



LIVING LETTERS

We live in an on-demand world. Speed is the order of the day, and constant innovations make everything faster and faster. Products are announced, rolled out, promoted, sold and then disposed of at a dizzying pace.

As a result, one of the great questions that our age poses is this: What Will Really Last?

We hunger to invest our lives in durable things, rather than those that will fade away. And what will endure? People and God's Word. Jesus said—"Heaven and Earth may pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

At YBL, our great objective and purpose is to help others build and invest in those things that last. In the pages that follow, you will hear about an exciting new initiative, YBL Second Half, which is equipping men to finish well. You will hear of the steady growth and conversions in Birmingham and Jackson, stories of faith and faithfulness in Huntsville, and God's blessing on Women Business Leaders (WBL) in Birmingham.

Are you pouring your life into others? Who will recall in eternity that God used you to write on their hearts?

"You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." 2 Corinthians 3:2-3



"The will of God will not take us where the grace of God cannot sustain us."
—Billy Graham

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Phil Reddick



It is extremely hard to put into a few paragraphs what has taken place this past year. Last year, my article talked about all the different changes in our ministry and me personally. This year, one word comes to my mind: "blessed".

God has accelerated and blessed our ministry in so many different ways. It begins with the staff that God has gathered around me. Each one is working hard to make a difference in God's Kingdom. Each is praying for God-sized results. I am excited you get to hear from each of them as you read this letter.

Our mentoring ministry continues to be a prime example of God meeting needs for YBL participants. People desire to have older men and older women help them through this life by sharing their experiences. What amazes me is how many people are willing to mentor others. We have 100 or more mentors that are willing to take time to invest in other people's lives. They give perspective, instruction, hazards to avoid, and friendship that encourages their protégé' to persevere. We have 265 matches as of today.

Then there are our banquets. This spring was a banner year for us. Each city was able to build momentum by our banquets and responses. Our combined attendance was well over 1000 people.

YBL Jackson had the Governor of Mississippi speak. He was very strong in his Christian witness. He made it clear that he opposed abortion, and was willing for anyone to write about that position. He made it clear that God placed him as Governor for a purpose. Those who work with him were thrilled at the boldness of his faith.

YBL Huntsville had former Auburn head coach, Gene Chizik, speak for them. For the 300 men attending, he explained why he left as defensive coordinator at North Carolina to be with his family. He did not want to look back and see himself as an absentee father. He attested to his commitment to Christ and answered a lot of questions that showed his convictions.

We were able to have John Aden, the former executive vice president at Walmart, speak for YBL in Birmingham. He was very explicit about his faith and challenged men to make a difference in their companies. He also spoke at a luncheon for us where he encouraged us to be involved in the city and its restoration.

The highlight for me from all these blessings this spring was what happened in WBL. Still in its infancy, the women had a 6:30am breakfast in January of this year with about 50 attending. It is very difficult for working women to make a meeting at that hour. It was also our first event where we charged the participants. The previous gatherings had been free.

We felt like the sweet spot for women would be a luncheon. That would give us the fewest conflicts, and it's something women can incorporate in their schedule. Most of our small groups meet at lunchtime around the city. Amy, her Board, and all of us prayed for at least 100 women to come to the Grand Bohemian for a luncheon with Mary Wyatt. She is the president of Wyatt construction.

As we approached that date, we knew we were going to reach 100 and exceed it. What totally surprised us was that 235 women attended the luncheon. God used it to show us that we have uncovered a great mission field for women in the marketplace. As a result of that luncheon, plus many follow-up appointments this summer, we have launched 5 new studies this fall. We are so grateful!

And I would be remiss if I didn't mention YBL Second Half. I have begun strategically to work with men with whom I've had relationships with for 20 years or more. The charge is to finish well and live a life of significance. The next 20-25 years will be different for them. These men are talking about issues that they will face or are facing today. Most of these questions are under the radar, and they need a place to talk about them openly.

This fall we have had three targeted luncheons where speakers are sharing their 2nd half journey. From these lunches, I hope we can form many support groups across our city.

Next year, I plan to have 6-10 gatherings for YBL Second Half. I am hoping and praying God raises up a mighty army to be mobilized for His Kingdom and minister to each other. I appreciate your prayers for wisdom in guiding this new endeavor.

Personally, I am grateful for my family, and the people God has put into my life. So many of you have supported this ministry for numerous years. I am grateful that I get to meet with men on a daily basis and seek to make a difference in their lives. I enjoy directing the staff and seeing them succeed. I love partnering with other churches and other ministries to impact our city. I see a great need for pre-marriage counseling and seeing men mentored. I rejoice as we see God's hand on this ministry. What a blessing!

You can see why I say I am blessed. I'm trusting God to keep me healthy, to help me make wise decisions, and to help me lead and finish well. My desire is to hear "Well done thou good and faithful servant." Let's finish strong together.

Be blessed!

Phil

"Our greatest fear in life should not be failure, but succeeding at things that don't really matter."

—D.L. Moody

IN THE YBL LIBRARY Book Recommendations From Phil Reddick

PAIN & SUFFERING

The Insanity of God by Nik Ripken. This is the story of the persecuted church all over the world. You will want to weep with the men, women, and children that have undergone severe persecution for the sake of Christ. Plus, you will rejoice at the mighty hand of God and His redemption of man despite the dark places and the evil in this world. You'll find yourself drawn to the stories over and over again.

Two excellent books that deal with pain and suffering are: *When God Doesn't Fix It* by Laura Story and *Embodied Hope* by Kelly Kopic. Laura Story is a singer, songwriter, and worship leader whose most familiar song is "Blessings." Kelly Kopic is a professor at Covenant College. Both deal with the personal sufferings of their spouses, and how they trusted God through the trials. Kelly's is much more a theological work; Laura's is for anyone, with great application points at the end of each chapter.

SECOND HALF

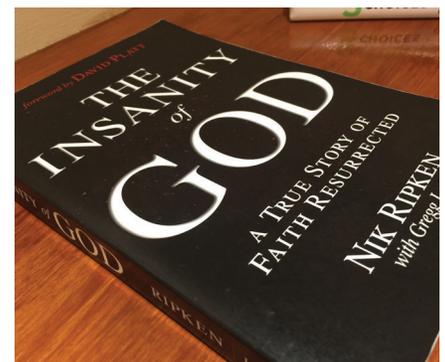
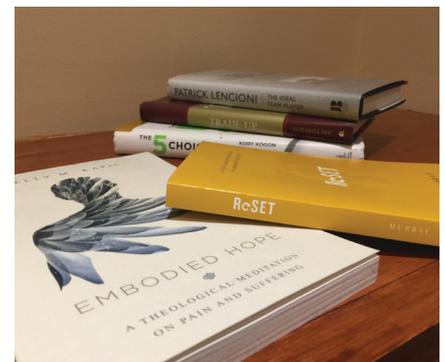
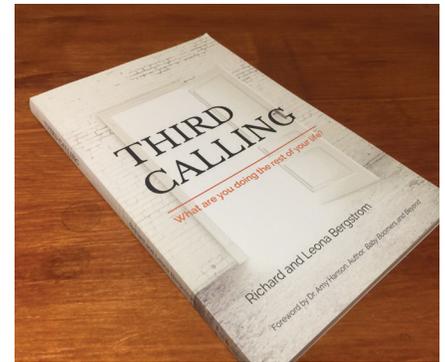
Because of our new YBL Second Half ministry, I have read several books that deal with the next 20-25 years of our lives. I particularly enjoyed *Third Calling* by Richard and Leona Bergstrom. I also strongly recommend the classic book by Bob Buford, *Halftime*.

BUSINESS

Two business books I enjoyed this year were *The Ideal Team Player* by Patrick Lencioni and *The Five Choices* by three authors Cory Kogon, Adam Merrill, and Leena Rinne. Lencioni uses three parameters for determining the ideal team player—humble, hungry, and smart. *The Five Choices* guides you through five principles that lead to extraordinary productivity.

Reset is a book on time management, rest, and priorities. It is written by David Murray, a professor at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary.

The Treasured King is a study on the life of David written by one of our own in YBL, Jeff Middleton. It could be used in your small group.



Andy – YBL Second Half Small Group Testimony

I attended my first YBL meeting in 1984- the year Phil Reddick joined the ministry. The ministry has been a faithful friend for my adult life. 2 years ago, I took early retirement from a corporate job to chase my dream of owning my own business. Despite an amiable departure, I left wounded by the loss of the life as I had known for so long. This helped me understand how many of my peers were successful by the world's definition of success, but are carrying a heavy load of expectations, responsibility, and in some instances, regret. The more I talked with others, the more I realized there is a generation of hurting men.

In response, we began a new core group of 6- 8 men that meet weekly to study the Word, be transparent, and to pray for each other. We have bonded quickly and already gone through health scares, spousal health issues, and parenting tests. We are a second half group, and we are meeting the needs of a group of men that are mostly self-employed, 50+ who are finding time again for new relationships.

YBL has grown with their initial business leaders who are not so young anymore. YBL has adapted to meet the needs of this group of second halfers who have been so busy doing what others needed them to do. We are now realizing we need stronger relationships with like-minded men who have many of the same issues in life, and can share life experiences as we build wonderful new relationships.

BIRMINGHAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT: BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

By Rob Genin



It is a joy to be a part of something that lasts. One of the tragedies of poor construction is that it often fails precisely at the moment the structure is stressed and the people are least prepared. I believe this is what Jesus had in mind when he talked about wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7. One structure was built on a solid foundation, while the other was

built on sand. The key detail implied in the story is that these two buildings looked identical—until they were put under the stress of the tides. When pressure came, one stood firm, while the other fell with a great crash. It is my hope that God might use YBL to help build men who stand firm.

In Birmingham, it has been my deep pleasure to be a part of a multi-generational discipleship and evangelism effort that has endured for 37 years. The heartbeat of our community—small groups—continues to pulse with steadiness and strength. We now have more than forty Birmingham groups, and it has been a blessing to watch men build Christ-centered friendships that endure 5, 10, 20 years or more. Real friendship is often slow growing, and therefore rare and valuable. As author Sam Keene once wrote, “The cadence of friendship is measured in decade long rhythms.” What a goal to pursue in our microwave culture!

In 2018, we have seen more men coming to and professing Christ. This is even more remarkable because of the oft repeated idea that conversions slow down as people age. While that is perhaps a natural progression, we serve a God who is supernatural.

Along with our consistent mentoring and local service opportunities at Restoration Academy, Samford, and other places in the city, this year YBL took a team of men to Puerto Rico to help with development, business and construction. This trip had the blessing of not only partnership and service with the local church there in San Juan, but also helping build relationships and passion for Christ and His mission that our men brought home with them. Taking the long view of relationship, we look forward to the possibility of returning again and again to this wonderful community and La Travesia Church, which is pouring itself out to preach and live the gospel.

Man by man, brick by brick we build. Christ is our one foundation. May God be pleased to continue His blessing in the growth of Christ-centered faith in men.



DANNY – BIRMINGHAM SMALL GROUP TESTIMONY

My experience of YBL has been nothing short of amazing. I recently moved to Birmingham about 5 months ago, and I didn't know a single person here. My father-in-law had mentioned a ministry that one of his good friends was a part of: "Young Business Leaders." I enjoy business and I want to be a better leader so I figured I'd check it out.

I joined a small group a few weeks later and the camaraderie that I've experienced has been exactly what I needed. The group of guys has been extremely friendly and accepting. We've shared stories, confessions, life lessons, and so much more. I truly count them all as brothers, and I'm so glad I've joined YBL. The study was simple yet truth-filled and packed with wisdom yet practical.

If you're on the fence about joining a small group, do it. Trust me, you won't regret it. (You might end up missing your sleep but it'll be worth it!)

WOMEN BUSINESS LEADERS: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Amy Pattillo



2018 has been a consistent display of God's faithfulness in the life of WBL. Each life impacted is the direct result of years of prayer and anticipation of what God will do. I can confidently say God is at work in the lives of women in the marketplace.

This year we have doubled our small groups, gained momentum with outreach luncheons and established a mentoring program. It is my joy to have a front row seat in this adventure. To God be the glory – great things He has done and will do!

MY LETTER By Samantha Delgado, Co-Owner & General Manager, Miami Fusion Café

I asked myself, "What does it mean to be a living letter?" as I read 2 Corinthians 3:2-3. I started digging to find out what Paul was talking about, because I knew that my purpose is to be the living letter... whatever that meant.

In the King James Version, it says epistle, which translates to the word epistolè. The Greek meaning of epistolè is "written message". It was easy enough to connect the dots, but I was not satisfied, so I dug a little more and found that epistolè is made of 2 different Greek words. This is what I was amazed by. Epi means 'with you' and Stello means 'to equip.'

So Paul was really saying that the Spirit of God is with us and is equipping us to be the message of Jesus. We are seen by everyone. I then had to ask myself, "Am I living a life that is the message of Jesus?" The true message of Jesus is LOVE! This is the question we should all ask ourselves. When people that are in my world read my message, what are they reading? Is it Jesus? Is it money? Is it work? The Holy Spirit is faithful to be with us and is equipping us to LOVE!

MY SIGNATURE By Anna Threadcraft, UAB Employee Wellness Director & Founding Board Member of WBL

Over the years, my signature has changed quite a bit. Hand scribbled notes passed in class as a child usually ended with a heart and my name. In my later elementary days, I began using my full name, and even added a "#22" occasionally, thinking it was cool because it was the way my big brothers (who actually wore a legitimate sports jersey with a number) signed.

Working within a clinical and corporate environment over the last 12 years, I've adjusted my signature to reflect a more professional tone, aware that what I sign now has a more permanent impact, even legally binding at times. Like many others, I also have an automated email signature that defines my title and who I represent.

In the workplace, we all leave a signature. Our actions more often than words, reflect our convictions and define what we believe. How I respond to conflict, the decision to extend (or withhold) professional patience/grace, and even the quality of my work all point to something. With whatever choice we make, we leave a signature. A willingness to daily submit our penmanship to the Lord will leave an identity that points towards hope and purpose.

Each day, we have multiple opportunities to passively move under the radar or work with intention. Even without words, those who work around us are watching to see what we believe. When we allow the Lord to author our story, we become living letters to others that reflect more than simply a job title, but a life laced with the character of Christ.



HUNTSVILLE: DIRECTOR'S REPORT by Bob Boerner



YBL Huntsville's theme for 2018 was "A Man and His Family." Outside of personal devotion to Christ, I can think of no greater priority for men than their families. However, we've created a culture (even in the church) that steals men away from their God-given mission at home. Families are struggling because men are struggling...with priorities...with sin. My friend, Pat Morley, writes, "No amount of success at work will compensate for failure at home. Yet, men often struggle in giving proper priority to their families."

We understand the struggle. There is so much that competes for our time, and many men believe that a "good Christian" should seek to be "successful" in every component of his life—his business, his church involvement, his personal walk with Christ, his civic responsibilities, his personal health, his financial management, his pursuit of healthy recreation, as well as, being a GREAT family man...and still find time to sleep!!

In 2018, the speakers for our YBL North Alabama's large events, as well as our Young Professional Forums, were focused on challenging men to prioritize their home responsibilities as husbands and fathers. While a man may make a significant impact

in the community, the greatest impact he will make is in his home...beginning with his wife and then his children. The Living Letters of a man's life should begin with his wife and children.

Coach Gene Chizik spoke for us this spring, and he addressed his decision to walk away from coaching in order to be a more engaged father. From a career standpoint, this may have been a career "buster," but from God's perspective, Coach Chizik made a decision to be the dad he believed God wanted him to become! In the fall, we asked Brodie Croyle, President of the Big Oak Ranch for Children, to speak on the impact that fathers (and fatherlessness) make on their children. Brodie grew up on the Ranch where he watched his dad, John, become a father to over 2,000 children who now call the Big Oak Ranch their home. Brodie's talk was compelling as he challenged our men to put God first and prioritize their families as their greatest ministry.

It is God's design to use each of us to influence the lives of those closest to us (the letters that God is writing through us), and those we impact the most are those who live with us in our homes!

"I've read the last page of the Bible. It's all going to turn out all right."

"A real Christian is the one who can give his pet parrot to the town gossip."

—Billy Graham

Trent – Huntsville Small Group Testimony

Meeting consistently on Tuesday mornings with YBL's Bible study has allowed me the opportunity to set my mind on Christ before I go to work. The Bible study format focuses on the fundamentals of the Christian faith, which is always useful for rejuvenating even the most experienced of Christians. Due to this intentional and prayerful Tuesday morning ritual it reminds me of my identity in Christ so that I can better impact those around me. I am grateful for YBL and for the time our small group shares each week.

Stephen – Huntsville Small Group Testimony

My YBL Bible study has been a great experience for me. The curriculum has been really good, but what I've enjoyed the most are the conversations that come out of the study time. It's helpful to be able to take a verse or two, or an idea, and really talk about it in real-world application in situations with people that are in or have been in similar situations. I am thankful for my YBL Small Group.

JACKSON: DIRECTOR'S REPORT by Jay Fletcher

It truly has been an incredible year of ministry in the marketplace for YBL in Jackson. As I reflect back on the year, three things stick out to me.

Our two outreach events connected over 450 men to a place where they heard the gospel clearly. We had the honor of having Mississippi's governor, Phil Bryant, as our speaker for our spring event and local wounded warrior CJ Stewart in the fall. Both men did an outstanding job of sharing their own stories of work, life and faith. We also saw several men begin a relationship with Christ and 30+ men get into a small group.

In 2018, we wanted to connect YBL Jackson to some new businesses. It has been so good to see our Board and other people involved in YBL excited about our ministry and introduce YBL to more in our community. Because of this effort, we had the largest clay shoot fundraiser that Jackson has ever had, with 30 teams in three flights. Many of these teams were new to YBL, so God is giving us a deeper reach into the Jackson marketplace for which we are grateful.

Lastly, we have grown to 28 small groups. We have tried to be very

intentional about identifying and training new small group leaders, anticipating God working in the lives of men, and nudging them to join a small group. Our monthly group leader meetings have been strong, and our leaders have done a great job of identifying potential leaders in their groups. We have also put a team together, made up of Board members and men involved in small groups, that is helping us think and pray through a strategy to help us coach and assist leaders as the small group ministry continues to grow.

For all these reasons, 2018 has been a blessing to many men in the workplaces of Jackson, MS. Following are a few stories that are a sampling of the work that God has been doing through the ministry of YBL of Jackson.

"Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others."

—Jack Welch



Brennon – Jackson Small Group Testimony

When I joined my YBL group I was very nervous on that first Thursday morning. I had joined the group late, I knew I would be the youngest one in my group, and I was scared about opening up to other guys that didn't know me. YBL has meant more to me than I can say. I was fresh out of college, really struggling to understand my purpose and place in life. I loved God, but I wasn't sure He felt the same way about me, because of some of the mistakes I had made in high school and college. I consider my group a brotherhood, and I am thankful that they allowed me to join them. YBL has and will continue to change my life and for that I can't thank you enough!

Hunter – Jackson Small Group Testimony

Coming into my YBL small group, I had recently separated from my wife with a divorce pending. I had not studied the Bible since grade school. I was in dire need of Christian growth and inspiration. Going through the Bible with my group has been a great gift to my life. Instantly, I felt comfortable sharing what was going on in my life. Having guys around my age experiencing the same thoughts as me about sin, Jesus, death, God and doubt has been extremely beneficial for my spiritual growth. I will make mistakes in this world, but knowing that God's grace will always be there for me is amazing. My goal from this experience is to take one step towards God each day.



Young Business Leaders
2310 Briarwood Trace
Birmingham, AL 34243

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
BIRMINGHAM, AL
PERMIT NO. 2143



“Jesus does not demand great deeds. All he wants is self-surrender and gratitude.” –Therese of Lusieux