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JESUS BRAND MINISTRY

The Berean

FAITH · FAMILY · WISDOM · EVERYDAY LIFE

COVER FEATURE

The Quiet Work, what God builds in hidden seasons

- Back to School with Faith, sending them out anchored, not anxious
- The Hidden Years, why obscurity is a workshop, not a waiting room
- The September Squeeze, a calm plan for the costliest month
- Youth Corner, Prayer Room, Kitchen Grace & the August Scripture Planner

FREE MONTHLY DOWNLOAD

"The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how." — Mark 4:26–27 (NKJV)

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WELCOME

From the Editor's Desk



July was about roots. August is about what roots do when nobody is watching. This special edition arrives in the quietest stretch of the year, school bags waiting in hallways, churches in their summer hush, gardens doing their most important work invisibly. It is the perfect month to talk about the quiet work of God.

We are tempted to believe that nothing is happening unless something is visible. Scripture disagrees. The seed grows "he himself does not know how" (Mark 4:27). Moses spent forty years in Midian before one burning bush. Jesus spent thirty hidden years before three public ones. Heaven, it turns out, is very comfortable with seasons that produce no headlines.

So before September arrives with its noise, new terms, new timetables, new demands, we want to hand you a month of stillness on purpose. The cover feature will reframe your hidden season. The Family Table will ready your children for new classrooms. The Faithful Pound will take the

panic out of the costliest month of the family year. And the Prayer Room will put words in your mouth for all of it.

INSIGHT:

God does His deepest work in the dark, not because He is hiding from you, but because roots are.

A word of family news: The Berean, this magazine, the blog and the publishing house, is an arm of **Jesus Brand Ministry**, rising from obscurity to limelight. Same table, fuller house.

As always: read it slowly, print it freely, share it widely. And if this edition finds you in a hidden season of your own, underemployed, unnoticed, waiting, read page 4 twice. It was written for you.

Grow quietly this August.

Matthew (Tolu) Olowoyeye

LEAD PASTOR & EDITOR · THE BEREAN · AN
ARM OF JESUS BRAND MINISTRY

"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."

ACTS 17:11 · NKJV

Contents

04 **Cover Feature — The Quiet Work**

What God builds in hidden seasons, and why yours is not wasted.

06 **The Family Table**

Back to school with faith, a September-ready conversation menu.

08 **Whole & Well**

The August reset, gently rebuilding rhythm before the term begins.

10 **Work as Worship**

The hidden years, faithfulness when nobody is watching your work.

12 **Kitchen Grace**

Puff-puff for a crowd, the joyful economics of feeding many.

14 **Word on the Marble + Berean Quiz**

Memory verses, and ten questions from the book of Ruth.

16 **The Deaf Ear**

Five things a believer should never listen to.

21 **August Celebrations**

Two family birthdays, Kike (14th) and Tolu (18th).

23 **The Berean Live News**

Verified live news from the Berean family, bereannews.org.

05 **Devotional of the Month**

Grown in the Dark — Mark 4 and the seed that needs no audience.

07 **Youth Corner — Anchored**

New rooms, same you, walking into new places without losing yourself.

09 **The Faithful Pound**

The September squeeze, a calm plan for the family year's costliest month.

11 **Better Together**

The ministry of the open door, hospitality as quiet evangelism.

13 **The Prayer Room**

Seven guided prayers for August, students, teachers, hidden seasons.

15 **August Scripture Planner**

Thirty-one days, thirty-one verses, a month of quiet mornings.

18 **Ten Lessons for Young Ministers**

Things experience teaches, offered early.

22 **The Picture Board**

Faces and places from the Berean family.

24 **From the Publishing House**

Real books, ready now, from The Berean Blog Store.

"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

ISAIAH 30:15 • NKJV

The Quiet Work

BY MATTHEW (TOLU) OLOWOYEYE

Nothing looks less impressive than a field in August. The harvest is not in; the sowing is long past; there is nothing to photograph but green rows doing apparently nothing. And yet ask any farmer: this is the month that decides everything. The quiet weeks are the working weeks.

Jesus built a whole parable on this. "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how" (Mark 4:26–27, NKJV). Notice who is asleep in that story, the farmer. And notice who is not — God. The growth does not pause when the watching stops.

Scripture is full of hidden seasons that turned out to be workshops. Moses spent forty years keeping sheep in Midian, learning the desert he would one day lead two million people through. Joseph interpreted dreams in a prison nobody visited. David was anointed king and then sent back to the flock. And the Son of God Himself spent thirty of His thirty-three years in a carpenter's workshop in an unremarkable town, and Heaven's verdict over those hidden years was: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17), spoken before a single miracle.

INSIGHT:

Obscurity is not God's rejection. It is often His workshop, the place He builds what the platform will later require.

So what do you do in a hidden season? You do what seeds do. You stay planted, do not uproot yourself every time nothing seems to happen. You draw deep, the disciplines of this quiet month (the planner on page 15, the prayers on page 13) are your root system. And you refuse to force the timetable: "in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9, NKJV).

Perhaps you are in such a season now, the job that has not come, the ministry nobody notices, the prayers with no visible answer. Take August's word for it: quiet is not the same as idle. Underground, in the dark, at this very moment, God is doing His most patient work, in your children, your character, your calling. Do not dig up the seed to check on it. Water it, and sleep.

PRAYER

Father, I trust You with my hidden season. Do Your quiet work in me, deepen what no one sees, and keep me faithful until the fruit appears in its season. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Grown in the Dark

"For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

MARK 4:28-29 · NKJV

Every gardener knows the strange truth: the most important part of a plant's life happens where no one can see it. Before a single blade breaks the surface, the seed has already split, rooted, and anchored itself, entirely in the dark. If it did that work in the light, it would die.

Mark 4 insists on order: first the blade, then the head, then the full grain. Not one stage can be skipped, rushed, or performed. And here is the uncomfortable mercy in it, the farmer contributes nothing to the growing. He sows, he sleeps, he rises. The earth yields "by itself." The Greek word is *automatē*, of its own accord. God has built quiet, unforced growth into the very grammar of His kingdom.

Much of modern faith struggles here. We want the full grain by Friday. We measure ourselves against believers three stages ahead and call the gap failure, when Scripture calls it a season. A blade is not a failed harvest. It is a stage, and God is not embarrassed by stages.

INSIGHT:

You cannot hurry a harvest by shouting at a field. You can only keep sowing, keep sleeping, and trust the God of the dark soil.

This month, choose one area where you have been digging up the seed, a child's faith, a slow answer, your own growth, and formally hand the timetable back to God. Keep doing the sowing that is yours: the Word each morning, the table each evening, the prayers on page 13. Then sleep. The earth is working.

PRAYER

Lord of the harvest, I stop digging up the seed. Grow what You have planted in me, first the blade, then the head, then the grain, and give me peace with Your order. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Back to School with Faith

THE FAMILY TABLE · SPECIAL EDITION

In a few weeks you will stand at a school gate and watch a piece of your heart walk away from you into a building full of voices you did not choose. Every believing parent knows that mixture of pride and prayer. Here is the good news: Scripture was written for exactly this handover.

When Hannah brought Samuel to the house of the LORD, a far more drastic school run than yours, she did not send him with anxiety. She sent him with a settled transaction: "as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD" (1 Samuel 1:28, NKJV). The child walked into Eli's flawed institution covered, because he had been given, not merely dropped off.

Your task in these last summer weeks is not to armour your children against the world but to anchor them before they enter it. Anchoring

happens at the table. Use August's unhurried dinners deliberately: the menu below is built for the season, and the Berean Table rules still stand, no screens (including yours), everyone answers youngest first, and one sentence of thanksgiving each to finish.

INSIGHT:

You cannot follow your child into the classroom. But your prayers, your verses and your table can, every single day.

And on the first morning of term, pray over each child at the door, out loud, hand on head, thirty seconds. It will feel small. So does a seed.

The Back-to-School Conversation Menu

STARTER

"What are you most looking forward to, and most nervous about, this term?" Let the nerves be said out loud; named fears shrink.

MAIN COURSE

"Who might be lonely in your class this year, and what could you do about it?" Send them in as missionaries, not just students.

SIDE DISH

"If a friend asks why our family goes to church, what would you say?" Rehearse it gently; 1 Peter 3:15 begins at dinner.

DESSERT

"Which verse shall we make our family verse for this school year?" Vote on it. Write it large. Say it every Monday.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

PROVERBS 22:6 · NKJV

New Rooms, Same You

FOR TEENS & YOUNG ADULTS

September is coming, and with it a new room. A new class, a new college, maybe a new city. New rooms carry a strange pressure: nobody there knows you yet, which means, for a few weeks, you get to decide who you are. That is either terrifying or brilliant, depending on what you walk in with.

Daniel was a teenager when he was marched into the newest room imaginable: Babylon. New language, new food, new name, the empire renamed him Belteshazzar and enrolled him in a three-year programme designed to dissolve his identity. It worked on almost everyone. It did not work on Daniel, and Scripture tells us exactly why: "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8, NKJV).

Purposed in his heart, past tense, before the pressure arrived. Daniel did not decide who he was in the moment of temptation; he decided in advance, privately, quietly, and then the moments simply obeyed the decision. That is the whole secret. The students who lose themselves in new rooms are almost never overpowered, they are just undecided.

INSIGHT:

Decide who you are before the room asks. An undecided identity gets decided for you.

Here is the rest of Daniel's story, and it matters: the empire changed his address, his syllabus and even his name, but "God gave them knowledge and skill" (Daniel 1:17), and the boy who kept his convictions ended up advising kings. Holding your identity did not shrink his life. It built it.

Before term starts, write your own "Daniel sentence", one line, decided in advance: what you will not do, and Whose you are. Put it in your phone, behind your lock screen if you are brave. New rooms are coming. Walk in already decided.

PRAYER

Father, before the new room, settle my heart. I purpose now to be Yours, in every class, every group chat, every corridor. Give me Daniel's quiet backbone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The August Reset

GENTLY REBUILDING RHYTHM BEFORE THE TERM BEGINS

Summer loosens everything, bedtimes drift, meals wander, screens creep. None of it is sinful; much of it is lovely. But September will not negotiate, and the family that crashes from holiday-mode into term-mode in a single weekend pays for it in tired tempers until October.

The biblical alternative is what it always is: rhythm, not spasm. God does not shock creation into seasons, evening and morning, seedtime and harvest, arrive by degrees. "He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knows its going down" (Psalm 104:19, NKJV). Bodies made in His image

respond to the same gentleness. So use August's last weeks to walk your household back to rhythm, fifteen minutes at a time, not all at once.

INSIGHT:

A rhythm you rebuild gently in August will still be standing in November. A regime you impose in September rarely survives its first fortnight.

And keep July's habits underneath it all, the prayer-walk, water first, the screen sunset, the true Sabbath. Rhythms are not replaced each month; they are deepened.

The Reset, four gentle steps

Bedtime Creep (backwards)

From mid-August, pull the whole house's bedtime back 15 minutes every few days. By term, you have landed softly. "He gives His beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2).

Morning Dress Rehearsal

One full school-morning run-through in the last week of August, breakfast, bags, the door prayer, with zero stakes. Laugh at what breaks; fix it before it counts.

The Sunday Reset Hour

One shared hour each Sunday evening: uniforms out, bags packed, week previewed, family prayed for. It converts Monday dread into Monday peace.

Golden-Hour Walks

Keep the prayer-walk, but take the family along twice a week while the evenings are still long. Movement, daylight and conversation, three medicines in one.

This page offers general encouragement, not medical advice. Please consult your GP before beginning any new exercise programme, and for any health concerns.

The September Squeeze

THE FAITHFUL POUND · A CALM PLAN FOR THE COSTLIEST MONTH

Uniforms. Shoes that fit for exactly one term.

Bags, buses, books, clubs, and the quiet dread of the first supermarket run of September. For most families, late summer is the most expensive corner of the year, and the most tempting month to borrow badly.

Scripture's answer is not panic and it is not plastic. It is the ant: "Go to the ant... which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer" (Proverbs 6:6–8, NKJV). Note when the ant works, in the summer, before the need. August is your summer. A squeeze foreseen in August is not a squeeze at all; it is a line item.

INSIGHT:

Panic buys in September what planning would have bought cheaper in August. The ant is not richer than you, just earlier.

The four jars from July still govern — Honour first, Household next, Tomorrow, then Generosity. September's costs live in the Household jar; fund them now, deliberately, and they will not raid the others.

The Squeeze Plan, four moves before term

1 • List it all, once

One sitting, one sheet: every back-to-school cost, per child, with honest numbers. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower, will he not first count the cost?" (Luke 14:28).

2 • Divide by the weeks left

Total ÷ weeks until term = this week's set-aside. A frightening number becomes four or five ordinary ones.

3 • Buy used, swap, bless

Uniform swaps at church, second-hand where it is wise, and, from the Generosity jar, quietly cover an item for a family feeling the squeeze harder than you.

4 • Refuse September debt

"The borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7). A cheaper shoe bought in freedom beats a branded one bought in chains.

General principles, not regulated financial advice. For decisions about debt, investments or pensions, consult a qualified adviser.

The Hidden Years

FAITHFULNESS WHEN NOBODY IS WATCHING YOUR WORK

Somewhere today a believer is doing excellent work that nobody will notice. The report that will be skim-read. The classroom prepared before the children arrive. The night shift, the small business with no queue outside, the CV that keeps not being answered. This page is for that believer.

Consider how much of Scripture's leadership was trained off-stage. Joseph ran Potiphar's house, then a prison, two invisible administrations, before he ran Egypt. David's CV before the throne was sheep, harp, and giant, in that order; the palace skills were shepherd skills renamed. And when Scripture summarises the Messiah's first thirty years, it needs one line: "Is this not the carpenter?" (Mark 6:3, NKJV). Heaven trusted its greatest assignment to a man with a long, quiet work history.

INSIGHT:

Promotion reveals character; it does not create it. The hidden years are where the creating happens.

So how do you work when nobody is watching? Exactly the way you would if Someone were, because Someone is. "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men... for you serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23–24, NKJV). The audit of the hidden years is simple: Is the work honest? Is it excellent? Is it offered? Then it is worship, whatever the job title says.

A word to the overlooked: "God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love" (Hebrews 6:10, NKJV). Nothing offered upward is lost, no unnoticed diligence, no unthanked kindness, no faithful year. The file Heaven keeps is complete.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, receive my hidden work. Keep me excellent without applause, honest without audit, and patient without bitterness, until Your season comes. Amen.

The Ministry of the Open Door

BETTER TOGETHER · HOSPITALITY AS QUIET EVANGELISM

Last month we said love is spelt T-I-M-E. This month, a second spelling: love is spelt C-O-M-E I-N. Of all the quiet works a household can do, few are more underrated than the open door, and few are more biblical. "Given to hospitality," Paul writes, in the same breath as prayer and patience (Romans 12:12–13, NKJV), as though having people over were a spiritual discipline. It is.

Notice how much of the Gospel happened around borrowed tables. Levi threw a dinner and his colleagues met Jesus. Zacchaeus opened his house and salvation came to it that same day. Two discouraged disciples on the Emmaus road pressed a stranger to stay for supper — "and He was known to them in the breaking of bread" (Luke 24:35, NKJV). The table has always been the Gospel's favourite pulpit.

INSIGHT:

Hospitality is not entertaining. Entertaining says "look at my home." Hospitality says "there is room for you in it."

This frees you from the tyranny of the perfect house. Hebrews does not say "entertain strangers once the kitchen is renovated." It says some who did so "have unwittingly entertained angels" (Hebrews 13:2, NKJV), and angels, presumably, did not check the skirting boards. Jollof from one pot (July, page 12) and puff-puff from one pan (overleaf) will cover any number of guests and any state of carpet.

For the married: host as a team, and decide together who your table is for this season, the new family at church, the student far from home, the neighbour who eats alone. For everyone: pick one name before August ends, and issue the invitation this week. Not "we should have you over sometime." A date.

PRAYER

Father, make our door easy to open and our table easy to join. Send us the people You want fed, in body and in soul, and let them meet You here. In Jesus' name, Amen.

"Be hospitable to one another without grumbling."

1 PETER 4:9 · NKJV

Puff-Puff for a Crowd

THE JOYFUL ECONOMICS OF FEEDING MANY · MAKES ABOUT 40 · 2 HOURS (MOSTLY RISING)

Ingredients

- 500g plain flour
- 7g sachet fast-action yeast
- 100g sugar (a little more if you like them sweet)
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- About 450ml warm water
- Vegetable oil, for deep frying
- Caster or icing sugar, to dust (optional)

"And they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments."

MATTHEW 14:20 · NKJV

Method

1. Whisk the flour, yeast, sugar, salt and nutmeg in a large bowl.
2. Add the warm water gradually, mixing by hand or spoon into a smooth, thick, stretchy batter, looser than dough, thicker than pancake mix.
3. Cover with a cloth and leave somewhere warm for 60–90 minutes, until doubled and bubbling. (This is the quiet work. Do not rush it.)
4. Heat 7–8cm of oil in a deep pan to about 175°C, a drop of batter should rise and sizzle steadily, not violently.
5. Scoop with an oiled hand or two spoons and drop rounds into the oil. Fry in batches, turning, 4–5 minutes until deep golden all through.
6. Drain on kitchen paper, dust with sugar, and serve warm, on the biggest tray you own, to more people than you planned for.

TABLE THOUGHT:

Puff-puff exists to be shared, nobody fries forty for themselves. Make a batch for the last youth night of summer, the new neighbours, or the volunteers who set up chairs every Sunday unseen. Multiplication has always been the Lord's favourite kitchen trick.

SAFETY:

Hot oil demands respect, never leave the pan unattended, keep little helpers at a distance, and let them join in at the dusting stage instead.

Seven Prayers for August

Pray one each day, Monday to Sunday, and repeat through the month. Pray them aloud where you can, faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17).

1 • For the Hidden Season

Father, teach me to trust Your quiet work. Grow in secret what You will reveal in season, and keep me from digging up the seed. "In quietness and confidence shall be my strength" (Isaiah 30:15).

2 • For Students & Young People

Lord, walk into every new classroom with our children. Give them Daniel's decided heart, true friends, and teachers of goodwill. Let them be taught of the LORD, with great peace (Isaiah 54:13).

3 • For Teachers & Schools

God of wisdom, strengthen every teacher, governor and school worker as the new year begins. Give them patience, insight and joy in unseen labour (Colossians 3:23–24).

4 • For Your Church

Revive Your church out of its summer quiet, O God. Refresh the shepherds, knit the returning fellowship together, and add to our number those being saved (Acts 2:47).

5 • For the Nation

We pray for kings and all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness (1 Timothy 2:1–2). Give our leaders wisdom, and heal our land, Lord.

6 • For the Overlooked

Father, You see everyone the world scrolls past, the unemployed, the carers, the lonely, the faithful in small places. You are not unjust to forget their work (Hebrews 6:10). Remember them today, and make me part of Your answer.

7 • For Yourself

Search me, O God, and know my heart (Psalm 139:23–24). Quiet my hurry, deepen my roots, and let the hidden me, the part only You see, be the truest and holiest part.

Word on the Marble

Two verses to memorise this month, write them on a card, and on your heart:

"For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.'"

ISAIAH 30:15 · NKJV

"For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel."

ZECHARIAH 4:10 · NKJV

The Berean Quiz — Book of Ruth

This month's reading focus is Ruth, four short chapters of quiet, loyal, redeeming love. Search the Scriptures, answers are at the foot of page 15. No peeking until you have tried!

1. In whose days, which era of Israel's history, is the story of Ruth set?
2. What was the name of Naomi's husband?
3. To which country did the family move to escape the famine?
4. Name Naomi's two daughters-in-law.
5. Complete Ruth's vow: "Entreat me not to leave you... for wherever you go..."
6. What name did Naomi ask to be called on returning to Bethlehem, and what does it mean?
7. In whose field did Ruth glean?
8. What did Boaz command his reapers to leave for Ruth on purpose?
9. What item was exchanged to confirm the redemption at the city gate?
10. What was the name of Ruth's son, and which king was his grandson?

FAMILY IDEA: run the quiz at the table on the last Friday of August, winner chooses the dessert. (Puff-puff, presumably.)

August Scripture Planner

One verse a morning, before the phone. Tick each day as you go, thirty-one quiet mornings and the month is anchored.

DAY	VERSE	THEME	DAY	VERSE	THEME
1	Mark 4:26–29	Quiet Growth	17	Matthew 13:31–32	Mustard Seed
2	Psalms 131:1–2	Stillness	18	Ruth 3:18	Sit Still
3	Zechariah 4:8–10	Small Things	19	Psalms 46:10–11	Be Still
4	Isaiah 30:15	Quietness	20	Daniel 1:8, 17	Decided
5	Matthew 6:1–4	In Secret	21	John 12:24–25	The Seed Dies
6	Ruth 1:16–17	Loyalty	22	Philippians 2:12–13	God at Work
7	Psalms 90:16–17	Establish	23	Hosea 14:5–7	Deep Roots
8	Luke 2:51–52	Hidden Years	24	Matthew 6:5–6	Secret Prayer
9	Galatians 6:9–10	Due Season	25	1 Samuel 1:27–28	Given Back
10	Psalms 37:5–7	Wait	26	Ruth 4:13–17	Redemption
11	Ruth 2:11–12	Refuge	27	Isaiah 40:29–31	Renewal
12	Colossians 3:2–3	Hidden in Christ	28	Proverbs 16:3	Commit
13	1 Thessalonians 4:11	Quiet Life	29	Hebrews 6:10–12	Not Forgotten
14	Proverbs 22:6	Training	30	Psalms 92:1–2	Morning Praise
15	Deuteronomy 6:5–7	Teaching	31	1 Corinthians 15:58	Not in Vain
16	Psalms 127:1–3	Heritage			

QUIZ ANSWERS (PAGE 14): 1. In the days when the judges ruled (Ruth 1:1) · 2. Elimelech · 3. Moab · 4. Orpah and Ruth · 5. "...I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16) · 6. Mara — "bitter" (Ruth 1:20) · 7. The field of Boaz · 8. Handfuls of grain, let fall on purpose (Ruth 2:16) · 9. A sandal (Ruth 4:7–8) · 10. Obed, grandfather of King David (Ruth 4:17).

The Deaf Ear

FIVE THINGS A BELIEVER SHOULD NEVER LISTEN TO

Charles Spurgeon used to tell his students that every minister needs "one blind eye and one deaf ear." I smiled the first time I read it. I have lived long enough now to know he was not being witty; he was being surgical. God gave us no ear lids, we cannot physically shut our hearing the way we shut our eyes, but He gave us a will. And the will is the true doorkeeper of the soul.

We live in the noisiest generation in human history. Endless feeds. Group chats that never sleep. Outrage on tap. Hearing everything has never been easier; the discipline of our age is choosing what never gets past the door. "My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings" (Proverbs 4:20, NKJV). If some sayings deserve the incline of your ear, then quietly, necessarily, some deserve none at all.

Here are five sounds worth sealing the ear against.

1

Quarrels that are not yours

Somebody offended somebody years ago, and now they want you on the jury. They will present the evidence with passion. They will make neutrality feel like betrayal. Decline the case. "He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears" (Proverbs 26:17, NKJV). Notice the picture: the moment you grab the dog's ears, you cannot let go without being bitten. Some conflicts can only hurt you, because they were never yours to hold.

2

Idle gossip

Slander rarely announces itself. It arrives dressed as concern, or worse, as a prayer request: "I'm only telling you this so we can pray..." Do not taste the morsel. Tell the server it is not on your diet. "Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases" (Proverbs 26:20, NKJV). Every fire needs fuel, and gossip needs ears. Refuse yours, and you starve a fire you never lit. Remember whose job accusation is; Scripture names the enemy "the accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10). Accusing the saints is his job description. Do not do his work for free.

Insight: The listener is half the gossip. No audience, no performance.

The Deaf Ear, continued

3

Secondhand criticism

Keep your door wide open to anyone who will say it to your face. Give the grapevine nothing. Solomon, the wisest man of his age, gave this startlingly practical counsel: "Do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others" (Ecclesiastes 7:21–22, NKJV). That second verse is the mercy in the medicine. You have muttered about others in your weaker moments; extend to them the grace of not collecting their mutterings about you. A heart that archives every overheard slight will run out of storage, and out of joy.

4

False accusations

Serve long enough, love long enough, lead long enough, and someone will misjudge you. It stings. Every instinct says: defend, explain, hunt down the low opinion and correct it. But you do not have to attend every trial you are summoned to. Do what your Master did. When He was reviled, He "did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23, NKJV). Commit your name to the same Judge, and He will do what no press release can: "He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday" (Psalm 37:6, NKJV). Light needs no lawyer. It simply dawns.

5

Spooky speculations

Novel prophecies. Coded revelations. End-times bandwagons with no biblical anchor. Every generation has them, and every generation loses good people down those corridors. Change the subject. "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife" (2 Timothy 2:23, NKJV). Notice what speculation generates: not revival, not holiness, not love. Strife. Keep the main thing the main thing: the gospel, to lost people. A believer anchored in Scripture does not need to chase mysteries; he is already carrying the greatest one, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

INSIGHT

You cannot control what is said around you. You can control what is welcomed in. The world will keep talking; that is its nature. But a deaf ear, rightly placed, is not rudeness. It is a spiritual discipline, and one of the quietest forms of holiness available to you today.

Ten Lessons for Young Ministers

THINGS EXPERIENCE TEACHES, OFFERED EARLY

I have been in ministry long enough to have scars where the lessons landed. Some of them only ministry itself could teach me, and I confess: had someone offered them to me at twenty-five, I might have nodded politely and ignored every one. Still, I offer them. Because somewhere a young minister will read this and be spared a wound I was not spared. That is worth the writing.

1

Somebody is always watching

You will be recognised in airports by people you have never met. You will be greeted in restaurants by names you cannot place. This is not fame; it is stewardship. The watching never stops, so live in such a way that the watching helps them. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Notice the order: they see the works, but the glory goes to the Father. Live for that second half.

Insight: Visibility is not a privilege of ministry. It is a responsibility of it.

2

Nothing is really private

Your messages, your browser, your "hidden" habits, none of it is hidden. Jesus said it plainly: "There is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known" (Luke 12:2). I have watched men build public ministries on private compromises, and I have watched the collapse. It always comes. Live your secret life as though it were already on the screen, because one day, before God if not before men, it will be.

3

Careless posts will haunt you

The internet forgets nothing. Churches read your feeds. Employers scroll your history. The joke you posted at nineteen will sit in the room during your interview at thirty. "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches" (Proverbs 22:1), and a good name is built in small, unwatched decisions, including the ones you make with your thumbs.

Ten Lessons, continued

4

You are not as great as you think

There is always a better preacher. Always. And here is the mercy hidden in that fact: the truly great ones have been humbled past caring who is better. Paul wrote, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think soberly" (Romans 12:3). Sober thinking is not low thinking. It is accurate thinking. God does not need your greatness; He asks for your faithfulness.

Insight: The pulpit is not a pedestal. It is an altar, and altars are where things die.

5

Ministry keeps no office hours

The phone will ring at midnight. The hospital will call on your day off. Guard your family fiercely, I say this as a man who learnt it too slowly, but do not imagine shepherding will ever fit an eight-to-five clock. "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfil it" (Colossians 4:17). Fulfilment, not convenience, is the measure.

6

A salary is not spirituality

The day they begin paying you to serve God is the day a quiet danger enters. Prayer can become preparation. Devotion can become duty. You can preach on fire and be privately cold. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed" (2 Timothy 2:15). Approved to God, not to the board, not to the congregation. Keep a secret history with Him that no payslip touches.

7

The pew may out-love the pulpit

Some of the deepest saints I have ever known could not parse a Greek verb. They simply loved God with an unguarded heart. "For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Let the grandmother on the third row teach you. Theological vocabulary is a tool, not a rank.

Ten Lessons, continued

8

Hiding sin is foolishness

God already sees it. Hiding it only decides who else gets to help you. "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). Find a trusted friend before you need one. "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16). Confession is not the end of your ministry. Concealment is.

9

You could fall. Watch.

Every fallen minister I have known, and I have known several, shared one conviction before the fall: it could never happen to me. That conviction was the first crack. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). Fear is not faithlessness here. A holy fear of falling is one of the ropes God uses to hold you up.

Insight: The man who knows he could fall builds guardrails. The man who knows he couldn't builds nothing.

10

God will never let you down

People will. Boards will. Mentors will disappoint you, and, hear me, you will disappoint others. But God? "He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8). Believe it while you are young, so you can cling to it when you are old. I have tested this promise across decades of ministry, in seasons I would not wish on anyone. He really is faithful. Always.

A PRAYER FOR THEM

Father, take these young ones further than You took me. Guard their secret lives, humble their public ones, and let them finish well. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Older ministers, what would you add? Younger ministers, which of these lands hardest? Write to us at thebereanblog.com; the best replies may appear next month.

August Birthdays

The Berean is a fellowship before it is a publication, so this month we pause the presses to celebrate two of our own. Join us at the table (puff-puff is on page 12).



AUGUST 14

Happy Birthday, Kike!

Full of strength and quiet grace, we thank God for another year of your life. May He satisfy you early with His mercy, and may this new year bloom in its season.

"She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future." — Proverbs 31:25



AUGUST 18

Happy Birthday, Tolu!

Our editor, pastor and chief encourager. May the Lord who has planted you keep you fresh and flourishing, and still bearing fruit in every season ahead.

"They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing." — Psalm 92:14

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

NUMBERS 6:24-26 • NKJV

Life at The Berean

Faces and places from the fellowship, because a ministry is people before it is pages.



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Baptisms, birthdays, answered prayers, full tables, the Picture Board belongs to the whole fellowship. Send a photo and one line of testimony via thebereanblog.com, and it may appear in next month's issue.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" — Psalm 133:1

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