



## Inspiration for Teachers From Bible Characters

### Leader or Lord? | Uriah: 2 Samuel 11 | Deana Swanson

The most pleasant and motivating people to work for are usually leaders, not lords. Effective leaders try to view situations from the perspective of those in their care and empathize with them. They do not lord over them by barking orders and bossing, but guide and lead by example.

Uriah the Hittite exemplifies this kind of leadership. After he answered King David's questions, he was given a lot of food and told to go to his house. Instead, Uriah chose to sleep at the door of David's house. He could not bear to relax and enjoy a vacation while his men slept in tents in the open fields, away from their homes and families.

Years ago, while teaching in a public school, my students and I were on a football field in midsummer. The hot and tired students needed rest and a water break, but the director was enjoying his power, pushing and ordering them around. I desperately wanted to leave and get a drink—which I could have done because of my position as a teacher—but being in the same situation as my students, I knew how they felt. They would feel the same way about me as they did the director if I walked away to

enjoy a cool drink while they suffered, so I decided to stay and suffer with them. Finally I left, returned with a squirt bottle, and gave every student a much-needed drink of water.

We should not be teaching to enjoy authority and power. We teach to impart knowledge and encourage our students. Leading by example is one of the best methods we can use. It's okay to tell my students that I was up late grading papers or preparing something special for them. They need to know that they are important, that learning is important, and that I am willing to work hard because of it. Most of them get the message.

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A seventh-grade boy once wrote “If this matters this much to you, it makes me care too.” This motivated me to keep leading this way.

Uriah’s men likely admired, respected, and followed him. He was not trying to be their buddy or friend; he was concerned for their well-being. He was truly a great leader, and he died doing what was right. That is the kind of teacher I hope to be: one who stands up for the right, who leads by example, and who empathizes with students rather than lording it over them. This doesn’t mean I’m easy on them; it means that I work hard and expect them to as well. It means modeling everything from neat handwriting to cheering them on to write that research paper.

Being a great leader isn’t easy, but it is important, and we should learn how to do it well. Modeling the behaviors we expect, keeping students accountable, and putting ourselves in their shoes will help us teachers to be gracious leaders rather than lords. [u](#)

*Deana lives in Terre Hill, Pennsylvania, with her husband Jeff (a teacher) and three of her five children (one of whom is a teacher also.) She taught in classrooms for fourteen years and homeschooled her children for eleven years. She is currently teaching at Maple Grove Mennonite Academy. Her favorite leisure activities are reading, writing, and playing board games with her family.*

# Spicing It Up



*Imagine spice cookies without the spices. Flour munchies. They’d hold the same nutritional value but there would be no taste appeal. The goal of “Spicing It Up” is to offer ideas for spicing up your classroom and teaching so your students don’t have to munch on bland “flour munchies.” School may not always be fun, but shouldn’t it be tasteful? Interesting? Engaging? In this space we offer tips, ideas, and techniques to counter bland, lackluster, and dull teaching.*

## Motivational Ideas | Deana Swanson

**W**hen discussing school, my husband Jeff and I often talk a lot about the exciting stuff—the projects, parties, and February Fun Days. The reason we do the “exciting stuff” is to make school an interesting, upbeat place to be, so that students are eager to be there—eager to learn, eager to think and write and expound and dream. The “fun stuff” that we do is to motivate students to try hard.

Motivation is a major factor for a successful school. Motivation enables students to stay on task and finish their work on time, strive to make good grades, achieve more than they thought they could, and stay on grade level and not fall behind. Elements of occasional surprise, spontaneity, and excitement help motivate students. Here are a few ideas:

### **Raise money for the charity of your choice.**

I got this great idea from another teacher. I brought in the Christian Aid Ministries brochure of gift ideas and let the students choose affordable projects we could fund, such as Bibles for China, a chicken, or a onesie for a baby. That way they had more of a vested interest in the project.

Next, I paid them. I was shocked when I first heard the idea, but here is how it works. Each student brought a little bank made from a can or something. (Some of them got creative and artistic with theirs.) I chose the subjects where I wanted them to focus on improving their grades. They got paid twenty-five cents for a grade of 97-100, ten cents for a 94-96, five cents for a 90-93, and one cent for an 85-89. Not a lot, but it adds up. By the end of the week, some of them had earned a whole dollar. The totals for the

*Continued on page 8.*



## Biomass: Humans and Animals

The total weight of Earth's wild land mammals—from elephants to bats—is less than 10 percent of the combined weight of men, women and children living on the planet, according to a study labeled as *The Global Biomass of Wild Mammals*, published in March 2023.

This study, conducted by scientists at Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science, found that wild land mammals have a total combined mass of 22 million tons, while humans now weigh in at around 390 million tons.

Domesticated species, such as sheep and cattle, and other hangers-on such as rodents, add a further 630 million tons to the total mass of creatures on the planet. The biomass of pigs alone is nearly double that of wild land mammals.

Domestic dogs and cats combined to a total of 22 million tons, a figure close to the total combined biomass of the earth's wild land mammals. The total mass of cats alone was almost double of that of the African elephant.

The study also found there are 1,200 species of bats that account for a fifth of all species of land mammals and two-thirds of all individual wild mammals by head count. However, bats account for only 10 percent of wild land animal's biomass.

The author of the article described the study as a “wake-up call” on the assumption that wild mammal populations are shrinking because of the increasing human population although the study did not conclude that.

—theguardian.com

## Hutterite Schools Going Private

Eight Hutterite colonies in Manitoba recently scrapped their public-school status, gave up taxpayer support, and became unfunded private academies. One colony converted its school in 2021; last year seven additional colonies followed suit.

“During the pandemic, many colony schools felt misrepresented and mandated to

restrictions that didn't apply to them,” said one teacher. “Those tensions and the rising popularity of Christian Light curriculum appear to be shaping the education landscape,” said the educator. A spokesperson for Christian Light confirmed their curriculum has been gaining momentum across Manitoba and among Hutterites but declined to offer further information.

Non-funded private schools in Manitoba are not required to hire certified teachers or use the provincial curriculum, but their chosen syllabus must meet the approval of the education department. Private schools are eligible to receive \$60 per student to cover curricular materials. A government spokesperson said that a colony going private usually involves a colony leader informing the local school division, a site visit by a department staffer, and the returning of public-school items and equipment.

—Winnipeg Free Press

## Prayer Back in Schools?

The U.S. Department of Education recently issued new guidance on prayer and other religious expressions in public schools. The new directive follows last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Kennedy vs. Bremerton*, which ruled that a football coach praying after games was a personal religious observance and that preventing someone from engaging in such a practice violated the First Amendment (free speech and the free exercise of religion).

The new guidance says “Teachers, school administrators, and other school employees may not encourage or discourage private prayer or other religious activity.” It states that the Constitution allows school employees to engage in private prayer during the workday. However, it also warns that they may not “compel, coerce, persuade, or encourage students to join in the employee's prayer or other religious activity.”

—npr.org







Juanita Horst

Sheila was not impressed. Nine students would have been perfect. Eleven was too many. When the chairman had called to tell her about the two new students, she had accepted the news graciously; she knew he had no choice in the matter either. He even sounded a bit apprehensive as he explained that the third grader had dyslexia.

As Sheila gathered her school supplies, chose name tags, and filled out her planner, she found herself feeling dubious about her new third grader. A dyslexic could change everything—*would* change everything.

Josh sighed; he ran a hand through his red-blond hair. Slumped with a weight too heavy for his nine-year-old shoulders, he stared dismally at his waiting school supplies. School simply wasn't fun, and with a new teacher and classmates he hardly knew, it would be dreadful.

Shrugging slightly as if to be free from the troublesome days ahead, he picked up his new flexible ruler. It had metal inside—probably aluminum, he figured—and its soft rubbery snap around his wrist was satisfying.

"Good morning, class," Sheila began, smiling enthusiastically at the rows of eager students. She could feel the excitement and energy level in the room.

"We'll begin by signing our names on the door poster. I hope to know all your names very soon, and I'm sure you know I am Miss Sheila." Precisely, she printed her name at the top.

The students took their turns. Angeline began with her beautiful script, then Beth, Tony, Roy. And six more. One was left—he must be Josh. His wide freckled face held the clearest green eyes she had ever seen—quite hazel. He gripped the marker tightly as he printed his name. The neatly inverted s stared back at Sheila as Josh returned to his desk. A distinct sense of foreboding settled over her.

Josh frowned at the rows of subtraction problems and traced the lesson number with his finger. He would never finish before recess. Angeline would. He glanced across the room at her, and his frown grew darker. Of course. Her finger was somewhere down on row three, and her bright pink mechanical pencil kept writing, even when she glanced over at the textbook problem. He could never do that. He knew without trying.

Suddenly he was tired of it. It wasn't fair—hadn't been for a long time. The people that always said, "Just try, Josh," must be too blind to see that he was trying. Abruptly he stood and headed for the door.

"Um, Josh." The cool voice of his teacher at the chalkboard stopped him short.

He turned toward her. *She is pretty this morning.* Not that her curly blonde hair was different than usual, but she just looked nice. Maybe it was the pink dress. It must be new.

"What do you need?" Miss Sheila asked, hand poised with chalk.

"Do you have a new dress?" he blurted. Ten little heads lifted from their lessons and gazed curiously at their teacher.

"Joshua. I asked, 'What do *you* need?'" She looked stern.

"Oh." He laughed awkwardly. "I was gonna get a drink. Guess I forgot to ask."

"Please sit down. You must get permission." Miss Sheila continued writing on the board.

Josh sighed and sat down. *The dress was pretty though.* Shrugging, he turned back to the tedious lesson. He copied one. He subtracted. He copied another. He glanced over at Angeline. Sure enough, she was smiling over at him, page finished. He stuck out his tongue and contorted his mouth. Her innocent eyes widened, her smile fading.

He set to writing madly. Soon Miss Sheila would come to check over their lessons and he would have at least three wrong, if not more. *She doesn't like me. Teachers don't like someone who can't*

learn math facts. But she likes Angeline. He had seen Miss Sheila's pleased smiles at her completed pages. It wasn't fair.

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The recess bell rang. "Books away," reminded Miss Sheila. *Clink!* The top section of Josh's mechanical pencil landed smartly on her metal desktop. A few students giggled in surprise.

"Josh, does this belong to you?" She held it up, not smiling. His bursting smile and hazel eyes would not get him out of this one. However unintentional it was, he needed to learn to be more careful.

"Yes, I can't believe it actually landed right in front of you! I didn't try it." He chuckled helplessly. "The look on your face, Miss Sheila."

Sheila knew she should laugh with him, but she couldn't. Classroom order seemed impossible with Josh in the class. Already this morning he had fallen out of his seat, spoken out of turn, and asked too many off-the-subject questions to count. It was hard to teach this way.

As the students filed out for recess, Sheila felt weary and vaguely uneasy. She knew that the resentful feeling she felt for Josh was not love. She also knew that a teacher who did not love all her students would not be very successful.

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Sheila dashed a 100% on Angeline's lesson and reached for the next one, hoping it wouldn't be Josh's. It was, and it was a mess as usual. She knew he tried hard, sometimes. But he was so hard to love. His inefficiency grated on her teacher nerves. Josh didn't fit with her goal of an organized, clean, and quiet classroom. She was ashamed to admit that sometimes she wished he hadn't moved here. Quietly she wrote 76% on his page.

She paused, thinking. *Somehow, I need to accept him. I'm tired of feeling resentful toward him and being frustrated that I feel that way. I need to love him—for real.*

Sheila propped her chin on her clasped hands. "Lord, I need love for Josh. Please. Give me love that sees beyond his annoying actions." A fresh breeze stirred through her classroom window, and Sheila felt hopeful as she picked up the next paper.

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Eying his teacher warily, Josh sat back down on the edge of his seat. He picked idly at his pencil tray.

Miss Sheila smiled and stepped toward him, as the last of the other students trailed out the door. "I don't want to keep you waiting for recess, Josh." She held his last math quiz in her hands. Josh felt a heavy dread settle over him. *Probably too many wrong again.*

"I only wanted to say that I am very happy with the effort you're putting into

your lessons. Especially math. Look." Miss Sheila laid the paper on his desk and pointed to the first part. "You figured this whole row right! In the next row you followed the correct steps; you only figured wrong." Stepping back, she caught his eye and smiled again. "Keep it up, Josh. I know you work hard, and I like that."

Josh could think of nothing to say. He flashed her a grateful smile as he left the room. Maybe he was worth something, even at school.

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"Third-grade reading class," Miss Sheila announced. Everyone filed to the class table. Except Josh. He was shuffling through the books in his desk.

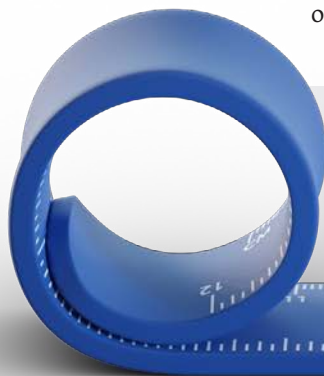
"Need something, Josh?" she asked quietly, willing herself to be patient.

He shuffled faster—papers, pens, eraser, books. "Yes, my reader." Josh's muffled voice came from under the desk lid. "Oh, look, my flexi ruler! It was lost." The rubbery ruler wrapped around his wrist with a little snap. His tousled head popped out from under the desk lid, and shining hazel eyes met Sheila's.

The very sight of the ruler caused Sheila's heart to sink; it had often been a distraction to Josh. But she swallowed a sigh and smiled genuinely. "Nice!" Uncurling the ruler and sliding it back into his desk, she pointed to the missing reader.

Clutching the reader, Josh scurried to the class table and clattered his chair into place. Sheila, taking her place in front, wondered suddenly when God had answered her prayer. For in place of the resentment that would have washed over her in previous days, she felt a fierce love for Josh. He was still disruptive, speaking out of turn, and trying her patience to the limit. But he had feelings too, and, probably more than his classmates, needed someone to understand and help him. Sheila vowed to never again see him as a nuisance.

Suddenly she became aware of five sets of eyes fastened on her, waiting. "Our story today is 'The Flying Whale,'" she announced, flipping open her reader. There was a spontaneous giggle from Josh, and Sheila smiled back into his merry hazel eyes. *How could I have ever thought he wasn't lovable?* "You may begin reading, Beth," Sheila spoke lightly, breathing a prayer of thanks. 



*Juanita is currently teaching in Colorado although she still calls Iowa home. This is her eighth year of teaching lower and middle grades.*

## Outdoor Classroom: Nature Mysteries

### Migratory Miracles

Andrew Zimmerman

What insect can fly thousands of miles and find a tree it has never seen—the very tree where its great-grandparents spent the previous winter? The beautiful monarch butterfly, weighing less than a gram, does just that.

The monarchs of eastern North America migrate to western Mexico to escape the harsh winter weather. (Western monarchs winter in California.) In the spring they fly north. There, during the summer, several generations live and die—most living only 2 to 6 weeks. But the butterflies of the last generation of summer, the migratory generation, live 8 to 9 months. They are in reproductive diapause, which means they don't mate and lay eggs until the following spring. They live on stored fat during the journey south and throughout the winter months. The remarkable journeys of this beautiful insect show us the wonderful Designer.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds also travel long distances in annual migrations. These tiny birds winter in southern Mexico and northern Panama and start flying north as early as January. Unlike Canada geese, they don't travel in flocks; they are loners. Before they cross the Gulf of Mexico, they gorge on insects and spiders, doubling their weight to 6 grams. They need the extra weight: the exertion of the 500-mile, 20-hour trip across the Gulf can bring them down to 2.5 grams. Some find resting places on oil rigs and fishing vessels during the trip.

Monarch  
Butterfly

Ruby-throated  
hummingbird





Arctic Tern

After reaching the States, they spread northward, following the spring flowers for nectar. In August and September, they begin traveling south again.

The Arctic tern holds the record for the longest distance traveled in any migration. This medium-sized seabird enjoys two summers every year as it travels from the Arctic to Antarctica and back again. It doesn't fly the shortest route but follows coastlines and makes use of prevailing winds to cover long distances. A 2013 tracking study showed that some terns flew 56,000 miles in a year.

How do these animals know where they can find a suitable climate? For some migrators, we could imagine that each generation learns about the migration because they were a part of it. A baby wildebeest of the Serengeti is a part of the seasonal migration with its mother, running with the herd within minutes of being born.

But some migrations don't occur every generation. Monarchs spend several generations in the north. The generation that hatches in late summer never migrated before, but develops specifically for the journey south. Somehow, they have the ability to navigate and to pass on information of wintering sites to succeeding generations.

How do these aviators find their way? Science does not yet have a clear answer. Apparently the monarch somehow uses the sun's position and the time of the day to find its direction. Birds seem to navigate by the sun and the stars. Some birds have magnetic sensors in their ears, allowing them to find direction by the earth's magnetic field. Some scientists believe birds can smell their way.

Study science, not because it's a required subject, but because it's fun to learn about the marvelous universe! 🌍

– Reprinted from *Homeschooler's Friend*, Summer 2023

Andrew enjoys sharing about creation science and Bible topics. His interests include Bible cultural background and hosting group trips to Israel. He lives in central Pennsylvania with his wife and children.



## Other Migratory Marvels

Besides the dainty monarch butterfly, the tiny ruby-throated hummingbird, and the amazing Arctic tern, continue your amazement (i.e. worship) by considering the following migrators.

- Blue whales are the largest animals on earth. They migrate north each spring and south each fall, singing, to the tune of 4,000 miles one way.
- Salmon spend years in the ocean and travel thousands of miles away (quite a feat for a fish) from their birthplace. After feeding and maturing for several years they migrate back to the river—often an arduous upriver journey of hundreds of miles—to the spot where they were hatched to reproduce, and die.
- Adult Christmas Island red crabs migrate annually from the rain forests of the plateau down to the coast to reproduce. The females lay their eggs in the ocean precisely at the turn of the high tide during the last quarter of the moon. The eggs hatch and the baby crabs eventually make their way to the rain forest. Because of the precision and predictability of this annual “crab walk,” the island's tourist industry is boosted every year.
- A young bar-tailed godwit likely set a nonstop distance record for migratory birds by flying at least 13,560 kilometers (8,435 miles) from Alaska to the Australian state of Tasmania in 2022. This dandy was five months old.
- The green darner dragonfly's migration is multigenerational—meaning it takes several generations to make the journey from the southern parts of the United States to the north and back.

**Sources:** Smithsonian magazine, other LightLines articles, and a smattering of online sources.

class were only around five dollars a week—not too much really, since it motivated them to make good grades, and it went to a good cause.

Friday was payday. I paid them in coins. If they had enough coins to equal a dollar, I gave them a one-dollar bill in exchange. They were learning to count money, practicing their math skills, and having fun all at the same time.

We totaled up everyone's money for the week and figured out how many Bibles or onesies or chickens we could purchase for others in need. Their grades went up, and they were not getting stuff for themselves; they were meeting the needs of others.


### Respond positively to students.

I rarely say “no” when a student answers a question incorrectly. I'll say, “Sorta, but not exactly,” or “Yes, but there is a better answer,” or “Good try,” or “Yes, that happened later,” or make a funny face, but never a stern “no.” I had a Sunday school teacher who responded to incorrect answers with a no, and eventually no one in the class wanted to answer him.

Some people are against giving rewards, saying that all the students should be treated the same. First, no one is ever left out completely at school because we do many things that everyone can be a part of. Second, we work to make sure that our students are placed at a level where they can achieve if they try. If they don't, usually they are choosing not to, despite our efforts to motivate them. Third, to remove all motivation and rewards leaves teachers dealing with a discouraging level of student mediocrity and apathy.

What about intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards—the concept that students should be self-motivated to do well instead of being motivated by external rewards from teachers? We try to create intrinsic motivation—the inner drive to do well—by first offering external rewards. With earned praise and encouragement, we have found that students do acquire the motivation to do well

on their own just for the sake of knowing that they have done their work well.

These suggestions are like tools in your teacher toolbox. Student motivation has been an effective tool for us, and as a result, we are highly motivated to find ways to motivate our students. 

— Excerpted from the book *I'm a Teacher and I Love It* by Deana Swanson

*Deana lives in Terre Hill, Pennsylvania, with her husband Jeff (a teacher) and three of her five children (one of whom is a teacher also.) She taught in classrooms for fourteen years and homeschooled her children for eleven years. She is currently teaching at Maple Grove Mennonite Academy. Her favorite leisure activities are reading, writing, and playing board games with her family.*

### Have a Recipe?

Please send us the “recipe” for your favorite “spice cookies,” that is - your tips, ideas, and techniques for Spicing It Up. What has spiced up your classroom and teaching? Send to [lightlines@christianlight.org](mailto:lightlines@christianlight.org) or mail to LightLines, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803-1312.



Hmm

Name one cause of deforestation.

Student answer: this LightUnit

### Teacher Check

Write a seven digit number that has the digit 6 in the 10,000's place.

Student answer: 6,666,666

Of Course!

List three things Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune have in common.

Student answer:

1. They are all planets.
2. They are round.
3. None of them have McDonalds.



# Dealing With Burnout

Davin Martin

**I**s teaching burning you out? Rest assured, you are not the first one. Burnout isn't all bad. The apathetic don't burn out; neither does the lazy fool who refuses to serve, stick to a commitment, or take a risk for God's kingdom. It was Paul who despaired of life (2 Corinthians 1:7), not Demas.

Burnout is real and can block our ability to think clearly. A Central American missionary related how mental stress blocked his ability to respond to danger. While raising young children, he and his wife also managed a guest house in addition to being the mission business manager. Then came the annual week-long Bible conference. He was assigned to teach a one-hour class each day that required a one-hour drive each way. One day as he darted and dove through the traffic, a truck suddenly stopped in front of him. Although he had ample time to stop his motorbike, stress blocked his ability to react. He crashed, severely injuring himself. As he regained consciousness, his first thought was, "Oh good, now I don't have to teach the rest of this week." Stress can make a life-threatening injury look like a pleasant escape.

Let's face it. Burnout carries a stigma, but burnout often results from a good desire to serve. Rather than being ashamed to reach for help, teachers need the wisdom to recognize burnout and the humility to ask for help. A teacher dealing with burnout needs the healing, restoration, and hope that comes from God—often through a godly community. Neglected burnout grows. The more we persist in burnout, the longer recovery takes. The damage we do to ourselves and to others increases. Instead of producing resources for the kingdom, we end up consuming those resources.

Let's consider a few causes for the Prophet Elijah's burnout and how he was restored. (A later article will look at preventing burnout.)

## Possible Signs of Teacher Burnout

- Energy, ideals, and ideas have dissipated, often showing up in poor performance and lack of productivity.
- Problems seem gigantic and overwhelming.
- Emotional or physical exhaustion. Sighs, tears, raised voice, short fuse, often tired, not sleeping well, forgetfulness, trouble concentrating.
- Apathy. Lack of concern or interest in important things. Loss of enjoyment.
- Negativism. An attitude of skepticism. Resistance to suggestions or instructions from others.
- Cynicism. A general mistrust of others' motives. Pessimism.
- Irritability. People and behaviors get under your skin.
- Critical attitudes. No longer expecting improvement. Fatalistic comments like "He'll never. . ." "She always. . ."
- Students note that the teacher has changed.

Sources: various - primarily from a talk by Tim Weaver at the Conservative Anabaptist School Board Institute (CASBI), 2010. Available at <https://thedockforlearning.org/audiovideo/recognizing-and-curing-teacher-burnout/>

Elijah lived in the dangerous space between King Ahab's wrath and the dwindling brook Cherith until God sent him as a refugee to the widow of Zarephath. Ahab had falsely accused him, "Art thou he that troublest Israel?" Elijah began to believe an untruth, "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord." False accusations and untruths can drain our spiritual and emotional resources faster than we can replace them.

Through the contest on Mount Carmel. Elijah experienced the depravity of Baal worship—the dancing, screaming, and self-mutilation. Encounters with evil can also drain our resources; even Jesus received the ministry of angels after His temptation in the wilderness.

God rained fire on the water-sodden sacrifice, annihilating it and the stones of the altar. The rain of fire on the altar and the rainstorms called up by Elijah's prayer would seem like a great "mountaintop" experience, but Elijah descended from the mountaintop, physically exerting himself in the six-mile race against a chariot to Jezreel, and then fled the wrath of Jezebel. Burnout can hit hard after mountaintop experiences. Physical exhaustion can magnify spiritual exhaustion.

Elijah requested that he could die. He was burned out.

God began to heal him. He started with taking care of Elijah's physical needs. Sometimes Christians pretend that all they need is spiritual answers to their problems. God isn't so silly. He knows our physical bodies are inseparably and mysteriously tied to our spirits. God let Elijah sleep; an angel gave him food. Elijah slept some more, and the angel gave him more food.

Are you taking care of your physical needs? Sometimes we look down on physicality. We imagine what we could get done if it weren't for this annoying, limited "robe of flesh!" In Elijah's case, God seems to say, "Get some sleep, eat, drink, and then we'll talk." Ecclesiastes also bears this out. The writer often overthinks everything and despairs of life, concluding that everything is vanity. It is interesting that many of his musings on the vanity of life end with verses like Ecclesiastes 2:24—"There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God." Would a modern Solomon tell the overthinking person to take a walk in the park?

After God took care of Elijah's physical needs, He told him the truth. "There are yet seven thousand who have not bent the knee before Baal." You are not alone! It does not all rely on you! Burnout often flows from a sense of isolation, a sense that nobody else can fill my role, a sense that I am indispensable. No! You are just one player in the global, historical, eternal kingdom of God. Don't fight alone; let your brothers hold up your arms! Envision your story as part of the story of the great cloud of witnesses who entered the victory Christ started in the desert and finished on the cross.

Then Elijah heard God's still small voice. This voice comes when we quiet our hearts and enter the presence of God. Often when faced with overwhelming difficulty, we try harder and work longer. There's a place for hard work and long hours, but not at the expense of our beholding the glory of the Lord that results in us being "changed into the same image." (2 Corinthians 3:18).

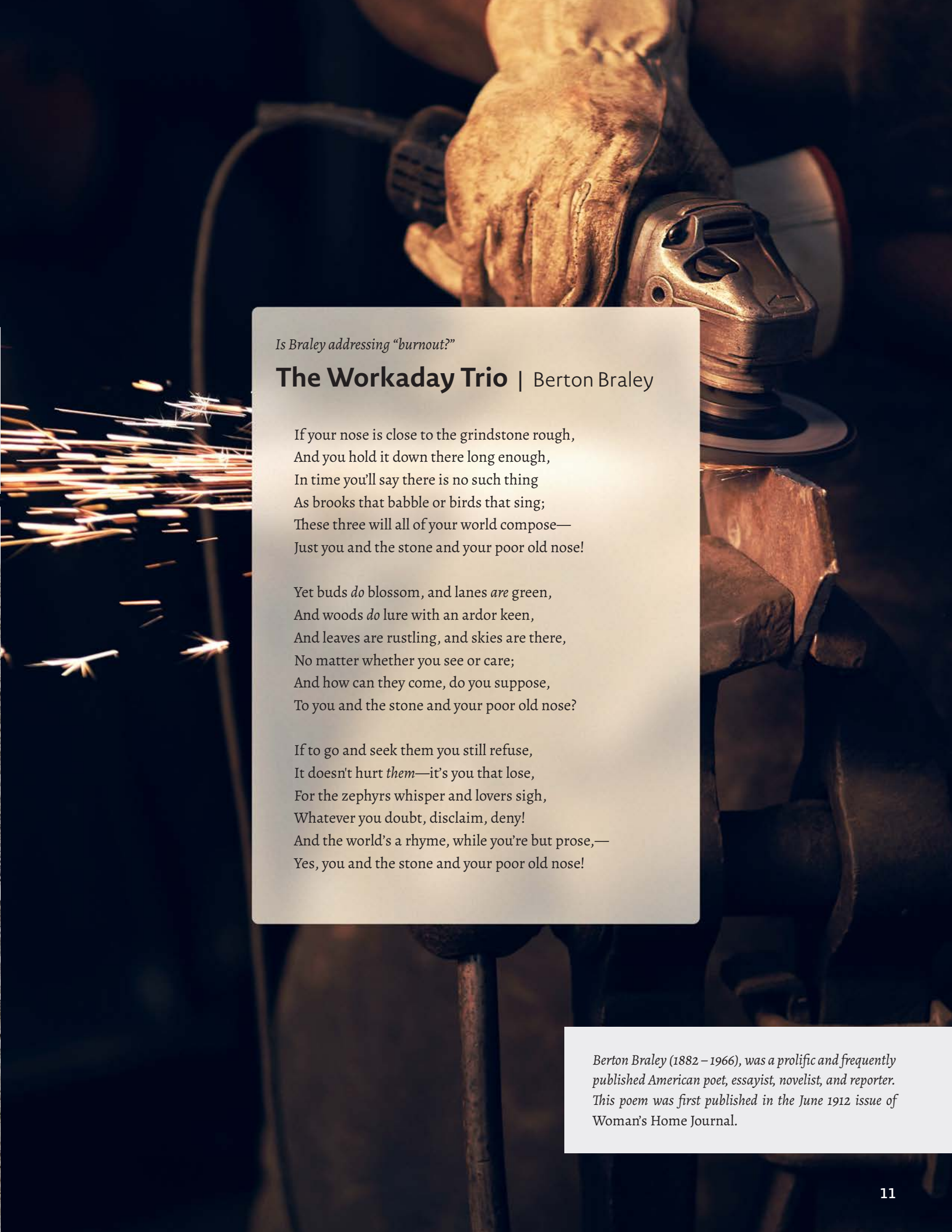
Are your spiritual eyes steadfastly gazing on the glory of the Lord? Who are the seven thousand who are serving with you? Do you need to take a walk in the park? Is it naptime?

Go ahead, you have God's permission. [L](#)

*In addition to his full-time job as a father to five sons, Davin runs a small farm to support his teaching habit, which he has engaged in over the last fourteen years. He and his wife Katelyn live in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, on a farm that was first bought by his ancestors in 1866. When he doesn't know what else to do, he writes. He recently authored a Personal Finance course for Christian Light.*







*Is Braley addressing “burnout?”*

## The Workaday Trio | Berton Braley

If your nose is close to the grindstone rough,  
And you hold it down there long enough,  
In time you'll say there is no such thing  
As brooks that babble or birds that sing;  
These three will all of your world compose—  
Just you and the stone and your poor old nose!

Yet buds *do* blossom, and lanes *are* green,  
And woods *do* lure with an ardor keen,  
And leaves are rustling, and skies are there,  
No matter whether you see or care;  
And how can they come, do you suppose,  
To you and the stone and your poor old nose?

If to go and seek them you still refuse,  
It doesn't hurt *them*—it's you that lose,  
For the zephyrs whisper and lovers sigh,  
Whatever you doubt, disclaim, deny!  
And the world's a rhyme, while you're but prose,—  
Yes, you and the stone and your poor old nose!

*Berton Braley (1882 – 1966), was a prolific and frequently published American poet, essayist, novelist, and reporter. This poem was first published in the June 1912 issue of Woman's Home Journal.*





*"Ask Another" is a question-answer space for teachers. Teachers are invited to pose questions on school-related subjects, offer responses to questions, or reply to responses. (LightLines will occasionally assign questions to experienced teachers for their qualified response.) Send questions or responses by email to [lightlines@christianlight.org](mailto:lightlines@christianlight.org) or by mail to LightLines Editor, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803. (Try to limit responses to fewer than 400 words.)*

## Ask Another

### Question:

Should students be allowed to whisper to each other during class? Why or why not? What is your policy and the rationale for it? Does age or circumstance make a difference?

—appeared in Summer 2023 LightLines

Normally I require my students (Gr.6) to keep silent during class to ensure that the others can concentrate and to prevent answers from being passed. When they're working with a partner, I allow low-tone talking. When I taught first grade, I allowed my students to quietly read to themselves during seat-reading time. —Hans Neufeld, Kingsville, Ontario, Canada

"Busy but quiet" describes the ideal classroom. How quiet is "quiet" has been debated by many teachers. The more inexperienced the teacher, and the earlier in the school year, the more careful the teacher should be to keep noise to a minimum.

The most sensible way to prevent whispering and gesturing is to stop a student the first time and remind him that he is not supposed to do it. Disturbing others is not to be something just dangerous enough to be fun, in which a teacher supplies the delightful danger by catching someone now and then. It is simply not to be.

Must you rebuke a student for a single whispered word? What if you see Daniel say a few words to Harlan and see Harlan hand him a pen? An experienced teacher's reply might be: "On the first day of school, I don't announce that there shall be no talking. I just keep the students quiet, as if there were a rule. Then if I see something like this, I'm free to let it pass."

—From *Handbook for Creative Teaching*, Rod & Staff Publishers, pp 650-651

Michael Linson, from Smart Classroom Management, responded to the question "Is there room for allowing students to talk while working independently?" like this: "No, there is not. Here's why: They can't concentrate. Mere ambient sound, like planes flying overhead or raindrops on the roof is a close second. But talking, even whispering? Like a surprise knock on your front door, it cuts straight through to the prefrontal cortex, breaking concentration in an instant. If you allow talking, this happens again and again all over your room. Even if your students get used to the chatter, the brains will naturally attempt to decipher what is being said, pulling it away from the focused work that needs to be done. Interruptions ruin flow."

—[smartclassroommanagement.com/2021/06/04](http://smartclassroommanagement.com/2021/06/04)

**Next question:** I understand the logic and reasoning behind requiring students to correct wrong answers. How and when is this best done? What works for you? — from questions often asked of school reps

**Please respond by December 25.** We'll print responses in the Summer 2024 issue of LightLines.

Please send your questions or responses to [lightlines@christianlight.org](mailto:lightlines@christianlight.org), fax them to 540-433-8896, or mail them to LightLines, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803. [📧](#)

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