



The Beacon

FAITH LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL'S VERY OWN BIMONTHLY STUDENT PUBLICATION

March 13, 2009

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Fit in Winter

By Taylor Wright



During sports seasons it is easy to stay fit. Mandatory practices force you to regularly work hard, and coaches encourage you to load up on the healthy foods. The idea of victory weighs on you more than the difficulties of the discipline it takes to get there. But what happens when volleyball, or basketball season is over? The motivation of winning a game is gone, and your schedule once again begins to fill up. The same schedule seems to repeat: up way too early, school, play practice. By the time home is once again in sight there is not much motivation, or time, left for exercise. After all, running from one daily activity to the next always seems to tucker you out, and many more fun activities require much less effort. Especially during the colder seasons it is easy to fall into that kind of mindset, but that doesn't mean that exercise isn't necessary- just that you are, like many, lacking motivation. According to Sarah Marshall Hons, a fitness writer Nearly 50% of young people aged 12-21 are not vigorously active on a regular basis. Only 19% of all high school students are physically active for 20 minutes or more in physical education classes every day during the school week.

In a culture that is obsessed with "the easy way out" new inventions are constantly being produced to make our lives easier, and allow us to work less.

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Dark Times

By Rene Castellero

"Why do this to me God; why do you put me through all this pain?" Does this question sound a little familiar to you? Chances are, these words sound very familiar to you no matter what your age. Young or old, all have asked this. We don't know why God puts us in the hardest positions; all we know is that he allows us to get through it. Why does God allow death in our families, friends to betray us, depression to overtake us, sicknesses to impede our loved ones, and war to affect the world? Just why does he do this? No matter how much we ask, we find there is no true answer. Or is there?



The answer is: It is God's will. Isaiah 53:10 "Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand." God allows dark times so that we will then see the light that he provides us. He has a great plan for us. We cannot see how all these hardships are going to be beneficial to us during those times, we just feel the pain. It is hard to accept and follow God's will during these struggles, we must seek him and his help. We cannot be foolish and find His will to be evil, because God cannot be tempted by evil, thus cannot bestow evil (John 1:13).

Our suffering is a way that God prepares us to do his will. He is teaching and making us stronger. God is using these times as a transformation process, from seeing the worldly view to allowing God's will to control your life. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

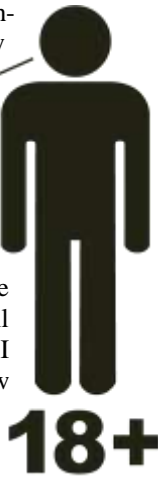
James 1:12 reads "blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." Wait, those who are under these "trials" are blessed by God? Correct, God blesses those who trust in him during these horrible and dark times. God promises life to those who seek him for his divine help instead of looking to *other* means of help.

Becoming Eighteen

By Curt Grimes

I had my eighteenth birthday last week. Woot, new privileges!

A friend was asking me what I planned to do for my birthday, and we talked about all the things that I could do now that I'm eighteen. Some privileges of an 18+ year-old include purchasing tobacco and pornography (and appearing in it, at that), gambling (only for a number of states), and getting body piercing and tattoos.



Something I realized when we talked about this was that many of the privileges now gained with being older are those that God would not want us to use. God does not want us using tobacco or getting excessive body piercing or tattoos, for we are to offer our bodies "as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God" (Romans 12:1). So, I *finally* turn 18 and can do all this really cool stuff legally, but God says I can't. Just great. What am I supposed to do? God asks us to set an example for others, showing them what is really right to do. Look at the next verse in Romans: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." God disapproves of gambling with our money (Proverbs 28:22), so we aren't supposed to gamble now just because we can.

Rather, we need to change our mindset, allowing us to follow God's will. How does changing our mindset about matters allow us to follow God's will? When we realize what is truly right and wrong, that's one more roadblock in our sinful instinct to disobey God's commands. And when we realize God's will better, we are better equipped to make an impression on others. We can show others that while we may have the legal privilege to purchase tobacco or view pornographic material, we choose not to. Explaining why you don't do these things when you're eighteen can be a great way to evangelize to others. Tell them that God says we should not do certain things, even if they acceptable by man's standards.

*People may be right in their own eyes,
but the Lord examines their heart.
Proverbs 21:2*

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This generation of America's youth, more than any other, has been given the tools, and opportunities to develop bad, and lazy habits. Increasing your level of physical activity is as simple as your mindset. Resolve not to take the easiest way out; take the stairs instead of the escalator, walk the two blocks to a friend's house, instead of coming home and immediately raiding the fridge to pop in front of the TV or computer-take your dog for a walk. Simple changes like these are good habits that anyone can learn to enjoy. If you're serious about living a healthier lifestyle, the helpful website Sparkteens.com can get you on the right track and help you along the way.

What's NOT in your text book

The true characters that lead our great country

By Rene Castillero

How do you picture your country's presidents? Do you see them as noble men, always doing their duty, acting responsibly, and always acting normal? For years we have been taught about our past presidents in history class, learning all about their heroic acts before becoming president and then how great they led the country during their time in office. Yes, we all know that America has had some really good presidents, even some bad ones, but were they always behaving like we believe they did? Were they really as normal as we thought? Not at all. You would be surprised at how crazy some of our presidents were and how some of our presidents had some interesting quirks to them.

Personal possessions had a role in our presidents' lives. For example, our first president, George Washington, had fake teeth. It was believed that Washington's teeth were made of wood, but actually were made from elephant and walrus tusks. Ruthford B. Hayes (19th president) was the first president to use a phone, weirdly enough his phone number was '1.' If you think women have to change clothes for every occasion in a day, Chester A. Arthur (21st president) can challenge any woman to a wardrobe battle. Arthur changed his pants many times within a day; he owned over 80 pairs of pants. We are also not the only people who find speeches to be boring. Lyndon B. Johnson (36th president) owned a watch with an alarm that he would purposely let go off during speeches that he found boring. Our last president, George W. Bush, owned a collection of over 250 signed baseballs.

Not even presidents can escape the law. U.S. Grant was pulled over and received a speeding ticket for \$20, after speeding on his horse drawn carriage down a Washington street. Warren G. Harding (29th president) was losing a gambling game and decided to up his bid by throwing in a set of White House China. He still lost.

Not all presidents enjoy their spouse's company. In Marin Van Buren's autobiography, he never at any point made a reference to his wife. Also, William McKinley's wife had a horrible case of epilepsy. If she ever had a seizure during a public event or dinner, McKinley would simply drape his handkerchief over her head and continue on with matters at hand.

These were only a few examples showing how weird our leaders were. Did you ever think that our presidents could be so interesting? I bet you won't be hearing about this in your history next class.

Diploma- Do You Really Need It?

By Paul Duda

Almost everyone in the United States of America goes to school at least while they are young. We start out in pre-school and move on to kindergarten and so on. We work hard in grade school to get to high school. Then we have to go through four years of high school just to get to college. So why do we need a high school or college diploma?

Many people such as parents and people of past generations say that you need a diploma to get through life. Others say that you need a college degree to get through life, or else you will be flipping burgers at McDonalds for the rest of your life.

Twenty-five percent of people in the United States, did not pass high school or go to college. There are seventy-five percent of people who did graduate, and guess what their lives are much better. The seventy-five percent of Americans who do, however, earn more money, get better jobs, will teach their children how to have a better future, and have better skills. There are many people such as family members and friends that I know that do not have a diploma. They have told me that they regret not getting one. One friend said that his life would have been a lot easier if he had just passed high school.

Now he is working as a waiter in a restaurant. He makes about four dollars an hour and can barely pay for gas or his rent. Do not put yourself in this situation, because it is not worth throwing your life away. I hope the next time I go to a fast food restaurant I do not see you there.



"40 Days, I Don't Even Know About 30 Hours!"

By Taylor Wright



"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." (Matthew 4:2) Just reading that makes you hungry right? We have trouble missing even our after school snack, think about forty days! "Eat your vegetables, there are starving kids in Africa who would love them!" most moms have tried that one. I know you've heard this one before, but food is something that we so easily take for granted. Did you know, that more than 26,000 children under the age of 5 die every day- mostly from preventable causes- like hunger. World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization, is dedicated to "building a better world for children." The non-profit organization came up with a way to get today's youth involved-

in the battle against world hunger. The 30 hour famine is "an international youth movement to fight world hunger." According to World Vision research, 840 million people in the world do not have enough to eat- that's one in every seven people. Think about your favorite drink at Starbucks or pop at the gas station, an estimated 2.1 billion people live on less than \$2 a day! Youth groups around the world participate in the 30 hour famine event in an effort to feed children of impoverished countries. This year, there are two national famine dates. The first February 27-28, Prince of Peace Crystal Lake hosted and other churches near by participated in. The lock-in sort of event benefited starving children because prior to it participants collected pledges and funds raised. The money raised is donated to World Vision and used to spread not only necessities of daily life, but also the Good News of Christ. Not only did participants have a fun time at the actual event, they got to experience perhaps for the first time what it is like to feel the real pangs of hunger. The next date is coming soon, April 24-25, why not talk to your youth group in an effort to get involved?