

PARENT LINK

Keeping Parents Connected

BIG BEACH BASH + CAMP LEBANON = GREAT START TO SUMMER AT BSM!



THE "THEOLOGY" OF BIG EVENTS IN STUDENT MINISTRY

Why is it that student ministries always feel the need to have these big events? A quick glance at BIG Student Ministries summer calendar reveals a slew of big events, including: an overnight camp out called the BIG Beach Bash, two weeks of camp (Junior and Senior High), a trip to San Antonio, Texas for a convention, and a "Back 2 School" retreat this fall. As a parent I'm sure you might be asking: "Do they think we don't have lives outside of church?" As a Pastor, I often find myself asking: "Am I crazy? Why have I planned my summer full of weeks and weekends with sleepless student ministry events?" The answer to these questions lies in what I playfully call: "The Theology of Big Events".

I have a lot of memories from school during my junior high and high school years. Memories of sporting events, dances, classes, nights out with friends, and so much more. I also have memories from student ministry during these same years. The funny thing is, the memories of the student ministry events ring so much more clear in my head. Much like my friendships from junior high and high school, my memories of random school and social events have begun to fade, they lack detail and meaning. The memories I have that are the most vivid, the most detailed, the most meaningful are without a doubt memories from events that I took part in while involved in the student ministry at my church. *Take a walk down memory lane with me...*

I can remember sitting in the hallway under the escalator at the Hyatt hotel in Denver sharing stories with others in my student ministry late into the night. I can remember every bunk and cabin I slept in at Camp Lebanon over the years. I can remember pooling money together with my friends to buy food for the homeless people in the cities of Nashville and Denver while at youth convention. I can remember the long bus

rides to those conventions, and the chaos that took place in the hotels while there. I can remember hiking to the top of "Natural Bridge" at Red River Gorge in Kentucky, and the hearing the announcement that our youth pastor and his wife were pregnant with their first child. I can remember passing football with the two little kids that lived in the house we were painting during our mission's trip to West Virginia. I remember that my friend Evan was the only one to fall out of the raft when we went white water rafting in West Virginia on the way home from the mission's trip.

Those were just some of the fun memories I had over the years. I didn't even get into the stories of when I encountered the presence of God while at some of these same events. For example, when I was 12 and I prayed at the altar at Camp Lebanon, asking God to reveal himself to me. Also, when I was 17 when I felt God's call to student ministry affirmed in my life while I was prayed over along with hundreds of other students by Pastor Harvey Carey at the Denver Convention Center. Finally, there's the time when I was 15 that the guy in charge of our mission's trip in West Virginia performed a monologue about the leper that Jesus healed... this was when I really felt like I understood God's grace for the first time.

I could fill this entire page with memories from those trips and events... trust me. However, the point of this exercise was not to bore you with a litany of experiences that have no relevance to you or your student. **The point was to show you what could be in store for your student if they commit to attending some of these events this summer, and in the years to follow.** I am confident that the experience and exposure that these events brought into my life played a vital role in shaping who I am today.

(Continued ----->)

Granted, I was an odd-ball "Church Kid"... I mean, I'd rather hang out with my youth pastor than kids from school. However, I don't believe for a second that the impact of these experiences are reserved for those who are overly excited to be involved in their student ministry.

That's where the "Theology of Big Events" comes in. **I whole heartedly believe that the things a teenager experiences while away from home have the staying power to affect their life way down the road.** You see, when we are at home life is pretty normal. We are in a routine, we are around the same people, and do the same things. It's rare that one of these normal days would produce a memory or experience that we could recall, or that would stir us several years down the road. That all changes though when we get away from home. Think about it in your own life... I'm willing to bet that some of your most vivid memories are of trips you took away from home; vacation, honeymoon, camping trip, business trip. **Whatever the context for your trip, the reality is when you break your routine and find yourself in a new place, memories tend to stick around a while longer.**

Now imagine adding authentic encounters with God into those scenarios. **Suddenly you aren't just remembering church camp because it was away from home, you are remembering it because you had a significant realization of who God is, or what He's done for you.** The fact that it happened while you were away only adds to the mystique and staying power of the memory.

So what's the point of all this? I hope you don't read this as an emotional sales pitch for your student to attend the summer events we have planned for BSM. It's so much more than that. It's the reason I wake up in the morning. It's the reason I'm in the game. The experiences, understandings, and awakenings that often happen during events such as the ones on our summer calendar have the potential to be life changing moments in the lives of teenagers... in the life of your teenager. To answer my own questions above: That is precisely why it is so worth planning my summer full of weeks and weekends filled with sleepless student ministry events. For your student to have one of these experiences: I'd sleep in a cabin all summer, fly or bus all around the country, sleeping in any bed but my own, and eat all of my meals on the go. So yea... maybe I am crazy. Crazy about seeing your student have a life changing summer.

Article by:

Luke Dooley 4/28/08)

Finding the Balance: Ten Tips to Building a Healthy, Balanced Life

Hard work is extolled in our society, and even in the Bible. But it seems we've taken this supposed virtue and added globalization, copious amounts of caffeine and unlimited Blackberry access to create a society in which our worth is almost solely defined by what we do. It's time to take a step back and restore healthy balance to our lives. Here are 10 ways you can get started.

1. Observe the Sabbath

After God had spent six days creating the earth, He rested on the seventh day and sanctified it. In Exodus 20: 8:10, we're instructed: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work" (TNIV). This isn't just a suggestion—Sabbath observance is the fourth of the Ten Commandments. Going to church and then coming home to plug in your laptop so you can work the rest of the day just won't cut it. If you know there's a big meeting or a final coming up at the start of the week, push yourself hard on the previous Thursday and Friday. Bottom line: If a day of rest is good enough for God, it's good enough for you, too.

2. Unplug From Technology

Dr. Bryan Robinson, author of *Chained to the Desk*, calls technology "the opium of our generation," and few of us can claim we've never felt something of a rush when using a tech toy. But just because you've got a new, flashy cell phone, Blackberry or iPhone doesn't mean you have to answer it, even if your company's paying for it. Weekends and evenings are what the "ringer off" setting is designed for, so use it. You won't be able to check work email if you don't plug in your laptop, and let's be honest: What could have happened at your job that's so urgent it needs your immediate attention at 11 p.m. on a Saturday night?

3. Get a Hobby

Get a gym membership, sign up for a service project or become part of a whitewater rafting club. It doesn't matter what you do, just commit to any new activity or rediscover an old hobby that requires you to dedicate at least one night a week to it. If you're worried that you'll start skipping it so you can work, get involved in a group activity that will depend on your participation or ask someone to keep you accountable. At first you may feel like you're slacking, but you'll find life more invigorating, meet new people and have something more to talk about than another oh-so-exciting 70-hour work week. If you don't believe that having no interests outside of work is lame, rent *In Good Company* and see how much fun Topher Grace's character has when he's living in his office.

4. Set and Enforce Boundaries

Trust us, your boss doesn't work that much overtime, despite what he or she may claim, and your professors didn't study 24/7 when they were in school. That's because they learned that to be successful you don't have to

devote every spare minute to work. If you're toiling far too long each week because of the unrealistic expectations of others, the only one who can change the situation is you. Tell your boss you'll work as hard as you can during the week and occasionally put in overtime when it's needed—but that's it. Be respectful when you do this, and you'll get respect back. Once the boundary is set, enforce it by not checking or returning voicemails and emails after hours. Your boss and co-workers will soon realize that you're serious, and as long as you don't slack when you're at work, you'll be in the clear.

5. Stop Procrastinating

How long do you spend each workday on the Web? If the answer is more than your one-hour lunch break, there's a problem. It's all too tempting to write emails, update your MySpace page or check out the latest dumb celebrity video on YouTube, but each trip to your Web browser halts your work momentum. Even responding immediately to colleagues' voicemails, IMs and emails adds up, eventually creating a mountain between you and what you need to get done before the end of the day. Leaving projects until the last minute can be even worse, as it creates unnecessary pressure and can leave you unprepared for that important presentation to your boss. If you plan ahead, particularly for big projects, and block off time daily during which phone, IM and email are off limits, you'll have no problem getting tasks finished. "Productivity studies show that the most effective workers don't procrastinate and only respond to email twice a day, because any more than that interrupts the flow of work," Karen Sumberg, of the Center for Work-Life Policy, says.

6. Reassess Your Priorities

You'll probably claim that your relationships with family, friends and God are more important to you than work, but your daily schedule may tell a different story. To find out if your work habits are detracting from the rest of your life, we've devised a simple exercise. Write a list of the five things that are most important to you. Then, each day for a week, log how much time you're devoting to these activities. At the end of the week, add up the figures. Even for people who don't struggle with workaholism, work will probably be number one on the list—and that's OK, but if the things you value most are getting little or none of your time, you're working too much. Just creating these two lists can help you rediscover what is important to you, and how much work you need to cut back on to be truly happy.

7. Go to Counseling

If you know you're struggling with workaholism and just can't break the cycle of one extreme work week on top of another, you may need professional help. Admitting you have a problem doesn't mean you're weak. On the contrary, it shows that you have the strength to change your situation for the better. A counselor can help identify why you feel compelled to work long hours, how your work habits are damaging yourself and those around

you and what you can do to free yourself from the shackles of workaholism. If you're married or in a serious relationship, couples or family therapy can also help the people affected by your overwork tendencies talk through the resentment, bitterness and loneliness they may be feeling.

8. Create a Budget

Debt is one of the main causes of workaholism. Student loans and rent or mortgage payments may be unavoidable, but spending too much on a car, putting every expense on your credit card and even going through the Starbucks drive-through every day can put your finances in a dire state that demands working extra hours to pay for excessive spending. Websites such as *Mvelopes.com* divide your income between customizable categories such as housing, car, entertainment and tithing to help you manage your finances more responsibly. If you can break the habit of overspending, there will be one less reason to live in the office. That George Constanza nap area under your desk isn't that comfortable anyway, is it?

9. Get Perspective

Sometimes it's hard to examine ourselves to find areas of fault or weakness, and denial is one of the key factors that stops people from identifying and then dealing with workaholism. Ask a colleague, family member, friend or someone else you trust to discuss your work habits. Does this person think you spend too much time working? Have there been negative changes in your mood and personality since you started working longer hours? A few minutes of honest dialogue may seem uncomfortable, but it will give you a valuable outside view of your working life that could help you make the first step in overcoming workaholism.

10. Read The Bible

Several books in the Bible, particularly Proverbs, advocate hard work, calling those who don't have jobs "sluggards." However, contrary to what many Christians have come to believe, Scripture does not encourage or exalt extreme work habits. The third of the Ten Commandments says, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). Too often we let work become a false idol, to which we sacrifice relationships and time with the one true God. Making time to study the Word, to pray and to be in fellowship with other believers helps re-center our focus on the Lord and to put work in its proper place—as an important part of our lives but not the reason to live.

Article By: Phil White (Relevant Magazine)

Dear Parents,

Normally all of the content in Parent Link is authored by BIG Student Ministries staff. However, I read the previous article this past week, thought it was a great read. The author is Phil White, he can be read frequently in Relevant Magazine.

Thanks for Reading!

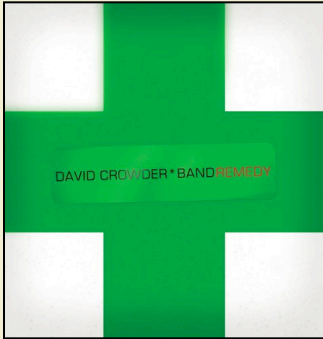
Luke Dooley

Picks & Clicks: Our Current Favorite Movies, Music and Websites

Worship Album

David Crowder Band - Remedy (Limited Edition re-release)

The David Crowder Band has become a staple of modern worship. Their style is personified in this re-release of their latest album: *Remedy*. Live Songs, plus videos from their last tour... this is a must have (In Stores Now)



Secular Album

Colbie Caillat - Coco

Colbie Caillat stormed the music world this winter with her soft voice, and smooth tones. There is no better soundtrack for a sunny spring day than this "bubbly" (hit song) 22 year old from Malibu. You can pick up Colbie's album in stores or on iTunes today!



Movie

Cloverfield - Released to DVD on April 22nd

A must see for anyone looking to be on the edge of their seat for 90 minutes. The incredible audio effects and stunning visuals mixed with the unique style of filming make for a wild ride. Contains some mild language, and "monster violence".



Website

hulu - (www.hulu.com)

This site is a must for any TV fans. Sponsored by major networks, this site allows you to LEGALLY watch your favorite TV shows the day after they air. Plus movies, sporting highlights, etc. Very cool site. *Warning* Some shows may not be suitable for all ages.



UPCOMING EVENTS... DON'T MISS OUT!

WHAT	Reds Game & Water Giveaway	BIG Beach Bash Overnight Camp Out!	Junior High Camp	Senior High Camp
WHEN	Wednesday May 14th 6-10 pm	Saturday - Sunday May 7-8 Noon- Noon	June 23-27 Mon. - Fri.	June 16-20 Mon. - Fri.
WHERE	Drop-off and Pick-up at Lakota East High School	Caesar's Creek State Park Drop-off and Pick-up at Lakota East High School	Camp Lebanon Retreat Center	Camp Lebanon Retreat Center
COST & OTHER KEY INFO	Cost is \$12 plus fast food money Sign up or RSVP by Sunday June 11th	Cost is \$25. Medical Release form and payment due May 25th.	Cost - \$105 Visit swoacamps.com for more information	Cost - \$105 Visit swoacamps.com for more information