

Guarding an empty bench doesn't serve any real purpose



America's Heartland
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over an empty bench.

It seemed like an odd thing for soldiers to be doing, so he asked a sergeant who had been on base for a few years why the bench was being guarded.

"I don't know why," the sergeant said, "but I've heard we've had men assigned to that bench for the past 35 years."

The post commander dug back through personnel files and found the name of the man who was in charge 35 years ago. He grabbed a telephone and called him up.

"I'm the new post commander, and I have a question for you," he said. "Why is that

bench so heavily guarded?"

The old retiree was shocked. "You mean the paint still isn't dry?"

I'm sure we've all noticed how some people do the same old things over and over again, whether it serves a purpose or not.

Churches are notorious for doing things in the same way, without asking why. For example, in our neck of the woods, the usual start time for Sunday worship services is 11 a.m. That's a holdover from the days when nearly all church families were full-time farmers, and they had a lot of

work to get done in the mornings before they saddled their horses or hitched their wagons for the long ride over rutted dirt roads to get to church. Nowadays, we can jump into our modern vehicles and be at church in a matter of minutes, without having milked a single cow, shucked even one ear of corn, or slopped any hogs.

Please don't hear me saying you and your church should consider an earlier start time. It's none of my business. But, if we're going to reach our unchurched neighbors, we'd be well advised to ask what time they'd prefer to be in church.

The Bible doesn't set the 11 a.m. worship time. Yet, we hold to it as if it's scriptural. In fact, the Bible tells us anytime is a great time to worship. "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised" (Psalm 113:3).

Could it be that we're like those soldiers guarding that bench? They didn't know why they were doing it. They were accomplishing nothing. But they kept right on doing it.

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When a new post commander arrived at an Army base, he was surprised to see a couple of his soldiers standing sentry

Kitchen Diva by Angela Shelf Medearis A Taste to Your Health



One of the best things about writing a food and recipe column is the opportunity to introduce my family, friends and readers to something new. I also enjoy experimenting with new ingredients and products.

Recently, I discovered a wonderful line of naturally sweetened, zero-calorie beverages called Zevia. It's one of the first drink brands focused on healthy versions of sodas (14 different kinds), energy drinks (grapefruit, mango ginger, raspberry, lime and kola), sparkling water (lime, blackberry, Mandarin orange and cucumber lemon), as well as a line of mixers, organic teas and Zevia Kidz.

So, what is Zevia Kidz? It's got the fizz of soda and the tangy sweet flavor of juice, but somehow it's neither. It keeps all the good stuff and leaves out all the bad with zero sugar and nothing artificial. Zevia formulas also are certified non-GMO, vegan, kosher, color-free, gluten-free, keto and paleo-friendly. I served the Zevia Kidz to children ages 3 to 10, and they loved the taste and the colorful Disney characters on the cans.

Zevia is the brainchild of founder and CEO Paddy Spence, a key figure in the natural food industry for more than 25 years. Paddy and his wife quit sugar 18 years ago, and since then he has completed in numerous triathlons and marathons. Zevia is the official soda of the CrossFit Games, an event that has banned bigger brands high in sugar content. You can find Zevia at thousands of grocery stores.

While Zevia is a healthy and delicious drink, it's also great as a nutritious, zero-calorie ingredient in drink recipes, snacks, main course dishes and desserts. Use it to create a light, crispy batter for the Zevia Orange Cauliflower Poppers, as the salad dressing base for the Quinoa Salad and to give a wonderful strawberry flavor and sweetness to the batter for the Strawberry Almond Cobbler. It's the perfect way to cut calories to create a "new you" in the new year!

- Zevia Orange Cauliflower Poppers**
- 1 quart oil
 - 1 head cauliflower
 - 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
 - 1 teaspoon sea salt
 - 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
 - 1/4 teaspoon thyme
 - 1/4 tsp. rosemary
 - Dash cayenne pepper (optional)
 - 3/4 cup Zevia Orange Soda
 - 1/4 cup Zevia Tonic
 - 2 egg yolks, beaten

1. Heat 1 quart oil in a deep-fryer or saucepan to 375 F.
2. Cut cauliflower into bite-sized pieces.
3. Combine flour, parsley, sea salt, garlic powder, thyme, rosemary and cayenne in a bowl and mix.
4. Whisk together orange soda and tonic water with egg yolks.
5. Dip cauliflower into egg mixture, then in dry ingredients until coated.
6. Deep fry batches of cauliflower until golden brown, about 3-5 minutes.
7. Pat dry on paper towels. Makes one batch.

- Quinoa Salad w/
 Zevia Orange Cilantro Dressing**
- 1/2 cup Zevia Orange Soda
 - 1/4 cup lime juice
 - 1/2 cup olive oil
 - 1 cup fresh cilantro
 - 1/2 avocado
 - 1 teaspoon garlic
- Quinoa Salad**
- 1 cup quinoa
 - 1 orange, cut into pieces
 - 1 grapefruit, cut into pieces
 - 1 lime, juiced
 - 1/2 avocado, diced
 - 1/4 cup feta
 - 1/4 cup diced red onion

1. Combine all salad dressing ingredients in a food processor and pulse until consistency is smooth.
2. Cook quinoa and let cool.
3. When cool, add to a bowl with remaining salad ingredients and top with Zevia Orange cilantro dressing. Makes 4 servings.

- Strawberry Almond Cobbler**
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
 - 4 cups hulled strawberries
 - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - 3/4 cup Zevia Strawberry soda
 - 1 teaspoon almond extract
 - 1-2 teaspoons liquid stevia to taste (if desired)
 - 1 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 tablespoon baking powder
 - 1/8 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 cup milk of choice

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Melt butter in a 9 by 13-inch pan in the oven while it's heating.
3. In a saucepan, bring strawberries, cinnamon, 1/4 cup of strawberry soda, and almond extract to a boil. Stir and let reduce for 5 minutes, adding stevia if desired.
4. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. Slowly whisk in milk and remaining 1/2 cup of strawberry soda, until fully combined to form a batter.
5. Pour the batter into the pan of melted butter without stirring.
6. Add in the strawberry mixture on top of the batter without stirring.
7. Bake for 35-45 minutes until golden brown. Serve warm and enjoy! Makes 8 servings.

Angela Shelf Medearis is an award-winning children's author, culinary historian and the author of seven cookbooks. Her new cookbook is "The Kitchen Diva's Diabetic Cookbook." Her website is www.divapro.com. To see how-to videos, recipes and much, much more, Like Angela Shelf Medearis, The Kitchen Diva! on Facebook. Recipes may not be reprinted without permission from Angela Shelf Medearis.

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Four Things That God Cannot Do

Wednesday, January 27th, 2021 Message
 Bro. Warren Rogers, Retired Baptist Minister

Matthew 19:26, "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

I know from the title that you are thinking this preacher is crazy and you are ready to argue with me. Now just cool down and read this, then we might discuss it, if you are still mad.

#1 God cannot lie -- Titus 1:1-2, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; ²In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Therefore everything God said is true. **Romans 3:23**, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Then **Romans 6:23**, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

#2 God cannot undo what has already been done -- If God allowed himself to undo what has already been done, surely He would have undone Satan's rebellion and Adam's fall. The Lord said unto the woman, "What is this that thou hast done?" ^{Genesis 3:13} God cannot undo your sinful deeds, or he would. God cannot unsay your sinful words or your sinful thoughts. Because he said in **Ezekiel 33:11**, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

#3 God cannot save anyone apart from their true faith in Christ -- John 3:18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Also **John 14:6**, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Plus **Acts 4:12**, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

#4 God cannot save anyone against their will. -- John 5:39-40, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. ⁴⁰And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Dear readers, I know God can do all things, but we must trust him and rely upon him so. He might be able to work through us.

Until next week, may God bless you and keep you is my prayer!

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"I'm missing the big game!"