

# THE IRON BRIEFING



NOVEMBER 2023

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

— Romans 12:2

IRON CONFERENCE 24

SAVE THE DATE  
Sept 20-22, 2024



Join us for three  
30 day reading plans to finish  
the year strong spiritually.

CONTINUING THE  
Q4 GROWTH PLAN

Contact Barry to join!

Nov  
30 Days focused on Gratitude

Dec  
30 Days focused on the  
Advent of Christ

## THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION

Transformation is about God being at the center of our life. Being a "better person" through performance is the opposite — man's ways are at the center.

We are reminded in both the old and new testaments:

Mark 10:18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good — except God alone."

Isaiah 64:6 *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.*

British Pastor Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994) was an English Christian evangelist who focused on the subjects of prayer and revival. One of his most penetrating quotes is,

*"Jesus did not come into the world to make bad men good. He came into the world to make dead men alive!"*

Working hard to be a better version of ourselves is NOT transformation. It is quite the opposite, because the performance itself comes from us and is based in pride. Transformation comes from God.

**Transformation comes out of surrender.** No pride is left in our surrender. Dying to our own desires and allowing the Spirit of God within us to direct our mind, heart and actions is transformation.

The doctrines of *justification* and *sanctification* are critical to understanding transformation. These must be taught to our children, and of course we must first have these foundational truths in our own souls before instructing others.

**Truth drives transformation.**

Transparency drives the traction required for continual surrender to obey God, truly follow Jesus and experience moment by moment transformation. Gradually the old self dies and what is left is the Spirit of Christ in us. Our righteous acts are now empowered by the righteous one within us!

"So why do we still sin?" your child may ask. The answer is, FREE WILL! We get to choose to obey God or do what the flesh desires. We depend on the Spirit of Christ within us to win the battle of temptation...and this cycle of surrender continues until we take our last breath.

— Gary Smith, Iron Forums Visionary



### BOARD MEMBERS

MARC CARSON	404.406.5235	MJCHUNTER58@GMAIL.COM
JASON CHANDLER	770.710.7747	JASONCHANDLER111@GMAIL.COM
JOEL M. FERDINAND	404.460.6952	JOEL.FERDINAND@FISHERBROYLES.COM
ROB MARBURY	404.274.7402	ROB@MARBURYCREATIVEGROUP.COM
GARY SMITH	404.558.0089	GSMITH@IRONFORUMS.ORG
MIKE TOWNSEND	404.281.0384	MTOWNSEND@MCMULLANCPAS.COM

### LOCATIONS & FACILITATORS

ALPHARETTA	MARK PUGH	404.409.3809	MPUGH@IRONFORUMS.ORG
COBB AND MIDTOWN	BRUCE WITT	678.637.9890	BWITT@IRONFORUMS.ORG
GAINESVILLE	JOSH IVY	704.743.8170	JIVY@IRONFORUMS.ORG
GWINNETT (BR, SN, SL, NG)	BARRY LUSK	386.383.7679	BLUSK@IRONFORUMS.ORG
JACKSONVILLE, FL	AARRON PINA	770.510.3117	APINA@IRONFORUMS.ORG
SUGARLOAF (WOMEN)	LAURE HOFFMAN	336.202.8366	LHOFFMAN@IRONFORUMS.ORG
VIRTUAL	LARRY RICE	757.472.2478	LRICE@IRONFORUMS.ORG

**TRACTION TIP****TEAM HEALTH, PART 3  
RELATIONSHIP**

In leadership, striking a balance between fixing problems and prioritizing relationships is a skill that leaders must work on daily. In his book *RARE Leadership*, esteemed expert in neuroscience and relationships, Dr. E. James Wilder, stresses the significance of putting relationships first. He underscores that remaining relational is necessary for effective leadership, especially amid distress.

When issues overshadow relationships, the effects of focusing on solving them swiftly are damaging. A leader's arguments and justifications for a quick solution inadvertently erode relationships. Their brain switches and "sees people as problems to be solved and focuses on managing others to maximize winning." Those around the leader perceive this as an attack by their "enemy," and respond in one of three ways: defend, retreat, or shut down. Dr. Wilder describes the phenomenon of switching into "Enemy Mode" – when the lower brain puts problem-solving over preserving connections – as a counter to building a healthy, collaborative team.

Strong teams are built on the foundation of healthy relationships. Emotional maturity is the ability to prioritize the group's well-being over personal interests. He emphasizes the importance of learning to "switch back to Relational Mode as quickly as possible."

Prioritizing relationships in leadership is integral to team and organizational success. Leaders must recognize that conflicts and problems are natural within a group but need not relationships. Instead, these challenges can be opportunities to strengthen relationships, cultivate compassion, and drive collective success.

[brent.stromwall@eosworldwide.com](mailto:brent.stromwall@eosworldwide.com).

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**ADVISOR SPOTLIGHT: CHARLES "NICK" NICKELL**

**Wife:** Dana and I celebrated our 45th anniversary in August. We met during my 4th year of college and she was a sophomore in high school. Yes, I robbed the cradle! We were engaged shortly after my graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy and were married 5 weeks later.

**Children:** We have 3 sons (Ryan, Cole, and Chad) and a daughter (Julia). We also have 4 grandchildren in Cumming and one more in Birmingham.

**Church:** The Vine Community Church

**Forum:** North Gwinnett

**What is the name and focus of your business?**

I spent 8 years as a navy nuclear officer, operating naval power plants on the sea and on land (strangely enough). The next 30 plus years were spent building and operating nuclear projects for the Department of Energy. Recently I participated in a small business (ProRoofing) startup with Dana and two of my sons.

**Who invited you to Iron Forums (who was your Andrew)?**

Dana and I attend The Vine Community Church with our son Cole and his family. There we met Gary and Margaret Smith. Gary invited me to visit a Forum and I knew this would be the place for me.

**What is your favorite part of the Iron Forums Snapshot?**

I particularly like the small size (3-4), where guys feel safe to share their concerns and deep prayer requests. It is difficult for men to be transparent, and this provides the ideal setting for intimate conversations, godly advice, admonition, and encouragement.

**How has Iron Forums improved your life?**

As I have transitioned from the workplace, Iron Forums has given me a way to partner with fellow brothers in Christ and serve the business community. I'm constantly impressed by the godliness of the men, young and old, that gather together to sharpen each other.

