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Soulfires

IGNITING MINISTRY

Brian Hardin:

Changed by the Word

One morning in December 2005, I awoke from a vivid dream, and the first thought that came to my mind was, “I want you to podcast the Bible.”

I sat up, shook off the dream and made a pot of coffee. But “I want you to podcast the Bible” became the tape playing over and over in my subconscious. I couldn’t get it out of my head.

So I did an Internet search for “podcasting.” At the time, you had to kind of figure it out for yourself. I did, and on New Year’s Eve, I read my first podcast of the Bible.

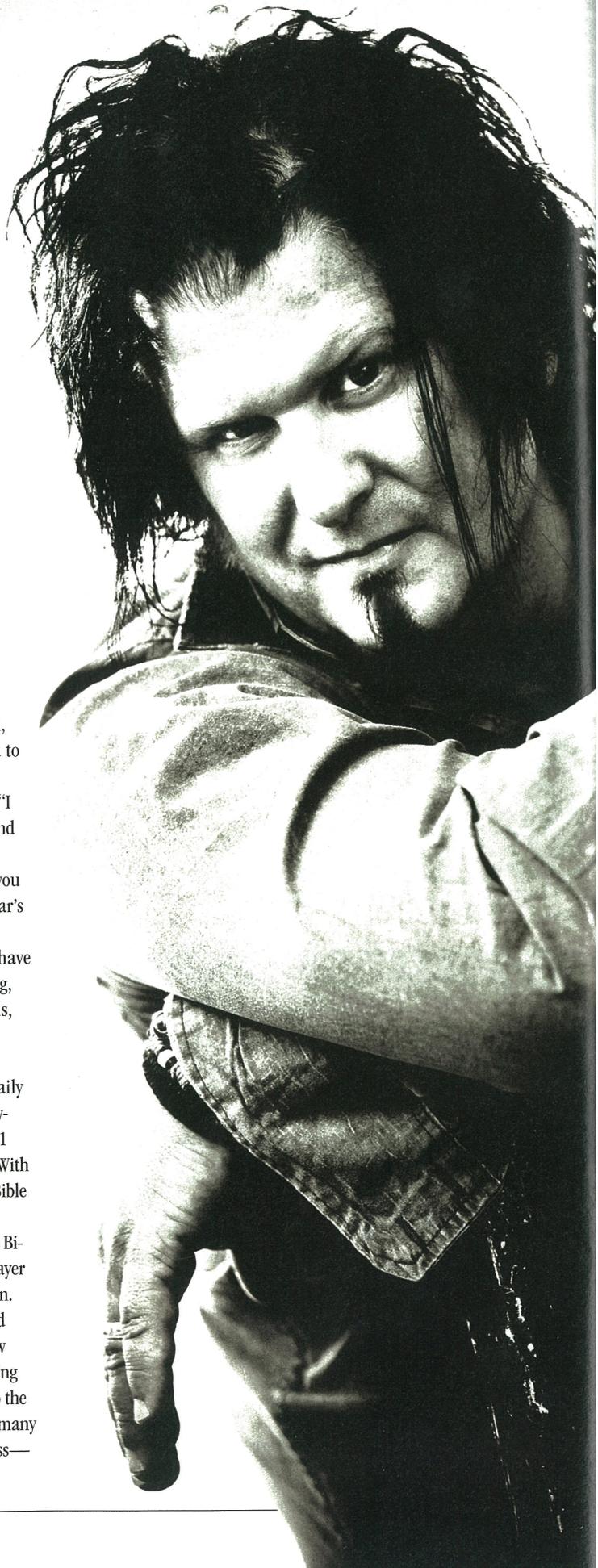
I said, “I’m Brian. I’m a record producer in Nashville. I have no broadcast experience. I really don’t know what I’m doing, but I plan to read through the Bible this year. If you get this, here is my email address.”

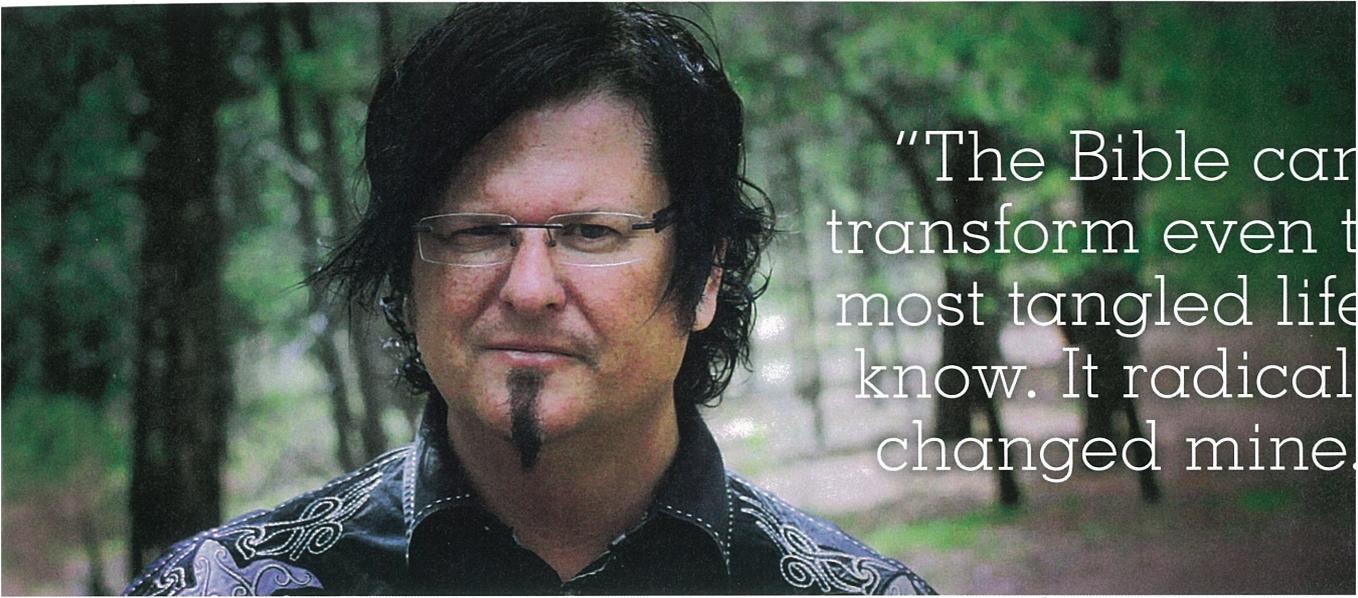
I expected about five people to sign up.

On New Year’s Day 2006, I had 257 emails. By June, the Daily Audio Bible had been downloaded 200,000 times. Now, following our sixth anniversary, it’s been downloaded more than 51 million times and is still one of the top podcasts on iTunes. With more than 1.5 million downloads monthly, the Daily Audio Bible is one of the most-listened-to podcasts in the world.

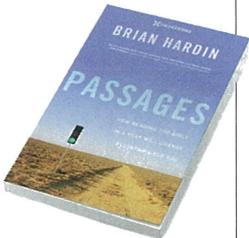
We’ve become a vast online family that prays and hears the Bible together. When somebody calls or goes into the online “Prayer Room” with a request, thousands of people pray for that person.

We receive an endless stream of emails from disenfranchised believers who have found a place of healing. I can’t tell you how many emails I’ve gotten from separated couples who had nothing to do but sign divorce papers, and once they started listening to the Bible, they found their marriages restored. I can’t tell you how many stories of people who were hopeless—I mean suicidally hopeless—and they found comfort in God’s Word and were restored.





“The Bible can transform even the most tangled life I know. It radically changed mine.”



The son of a traveling evangelist, **Brian Hardin** lived a life of lukewarm Christianity and semi-agnosticism until the imminent collapse of his music career and thousands of dollars in debt led him to turn to God and His Word. The decision changed his life. Today, he's the voice of the Daily Audio Bible, a podcast that is among the most-listened-to on iTunes. He is also the author of *Passages: How Reading the Bible in a Year Will Change Everything for You* (Zondervan).

ONLINE:
DailyAudioBible.com

The Bible has a voice, and if given the chance to speak—in context—it will create amazing change in your heart. The Bible can transform even the most tangled life. I know. It radically changed mine.

I grew up a preacher's son, but my faith was remarkably weak. I was homeschooled and toured the country with my mom and dad, a traveling evangelist.

But rather than following in his footsteps, I chose to pursue a career in music. One Sunday, I met a guy at our church with an eight-track recording studio. I spent the money I earned working minimum wage jobs at that studio, learning the music business. One of my friend's records sold 2 million copies. Within a couple of years, I had a manager and was climbing the ladder of success in Music City.

In the ensuing years, I produced records for Christian rock pioneer Larry Norman, David Meece and many other musicians and Christian bands. I made about 200 albums, some that garnered Grammy and Dove Award nominations.

But I didn't really know God.

About a decade ago, I started making records for an emerging company and invested heavily in this business. Then, they asked me to work on a few projects without payment until the next round of funding came in. Against my better judgment, I agreed. Before I knew it, we had lived a year on our savings.

The company wound up declaring bankruptcy in 2003, and I was left with \$90,000 in bills to pay to save my reputation.

Broke and facing the collapse of my musical career, I was left only with the poverty of the semi-agnostic life I had led.

I went home and sunk into my couch. I thought, *Maybe, I'll just become an atheist and start drinking. I could*

jump back into the music business—kill or be killed. I could really start living a life of faith.

Facing this existential dilemma, I prayed, telling God I was finished with my lukewarm Christianity.

I didn't know how I would support my wife, Jill, and our children, but I decided for the first time to give my genuine effort. Shortly afterward, the phone rang and an employer offered some work. Then the provision never stopped.

It was at this time that I turned to the Book I had to read as part of so many failed New Year's resolutions.

As I immersed myself in daily Bible reading, the tectonic plates of my soul began to shift. It began to make a profound difference in my life. In fact, it changed everything from the ground out. In the past, I had gone to the Bible for comfort during hard times. But many of those verses were pulled completely out of context.

What I learned reading the Bible in context is that the utter humanity of Scripture to the forefront. It's a full, beautiful narrative, unparalleled in literature. The Bible is a sweeping epic of God's passionate love for His people. The New Testament is just an unbelievable story of the lengths God is willing to go to win our hearts.

If you ask my wife, she would say the man I was before I started reading the Bible isn't alive anymore. That man is not here. It's changed everything. We still disagree on things, but absolutely. Does it make all problems of life go away? No. But reading the Bible orients you to God.

The Bible invited me to surrender everything. That was the thing to do, but once you jump in, you find out the Bible is your best friend, offering counsel and companionship. It's the love of God in your life. —As told to Troy.