



Times Remembered
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Fear of Thunder

When I was young, I had a fear of thunderstorms . . . astraphobia as it is called. As soon as I saw a dark cloud I became leery. With the first clap of thunder and lightning flashing, I made a bee line to my hiding place during the storm. I dove over the living room couch that was setting cattie-cornered on the wall, then onto the fluffy feather bed that Mom kept behind the couch. I covered my head until it was all over.

We need a healthy respect for thunderstorms, something between hiding behind a couch or in closet and not sitting on a roof holding a metal golf club. The good news is that lightning kills very few people. In 2013, lightning only killed 23 people in the United States . . . that was a record-low number. The worse news is that you

can probably multiply that number by 10 to get the number of people injured by lightning, and some of them have been left with permanent disabilities.

Southern states get more thunder storms than Northern states. Florida typically leads the country in lightning strikes and casualties. It is estimated that in one year, lightning hits the ground 25 million times somewhere in the U.S.

Always check the weather forecast for possible thunderstorms occurring at your location. If thunderstorms are forecast, the threat of lightning is inferred. Radar does not detect lightning; but the forecast of thunderstorms usually produces heavy rain, so places that are receiving heavy rain are more likely getting lightning, too.

When lightning is in the area, do not stand underneath a tree. Trees are often the tallest structure, meaning they can attract lightning and electricity can run underground.

Conveniently, thunderstorms send out their lightning warning signals. We call this thunder. Thunder is the sound made when lightning heats the air, causing it to expand rapidly. A close lightning strike makes a loud crack or explosion. This tends to scare people, but if you heard it, it missed you!! More distant strikes produce rumbling thunder with the sound waves bouncing and reflecting.

And the old rule does

work: If you see lightning, count five seconds, and if you then hear the clap from the strike, the lightning was 1 mile away. If you count to 15 before you hear it, the lightning strike is three miles away. This formula has to do with the speed of light which is almost instantaneously fast, and the speed of sound, which is much slower. Lightning bolts have been known to strike as far away as 10 miles from the parent thunderstorm. And lightning always produces thunder.

So what do you do when a thunderstorm is getting close? Go inside. And not in a metal shed or an outhouse. You are safer in a car or inside the house. Don't seek shelter under a tree. As we know lightning seeks the highest objects, and electricity can jump and run underground. Also stay away from metal fences and water.

If you are outside in the open, crouch down. You don't want to be the highest object. But don't lie down on the ground . . . remember electricity runs through the ground. Crouching down minimizes your exposure.

But there is a bright side to thunderstorms. They bring life-supporting rains, especially in the summer. Without the rain we would have no garden, crops or farms to feed people. The storms replenish the ground water supply. So follow the rules, heed the warnings of storms, find a safe place and enjoy one of nature's greatest shows.

Marriage benefit: You don't have to finish your own sentences



America's Heartland

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I heard the other day about the fellow who joked he hadn't spoken to his wife in 18 months.

"Why not," his friend asked.

"Because I don't like to interrupt her."

I heard about another fellow who confided that he loves being married.

"I was single for a long time," he said, "and I grew so tired of finishing my own sentences."

Anyone who knows anything about humanity knows there are people who talk a lot

and there are people who talk very little. It's just the way God made them, and while there's nothing wrong with either, either can get on the other's nerves.

The Bible is clear that we should love one another regardless of our differences. That means regardless of skin tone, regardless of height, regardless of weight, regardless of wealth or lack thereof, regardless of age.

Regardless. We're admonished constantly in scripture to love, and we're told that love for others is a clear indication of a good relationship with the Lord.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4:7-8).

The Bible also tells us that simply saying we love others isn't good enough.

"Little children, we

must not love with word or speech, but with truth and action" (1 John 3:18).

Some wise person once said that if we knew we had only five minutes left to say all we wanted to say, every cell phone would be lit up with people eagerly calling others to simply say: "I love you."

That wise person then asked: "Why wait until the last five minutes?"

We can be like the man who joked he hadn't talked to his wife in 18 years because he didn't want to interrupt her. Or, we can be like the fellow who joked he loved being married because he grew tired of finishing his own sentences.

But, perhaps we should be like a person who is down to his final five minutes, so that we might actually tell, or show, those closest to us that we love them.

Roger Alford offers words of encouragement to residents of America's heartland. Reach him at rogeralford1@gmail.com.

Stephen Willis- S. Irvine Principal to Attend Executive Leadership Training

An Irvine principal is set to begin a year-long executive level leadership training course usually reserved for the nation's top CEOs.

Stephen Willis of South Irvine Early Learning Center was selected in March to participate in the Kentucky Chamber Foundation's Leadership Institute for School Principals by an advisory board made up of business leaders and school superintendents.

Willis, one of 40 selected principals, will begin attending classes this summer at The BB&T Leadership Institute in High Point, North Carolina, in partnership with the Kentucky Chamber Foundation.

The BB&T Leadership Institute has customized a program to meet the specific leadership development needs of school administrators. Principals will also attend follow-up sessions in the fall and early next year in Kentucky.

"It is an honor to be selected to attend the 2018 BB&T Leadership Institute," said Willis. "I am looking forward to using this new gained knowledge to further progress our community."

Elementary, middle and high school principals from across Kentucky representing both public and private schools applied for the institute, which is supported

by generous donations from businesses across the state. So far, more than \$3 million has been spent on over 350 principals from 93 Kentucky counties since the program began in 2011.

"The business community takes great pride in supporting the Leadership Institute for School Principals," said Kentucky Chamber President and CEO Dave Adkisson. "Employers value the importance of effective leadership in the private sector, and the same is true for schools. That's why we think it is important principals experience executive-level training similar to what is provided for corporate leaders."

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