



40 YEARS OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS - TO AND THROUGH YBL MINISTRIES

This year marks Young Business Leaders' 40th anniversary (1981-2021)! God has been faithful all this time, to and through YBL Ministries. Forty years ago, YBL began with a group of men who wanted to reach their co-workers in the marketplace. The strategies of small group discipleship, event outreach, and one-on-one mentoring are all the outflow of a vision to help businessmen (and now women) to know God through Jesus Christ. We are sent to make disciples; Jesus loves people and seeks what is lost – so we must go to them.

Forty is a significant number in the Bible. Typically, it represents a time of testing. Rain fell for forty days upon the earth in the worldwide flood. Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai, and then forty years in the wilderness with the Israelites. Elijah was in the wilderness for forty days fed by ravens. Jesus was tempted after fasting forty days. In this continuing season of trial, we remember that God is faithful – to bring us trials for our growth and bring us through them for our deliverance.

YBL Ministries, like you, has continued to live in a world that calls for adaptation and flexibility. Many large companies have not gone fully back to their offices, and this has meant our small groups continue to adjust and flex. Videoconferencing has been a valuable tool for some; others have prioritized the need for personal presence and connection for encouragement and prayer. The flexibility of many small groups means that we can adjust to the different needs and situations of each person.

Our compassion and patience with one another have been tested in this past year. Disagreements have strained the church and divided believers over this extended pandemic and over the strategies to deal with it. Engagement in small groups is a key component for maintaining relationships when so many are under pressure.

In our newsletter this year, you can hear testimonies of God's preserving and redeeming grace – 40 years of His faithfulness! We pray and trust that this symbolic and important year will be a reminder that God purposes our trials – not for our destruction, but for our deliverance. The reminder of Romans 8:31-32, 38-39 is the rock under our feet:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Join us as we celebrate God's blessing and resolve to seek Him in the days to come! - Rob Genin

"Therefore, my beloved, be firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." – 1 Corinthians 15:58

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PHIL REDDICK

40 years. It is so hard to believe it's been 40 years since this ministry began in 1981. It was started by a group of young men that had a vision to reach their friends, colleagues and co-workers in the city of Birmingham with the gospel. For the first three years they had some banquets, worked to follow up the men who came and had a couple of Bible studies going. It grew, and they saw the need to get more organized.

It was my privilege to become the first Director in 1984. I immediately saw there were many Christians in Birmingham and significant resources. God gave me a lasting conviction that this city can be used to reach the world for Jesus Christ. What a blessing it has been to be a part of what God has done for these past 37 years!

Since that time we have started works in many different cities. We also launched a women's ministry in Birmingham in 2014, and a 2nd Half ministry in 2018. We now have the privilege to reach men and women from the time they leave college through their work careers and even beyond.

We walk with men and women through their life's journey. We want to be with them and alongside them for the joys: marriage, children, promotions, ministry, grandchildren and more. We also want to be with them during the trials: loss of loved ones, downsizing, physical and mental distress, job relocation, and end-of-life issues. This work is the ministry of friendship.

Please rejoice with me over all that God has accomplished: brothers coming to know Christ,

marriages restored, people coming to know our Savior. We see men and women using their vocation as a ministry to those that don't know Christ or need to grow in their relationship with Christ. I am amazed at the sovereignty, the goodness, faithfulness, and the holiness of our God. He is our purpose. He is our hope. He is our victorious King!

The job is not done. There are so many in our city, nation, and world who have not experienced His forgiveness, the peace of God and peace with God, and I desire for all of us who read this letter to Finish Well.

Won't you join me in this endeavor? Please pray that all of us would hear those words when we meet Jesus, "Well done good and faithful servant." Until then, let us labor on His behalf. I am grateful for each one of you.



YBL 2ND HALF BIRMINGHAM - TESTIMONIALS

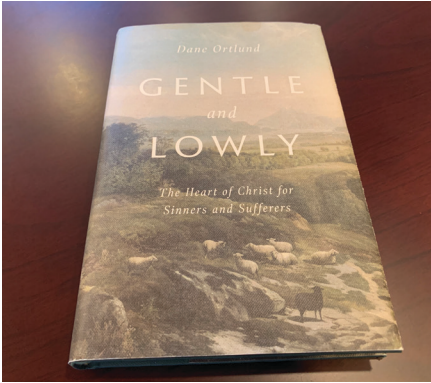
"2nd Half has come along at just the right time. I am planning on retiring next year, so I wanted to start planning how to make this next chapter of my life count. The 2nd Half large group meetings, as well as one of the small group studies I'm in, has helped me think through and visualize what that might look like. God's timing is perfect!" - **Steve Adams**

"The "Second Half" Meeting and Bible Study has been a tremendous asset to my life. Men often operate alone in business, social and family matters. Having a group of men to be transparent with and hold me accountable has transformed my life. I have changed, and I am learning to become the hands of our savior Jesus Christ to others." - **Ryan Thomas**

"My son John, first introduced me to YBL almost 4 years ago, and we attended a speaker event. I learned about the 2nd Half YBL group, and joined to participate in a small group Men's Bible study. I didn't know if I would fit in, as most of the men were more accomplished, successful, and experienced in Bible knowledge. What I found was this: welcoming Christian men, new lasting friendships, a desire for knowing God deeper, community service opportunities, and growth from inspiring speaker programs. I treasure our weekly meetings, as we have a common purpose to glorify God and to finish strong as Christian men." - **Jim Schenk**

IN THE YBL LIBRARY

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE YBL MINISTRIES TEAM



Phil's Book Reviews

Gentle and Lowly – Dane Ortlund

My favorite book this year is hands-down *Gentle and Lowly* by Dane Ortlund. It is a book about the heart of Christ and demonstrates how much God loves and accepts us as His children. For me it is a breath of fresh air and a reminder to rejoice in the God I love and serve. I would say is the best book that I've read in the last five years.

Lead – Paul David Tripp

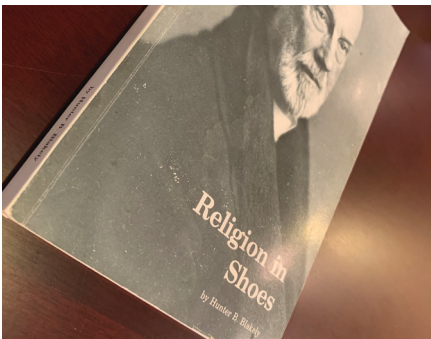
Paul David Tripp is one of my favorite authors. He is writing as a pastor to ministry leaders. His book *LEAD* deals with 12 principles that are necessary for healthy leadership. I particularly thought the chapters on "War" and "Candor" were particularly relevant. His definition of candor is, "The humility of approachability and the courage of loving honesty."

The Emotionally Healthy Leader – Peter Scazzero

Peter concentrates on how transforming your inner life will transform your leadership in all areas. Two chapters that stand out to me are, "Leading out of your Marriage or Singleness" and, "Practice Sabbath Delight".

Grit – Angela Duckworth

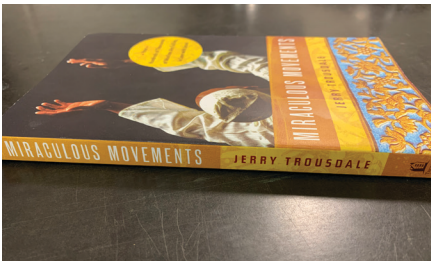
She defines Grit as "the power of passion and perseverance." She has multiple examples of how grit enables people to accomplish amazing results. The chapters on Practice, Purpose and Hope are extremely helpful. Add the power of the Holy Spirit to what she writes and you can see our God accomplish the supernatural.



Rob's Book Reviews

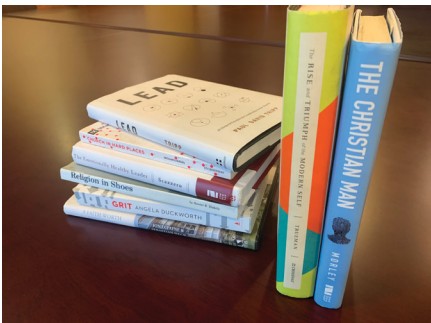
Miraculous Movements – Jerry Trousdale

This book has been around for more than ten years, but it is a refreshing look at the importance of making disciples and how God is working around the world today to spread His good news through ordinary people. The stories shared within are astonishing and encouraging. I found it very hope giving in a year of hardships. It is an easy read, and will inspire and challenge you to share God's love with others.



Religion in Shoes – Hunter S. Blakely

This book is the biography of Brother Bryan, a Presbyterian Pastor who served in Birmingham in the early 1900's. He was a tireless worker and a simple and faithful man. He loved the people of the city and ministered to the poor and wealthy alike. He was essentially the chaplain of the city of Birmingham, and his life and example are still being felt today. It is a great read and will motivate you while you learn the history of Birmingham in its earlier days.



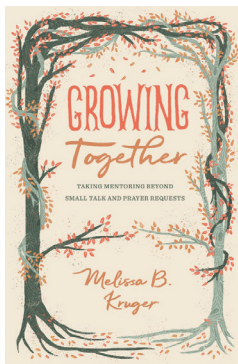
The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self – Carl R. Trueman

If you have been dizzied by the rapid change of cultural norms in our day, this book is worth a look. It is an insightful, well researched, and well written assessment of our present day. Trueman demonstrates in detail how the modern cultural revolution we are witnessing is the result of ideas from Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and others. It is very helpful in understanding how deep the current changes go and how to get to the root of our cultural and spiritual problems, instead of fighting the surface symptoms. A challenging book, it will grow you in your thinking and reading ability!

August's Book Review

Growing Together: Taking Mentoring Beyond Small Talk & Prayer Requests – Melissa B. Kruger

"I was wondering—would you be my Titus 2 woman?" We need one another. Yet we don't always know how to develop relationships that help us grow in the Christian life. Spiritual mentoring offers a way for younger believers and more mature Christians to grow together through intentional discipleship and accountability. If you're looking for a place to start, Melissa Kruger presents a guide for discipleship conversations that span a variety of topics for spiritual growth. Each lesson encourages both mentor and mentee to focus on the hope of the gospel as they learn together from the truth of God's word.



YBL BIRMINGHAM : DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ROB GENIN

I continue to be grateful for God's preserving and sustaining grace through all our challenges. The lack of in-person events through 2020 and the first part of 2021 served to be a blessing in that it drove us deeper into the foundation of YBL – discipleship. This year, I and our Birmingham ministry leaders have sought to grow specifically in the area of making disciples who make disciples. We had a number of additional trainings that have sought to get us back to scripture and specifically how to use God's Word in outreach to others—through the sharing of simple stories from the Bible. We are growing in the practice of asking questions and letting God's Word be the teacher.

We re-opened public events in May of this year. We are very grateful for the men who have shared with our community in 2021: Ed Kobel of Debartolo Development, Alan Barnhart of Barnhart Crane, Bill McCurine, a former federal justice who spoke to us over zoom in February. You can see these talks and more from 2021 on our website: ybl.org/Birmingham/event-archives.

We thank God as we celebrate His faithfulness to make disciples through our very human efforts. We thank you for partnering with us in this work!



5 new small groups started this year

45 new men in weekly discipleship groups

Approx. 220 in weekly discipleship

New 6-week disciple-making training for leaders

Emphasis on questions and discovery in Bible studies

Renewed emphasis on weekly prayer and fasting

Extensive collaboration with other non-profit ministries



New Faces of YBL Ministries!

YBL Birmingham welcomes Katie Barr, our new Administrative Assistant, and Carter Duncan, our YBL Communications Intern for 2021-22.

Katie is a graduate of Alabama.

Carter is a graduate of Samford and a member of the Briarwood Fellows class of 2021-22.

40 YEARS OF APPRECIATION FOR YBL

"Young Business Leaders has been part of my life since I was actually young! I was invited to my first banquet about 30 years ago. After that, I joined a small group and have remained friends with those men for decades. I can say that the friendships I made in that small group changed the trajectory of both my faith and my career in positive ways." – **Price Hightower**

"I'm thankful for God's use of unqualified men to accomplish His purposes. The ministry began with such men and continues to be led by the same. The mission and method has not changed over these 40 years. God's work done God's way never lacks God's resources." – **Wes Cline**

"My group meets on Monday mornings and it's encouraging to simply be with other men who have made the choice to prioritize Christian fellowship, study, and prayer to kick off the work week. I am thankful for how the YBL ministry reaches beyond the discipleship groups. I'm amazed to see businesses, communities, and families who are impacted THROUGH the men that are engaged with YBL." – **Sam Duffey**

"The keynote speakers at the YBL Breakfast have been insightful and encouraging. The events are soft landing spots for friends that are far from God or do not know him. I am glad I have a place to invite my professional colleagues that may not be ready to attend church can attend the meetings and outings planned by YBL." – **Martin Briggs**

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself."
– **Leo Tolstoy**

WBL: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

AUGUST GRIFFITH



God has been busting down doors for Women Business Leaders all year long, enabling more women to come alongside us and help transform the marketplace. Our ministry theme this year was: **Growing Together in Christ**. In January, God led me to Luke 2:52, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and favor with man." This verse highlights four key areas for growth: 1. Wisdom (Mental) 2. Stature (Physical) 3. Favor with God (Spiritual) 4. Favor with Man (Social). Jesus' true humanity is seen in his learning as other human beings learn, and our prayer has been to keep growing more and more like Jesus—together—in 2021. It has been such a blessing to foster authentic community and point women to Christ through WBL's outreach initiatives this year.



We kicked off the year with a City-Wide Prayer Gathering. In response to the COVID peak at the time, we made the decision to host a virtual prayer gathering over Zoom. The call was led by three prominent leaders from our ministry: Susan Gamble (Board Chairman), Kayla Briggs (Ministry Partner), and Kalee Baker (Small Group Leader). Over 40 Women from all across the city took a break in the middle of their busy workdays to stop and pray with us for our city. It was powerful! In April, we hosted our Spring Online Event featuring WBL Alumni, Anna Threadcraft, RDN, LD. Anna is the Lead Wellness Program Manager at Delta Airlines and shared a pointed testimony of God's faithfulness while tackling the topic of Navigating Uncertain Times. We ended the year with a grand reunion at our Annual Faith & Work Luncheon with Cindi Filer. This was our first in-person event since 2019, and it was SO worth the wait! It has been a long, draining two years of "tilling the soil" through remote ministry. All I can say is that God showed off and gave us a beautiful view of the plentiful harvest here in Birmingham! Our speaker, Cindi, is the CEO and Owner of a Staffing and Recruiting firm based out of Atlanta. She gave an outstanding talk about Developing Gratitude: A Game-Changing Skill for Leadership and Life. God was in ALL of the details. (You can access WBL's 2021 recorded events on our website and our YouTube Channel)

A few hallelujah highlights:

- 240 attendees joined us at The Club on October 15th (The largest WBL turnout to date!)
- \$11,000 was raised in Sponsorships (which included 14 different Corporate Sponsors!)
- 143 women responded to our invitation to get involved in the ministry
- 5 of those responses included women who want to investigate their faith and a personal relationship with Christ!
- 60 churches were represented in the crowd that day and 80 different employers from around the state.



Again, PRAISE GOD. I told you He was showing off! I'll end by sharing that this year's ministry theme could not be more fitting for such a time as this... my family is growing! Our little girl, Gracie Rhea Griffith, will be making her grand debut in November—and hopefully has already arrived by the time you receive this newsletter. We are thrilled beyond words to welcome this gracious gift into our arms!

It is a true joy and privilege to serve Women Business Leaders. I am forever grateful for your prayers, your care, and your faithful partnership. **To God be the glory, great things he has done!**

"So many of us long to have a place for deeper connection and meaningful spiritual discussion at work, but with the endless demands for our time and attention, adding one more thing to our plate seems like a daunting task. That's where WBL steps in and meets us where we are - providing resources and leadership that minister to our hearts in the nooks and crannies of our hectic days. Marion was a complete stranger to us four years ago and now she's a dear friend whose gifts of consistency, love and wisdom have changed our lives." - **Lauren Billings CPA, RSM, Assurance Senior Manager, WBL Small Group Member**

"As a small group leader for young women who work at RSM, I am honored to be able to fulfill the injunction of Titus 2: 3, that the older women should teach the younger women. It is a delight to be able to be a part of the lives of these exceptional young women as they navigate the challenges of being a Christian in the work place and in life." - **Marion Threadcraft, WBL Small Group Leader**

"The power of the Gospel still brings life where there is death, hope where there is despair, beauty where there is brokenness." - **Nancy Guthrie**

HUNTSVILLE: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

BOB BOERNER

YBL Huntsville is Changing Names — But Not its Focus!

YBL Huntsville celebrates the 40-year Anniversary of YBL --as it continues to leave a Godly legacy in our communities. YBL has left an eternal mark on the lives of men and women--as it has served God's purposes to transform individuals, marriages, families, businesses, and communities through the power of the Gospel of Christ.

YBL Huntsville is indebted to the vision of YBL, its leadership, and its sacrificial investment in our city and ministry since we were launched 32 years ago. Because of this partnership, YBL Huntsville is a thriving, healthy and mature ministry--committed to evangelism and discipleship in the work place as we seek to transform lives for Christ.

Over the years YBL Huntsville has matured and developed. As the city of Huntsville has grown, becoming Alabama's largest city, our local Board

has determined that we will be more effective in reaching men locally by making a name change. In November of 2021, YBL Huntsville will be changing our name to *Vantage Leadership Initiative*. Our name change will reflect our increasing desire to help men view and live life through a biblical lens. It is our ambition to stay deeply connected to the ministries of YBL Birmingham and YBL Jackson--as we expand our programs of discipleship, mentoring, and Second Half under a new name.

We celebrate all that God has done, and continues to do through YBL. We are truly grateful for the lasting legacy and impact YBL has made! In the future, Vantage Leadership Initiative desires to carry on that legacy as we seek to serve Christ and His eternal kingdom in Huntsville's marketplace and beyond--for His Glory!



"I've enjoyed YBL because I've been able to sit with other men in Christ and vulnerably share my concerns or problems in a non-judgmental environment. I've learned a problem shared is a problem halved and these men have been able to help me carry and fight through these burdens." - **David, Huntsville**

"Jesus promised his disciples three things—that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy, and in constant trouble." - G.K. Chesterton

JACKSON: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JAY FLETCHER

Happy 40th birthday to YBL!

For 40 years YBL has been ministering to businessmen in the workplaces in the Birmingham metro area. YBL Birmingham and Briarwood Presbyterian Church helped launch YBL Jackson in 1994. 27 years later, we are still seeing God move in incredible ways in the hearts and lives of businessmen in the Jackson metro area.



YBL Ministry Highlights



- Our ministry theme for 2021 has been, "connected". It has been a blessing to see businessmen connect to Christ for the first time. Others got connected to a small group to deepen their walk with Christ with a group of friends. Some decided that their connection point was a mentoring relationship...a one-on-one experience to walk deeper into life and faith. After a year of being disconnected because of COVID, it has been awesome to see men connected to Christ and their small groups.
- 30+ small groups continue to meet weekly.
- Group leaders continue to meet monthly for prayer, training and encouragement.
- Our Young Professionals Network (YPN) continues to grow and invest in the young leaders in the Jackson area.
- Our Spring Banquet with Aaron Rice was incredible. 200+ attended and were challenged by the Iraq war veteran and Director of the Mississippi Justice Institute.
- We began 2nd Half by organizing a 2nd Half Advisory Team that is focusing on developing mentor training for our men that are 55+ so that they can begin investing in younger businessmen. They are also planning to start some "coffee" small groups to begin introducing small groups to their friends and business associates.
- The future is bright as God continues to send businessmen of all ages to us for the purpose of helping them find a relationship with Christ and grow in their faith.

Prayer Request: YBL sincerely thanks Jay Fletcher for his faithful and fruitful service to disciple men! At the end of 2021, he has transitioned from YBL. Please pray with our ministry and the Jackson Board as they seek the next called man who will continue to grow this thriving work.

"I changed career paths after 15 years in a previous line of work. My new vocation relies heavily on building relationships and meeting new people with which to do business. As I was scrolling through Facebook one night, I saw an ad for YBL. I knew this was an opportunity to meet some new people and be more equipped to exercise my faith in the workplace. It has been all that and more. Funny enough, I've ended up being in a YBL group with four other guys I'm already in choir with at First Baptist Jackson. We had no idea each other was joining, but it has been a great way to get to know those guys better and create new relationships with others as well. Through the YBL group, I've realized that my faith is not just for Sundays and Wednesday nights, it is for each and every day. Our mission field is the workplace, and I've been able to take the lessons learned in my YBL group and utilize them in my everyday interactions. It's been an absolute blessing, and I'm so thankful for Jay Fletcher and the YBL community for opening up this opportunity." – **David Nichols, 37, New York Life (Ridgeland, MS)**

"An ounce of progress is worth a yard of complaint." – Booker T. Washington



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"Life is precarious, and life is precious. Don't presume you will have it tomorrow, and don't waste it today." – John Piper