Early Church had significant differences they had to work through. Believers disagreed on race (Jewish nationals vs. Gentiles and Samaritans), politics (allegiance to Rome vs. Israel), social class, women's roles in the church, religious practices and more.

There is no way people who were so different could ever get along — unless they learned that there was something more important than their differences.

The fact is, these believers shared something important in common: They had been saved by grace through faith in Jesus. They had joined a new family because of Jesus. They had direct access to God because of Jesus. Having Jesus in common was more important than anything else. They stood on common ground. Knowing this changed everything.

As long as we live on this planet, we will disagree with others. May we avoid the distraction of winning at all costs. Instead, let's see through Compassion's eyes what is most important. Underneath all the issues, there is another person who needs love. They are someone for whom Jesus died. Instead of treating them like enemies, let's show them we want them on our team.

