

### Robbie Taylor, Set Free to Live Free



Recently in my preparation to share with a local faith community, I was reflecting and processing to understand the 3rd commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Sometimes, we can see laws as dry rules and yet not take time to delve into their profound importance for those first receiving them and their implications for us in 2023. I found it goes beyond mere avoidance of disrespecting God's name, that the phrase "to take" means "to carry". It emphasizes honouring the holiness and significance of God's name; His name is His character and authority. And we are to carry that in our actions and words. It calls believers to live in a way that brings glory to His name, and walk in His power and purposes to show the world truth and not make His name empty or worthless by our walk.

I was struck that God's people were set free to live free, but that living free is to live in a way that gave them the best opportunity to thrive as people. He gave order as our creator with a structure that would give a profound meaning, that would allow His people to know that the One giving the law deeply loves them and that His name is connected to His character and His love for them. In reflection, it shows us our need for a saviour as we in our human nature fall short of His command; Jesus provides redemption through the cross and bears our sin, offering forgiveness and restoration. Believers are called to authentically represent God's character, aligning our words and deeds with His holiness. And we are now set free to live free by the Holy Spirit as we carry the Lord's name.

YFC Comox Valley's vital role in working with youth adds a crucial layer to this important call. By providing guidance and support, we are instrumental in instilling hope in young lives. We offer youth a God-designed purpose through the Gospel message of Jesus and help them understand the significance of living in alignment with God's principles through His indwelling Holy Spirit, which is fundamental to living holistically transformed and free to reach their true potential.

The work of YFC Comox Valley holds the key to fostering an environment where young individuals facing the challenges of modern society can find hope, purpose, and a sense of belonging. So that those living in darkness and bondage can experience freedom in Jesus Christ. We, as Christian leaders, align with the principle of the 3rd commandment, through the Spirit building relationships that are pointing to Jesus' redemptive work. This will be pivotal in shaping a future generation that embodies the values of respect, love, and the honour of God's name in their lives, bringing about His transformative purposes to truly be living fully in Christ.

### Taeryn Novak, He Is With Us

Lately I have been reminded of how God is with us in uncertainty. Of course, throughout my years of walking with God, I have known this truth both logically and experientially. But sometimes we go through seasons where we become even more intimately aware of this facet of Christ's presence with us.

This uncertainty about what is happening around us and within us is a reality that I think we always live with, but maybe just don't notice. When things are going 'well,' we may get comfortable with the idea that we are in control, that we know what's coming next. But James 4 says, "Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow... Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'"

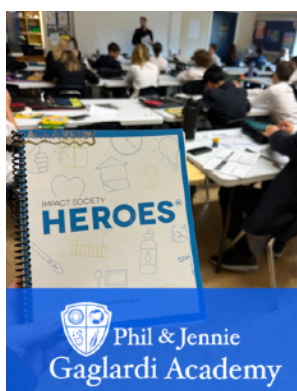
So, this has been my challenge recently: remaining centred on Christ, His love, His presence. Even (and especially) in the unknown. I want to continue to surrender each day to His leading, continue to serve the youth He has placed in my life right now, and continue to trust Him with the outcomes. Week to week, I know I have to keep believing and looking for how Jesus is working in the lives of young people because He always is.

I cannot tell you how encouraging it is to know that all of you are here as well, advocating for and empowering these youth to discover purpose, hope and life. Thank you.



**EVERY YOUNG PERSON  
LIVING FULLY IN CHRIST**

### Transforming Lives, Shaping Futures: A Grateful Testimonial for the Heroes Program at Phil & Jennie Gaglardi Academy



I am writing to express our profound gratitude for the transformative impact that your Heroes Program has had on the Phil & Jennie Gaglardi Academy. This program's emphasis on instilling values such as being a hero, treating others with respect, and lifting people up has deeply resonated with our students. Sharing the values of investing in the growth of our young minds is essential for their personal development, but it is also crucial for the flourishing of our Christian community.

The program's focus on recognizing individual gifts, fostering a desire to succeed despite challenges, and the belief that change can start in their youth has resulted in a remarkable shift in mindset. From initially unengaged students to those actively learning to build others up, the Heroes Program has significantly contributed to increased positivity in the classroom and a noticeable decline in adverse treatment among peers. The impactful testimony videos have played a crucial role in fostering a belief among students that they can make a difference now,

showcasing the profound influence your organization has on shaping the future leaders of our community. Thank you for your outstanding support and commitment to empowering our youth.



Elena Harper, **Obedient to the Spirit**



Over the past year my heart has been to see youth grow into who they were called to be and to walk out in the giftings and abilities that God has given them individually. To be able to create a space for youth to put into practice what their giftings are, as well as what they feel like God is calling them to.

This October we held our Giving in Thanksgiving event here at YFC, where I was able to take a group of youth out into the community and minister to the homeless. During that night I asked my group if anyone felt led to go and pray for someone specific, with a leader. A young girl who was new to YFC shot up her hand and said that there was a man who was sitting in a group that she felt led to pray

for. Myself, this girl and her friend went over to this man and were able to pray for him. This girl was led by the Spirit, even if she herself wouldn't be able to identify that it was the Spirit of God moving through her in that moment.

These are the moments that we pray for, moments that our heart longs for, youth walking out in their gifting and walking out in the obedience of the Lord moving in their lives. We pray for compassion to rise in this generation, for an increase of the awareness of the Holy Spirit, for a greater understanding of who God the Father is, and for them to grow in the fear of the Lord.

It's been through programs and events like this one that many students have come to know the power of prayer and service. Thank you for your investment to this ministry and to these youth— it is of eternal value.

Ava, Grade 10 , **Echoes of Empathy**



Hi my name is Ava, and out of the last two years that I've done Giving in Thanksgiving, I've experienced many interactions that brought a smile to my face. I still remember last year when I met a man living on the streets who was also a believer in Jesus. When we gifted him a care package, he was so excited to receive it, especially the bus tickets; he said ecstatically, "Yes! I can finally go to church now!" Both years, as soon as we went to give out the care packages, I could just tell there was a spark of hope for these people in the gifts that we brought them. I hope that churches can continue to show care to this community.

A highlight from this year's opportunity to serve was going to the local warming centre and seeing the employees become so thankful that we were out there doing this ministry for God and how we had decided to give up our Friday night to do so. The fact that last year 20 youth attended the event and this year 50 youth were there was really amazing to see, as well as the amount of care packages we got to hand-deliver to people this year— almost 80 bags. It was a really fun experience that brought me out of my bubble, being able to talk to people and make small connections. I feel like I've made a difference in the community, both years I've attended this event. It has helped me as a person to see others around me in need. The main thing I can take away is that I learned that God can work through everyone in specific ways. I felt like God was using me as His helper to give these people a sense of hope that many people care for them and that God wants me to live with love, empathy and compassion. Thank you to the YFC team for providing these opportunities to walk out my faith in a practical way.

Rebekah Kenway, **When the Church Works Together**



We've experienced some transitions within our team recently. Nevertheless, our faith remains steady in a God who is consistently present, regardless of the circumstances. In this season of little, as we continue to commit what we have to the Lord, He has been faithful to show up and multiply the works of our hands. As you may already be aware, we had a super successful Giving in Thanksgiving event this year. Compared to previous years we had more than double the amount of youth in attendance, so the impact was greater in that way, but what was also beautiful was the partnership that took place leading up to and during the event.

Most churches in the Comox Valley were present in one form or another. Whether that be in the kitchen crew, through the many people who donated items to go in the care packages, the donations received from the Salvation Army and their Captain sharing a word on the night, or church pastors coming to serve and volunteer at the event. It was a beautiful display of Christ's body— united, working together and compelled by love.

This was not just a success for the youth who were thrilled to step into the gift of service and compassion, but it was a success for our community and God's people. For us, whether as a ministry or as individuals, seasons and circumstances change, but we remain strong if we remain connected in Christ's body because we remain connected to the one true God who formed and made us.

“Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you harmony with one another in Christ Jesus, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:5-6

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