

# iBelieve

MAGAZINE

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**PREVIEW**



# A SITDOWN WITH KUTLESS

iBelieve Magazine had a chance recently to sit down with Nick DePartee from Kutless to talk about their new album, "Glory", their musical journey, and the band's heart for ministry.

**iB / You guys have been doing this since 2001. How have things changed for you guys since you were that young, upstart band?**

**K /** I came in in about '07. The band started as a worship band at the guys' college in Portland. So worship has kind of been like the foundation of the band, but then as most people know, that first record the guys put out in 2002, the self-titled record, was super heavy, like nu-metal, like this total for the time absolutely relevant. I know that wasn't

really happening in Christian music, that whole sound.

So you go from that to today where we are. You look 10 or 12 years down the road, and we put *Strong Tower* out back in '05. That was the first worship record the band did. It did really well, but I think our story has been kind of that struggle of always having a heart of worship but loving rock music and finding that balance. Do you know what I mean? And finding, "Well, how do we attain the heart of this band, which is worship, but also apply it in a fresh way, that is kind of that rock sound?"

So I think, honestly, it's not so much that we've morphed over the years. I think it has just been a search to find that middle ground and where we

do our thing best. Bringing that to where we are now, the new record, I think, personally, that just on a musical level and even just the content of the new record, I think we've finally kind of found our spot and found what we do best, which I believe we've just seen over the years.

We did *It Is Well* and *Strong Tower*, these records that had a lot of cover songs and like a lot of modern worship songs that we redid. This time we really just wanted to write songs all original, and it just kind of worked out that a lot of them were really worshipful.

We kind of had this desire to kind of do everything we can to push worship music forward and do some fresh things sonically, but it's really simply



just a bunch of loud songs that glorify God. So that was kind of our heart.

**iB / So in that same mindset, do you see *Glory* as breaking new ground for you guys or is it just another step in the development of the growth of who Kutless is as an entity?**

**K /** I think it's yes and yes on that question. It's definitely, I think, for us just as a band, new ground for us. I think we've pushed ourselves to not settle. It's easy, I think, especially in a worship setting, especially when you're being very intentional, to write songs that I think will work well in a church. We wanted it to be really accessible but still creative.

There's a weird balance there, so it kind of pushed us to have to get out of the typical realm of, "This is good enough. It's a simple four-chord progression." It's like, "Well, can we do that better? Is there a better melody or a better way to do this that's more accessible?" I know for me just as a writer it definitely pushed me.

I think as a whole we wrote together as a band way more than we probably ever have on a record. We kind of spent two or three weeks together, basically working 9:00 to 5:00 in the studio just mixing it up. Our drummer and our

producer and I would go write for a couple of hours, and we'd write a song. Then I'd go write with Jon Micah, our singer, for another couple of hours, and we just kind of created probably 30 to 40 songs in that process.



It just kind of became almost a retreat for us to just kind of have that time to just create songs and be in the Word together and praying and just kind of seeing what God wanted to say. I really think that's what kind of propelled the content of the record.

Then sonically I absolutely think we've... I don't think it's necessarily anything that's going to be mind-blowing or pushing the envelope completely as far as Christian music goes, but I think for us we definitely have taken a new step, and it's an absolutely fresh sound for Kutless.

Fans of *Strong Tower* will

love it. There's stuff like that. I think even fans of all of our rock stuff, there are definitely tracks they're going to love. The bottom line is we just want people to hear it and be inspired to worship God in a fresh way.

Yeah, I mean, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter what it sounds like. As long as one person even just kind of reconnects to God in a way they haven't before, then it's a total success.

Absolutely. It's one of those things. I think, for us, we're like every time you go into a record, it's like you can try to cater to, "Okay,

what do we think our fans want or what do we think...?" There's always going to be that. We want our fans to like our music, of course. They've been loyal to us for years.

At the same time someone will always hate your record too. So you have to at some point... I think this is where we've really landed as a band across the board is just, "God, what do you want us to create? Show us how to do that, show us what to say, how to say it in our music, and use us."

Then I think the more we have done that, the more success we've seen on album sales and radio charts and all that. That stuff comes and goes, but

I think we've really started to redefine what success means to us as a band, and that's just again meeting people where they have been like, "Man, during this song, God really spoke to me, and I want you guys to know you're being used."

Those kind of conversations just inspire me personally way more than, "Cool. We sold a thousand more records." That part of the industry is just so fickle. To get wrapped up in it is just more defeating than it is encouraging. I think we just continue to realize more and more (I think this goes for my own personal life), that the more we align ourselves with, "Okay, God, what do you want to do and how do I stay out of the way?" I think we start to see that success on a kingdom level, our eyes kind of shift to his perspective, and it makes everything a lot easier to deal with.

**iB / Your new single, "You Alone," has kind of become a big hit, another in a long line of big hits for you guys. Where did that one kind of come from? What spirit did that come from for you guys?**

**K /** That song was actually super fun. It's just one story of many in this. Like I told you, we kind of changed up our writing process a lot on this whole record. James, our other guitarist; Dave Lubben, our producer; and I actually

wrote "You Alone." It's funny, because I hear like the final product of what the song became, but then I also can picture the room. We were in our producer's basement when we wrote that. I was over playing piano. We're all like scattered all over the room, just humming.

Creating a song, you sound like a bunch of weirdos most of the time. I think I was playing some little piano thing. We kind of started singing. I don't even remember how it came up, but someone just said, "You alone." You just start humming these ideas that start popping into your head, and then it just was like, "You alone," what a great message. What a great reminder that...

This is kind of the heart, especially why we wanted this to be the first single. It's very much the heart of the record, which is it's so easy even in worship to kind of say, "Oh, God, woe is me. I lay before you. I'm here broken." There's nothing wrong with those songs, but as a whole we wanted this record to be a little bit more, "God, you are so good, you are so mighty, and we worship you," and kind of almost get the focus half off of ourselves even in a

worship moment and just make sure we're... Those moments exist on the record.

You look through the Psalms. I think that's a very real aspect of what our worship is. It's that realization that we are nothing and having those real moments. With "You Alone," it was just, "Man, let's just make a song that just really reminds us and hopefully reminds people that only God is worthy of our praise. Him alone, only he deserves it."

Even if I do something great in my career or my family, it's like, "That's only because God has given me the ability to do something, and it's for his glory anyway." We can't take credit for anything. It's kind of just we wanted to do a simple message of just reminding ourselves that, "God, we're going to worship you because you're the absolutely only One who deserves this honor and this praise."

**iB / So you were talking before about like seeing more of the kingdom success**



**instead of the earthly success of your records and your songs. Do you have any stories that kind of stick out from individual people you've heard from in regards to songs like "What Faith Can Do?"**

**K /** Yeah, the crazy thing about that song specifically actually, "What Faith Can Do," is we to this day continue to get just hundreds of emails from people about that song. I think for me at this point in where we are, I'll just absolutely stay with "What Faith Can Do" as far as the example goes, because there have been so many stories that it's just unreal when you get these letters.

We've had marriages that were basically on the rocks and on the verge of divorce and total destruction, and we've gotten emails where people are just, "Man, this song came on the radio when I was about to end my marriage" or "I was in the process of committing suicide, and my radio turned on by itself and 'What Faith Can Do' came on and God completely opened my eyes to a plan he has for my life."

I get goose bumps talking about it, because it's... Maybe this is selfish, but I think the biggest thing about it that always rocks my world is it just completely shows us as the band that it is absolutely not about us, first of all. It's so much bigger. I think what I've found excitement and hope in

through these stories and these emails we get is more just the fact that God is working on such a bigger and at the same time more intricate scale than we can ever imagine.

Like every single interaction we have in life just carries us on into this web God has created to bring people to him and to bring him glory. I think that I guess actually really applies to the new record as well, because it's kind of like what we want to embrace is the fact that it's all so much bigger than us, yet God still chooses to involve us in his story.

I think that more than anything is the heart of our band these days. It's just, "God, thank you for letting us be a part of what you're doing, and please continue to use us." I think through songs like "What Faith Can Do" and these other ones people have been impacted by are just more and more proof of the fact God is very much at work in the lives of his people.

**iB /** Awesome, man. **Something I saw you guys set up was the Military Mission Project. What's up with that?**

**K /** Yeah, we started that probably about a year ago or so. We've been kind of just working on developing that. It basically started as a way to kind of give back. We obviously are fully in support of all of our guys in the military, guys and girls, who are serving

our country. It was like this little way we realized we could give back and encourage.

A lot of these guys come back from overseas. They have to, after fighting a war, come home and really kind of get back into normal life. We've seen so much where marriages are impacted by it, and it's a difficult time of families kind of just getting back in the swing of, "Oh, Dad has been gone in war for two years, and now he's back. How do we operate again?"

It's kind of a twofold operation we started, which is, one, just giving tickets to our concerts away to the military personnel. There's a whole contact sheet on our website. It's called just [Kutless.com/KMMP](http://Kutless.com/KMMP). Basically you go on there, you email us, and say, "Hey, my wife and I want to come out to your show." We get it all squared away.

That's just to encourage kind of

a date night and like,

"Hey, you guys are probably dealing with so much. At



least come out. We want to encourage you with some music and having a free night out together," and hopefully having a night where they can kind of get refreshed by the Lord.



Also, we give a percentage of all of our merchandise sales at our shows to an operation called Operation Heal Our Patriots. They partner with Samaritan's Purse organization. What they do is just a whole other level that's just awesome, because they take some of these same guys and ladies who are serving overseas. When they come back, they're taking these couples to a retreat center in Alaska.

**iB / I know how hard you guys have always worked with Compassion International. It seems like one of the big hearts of the band is to use the platform of music you've been given to reach beyond music, not just like, "Oh, hey, we wrote a bunch of songs, and hopefully we touch people's lives by playing cool jams," beyond that even and saying, "Okay, we have a platform. Now we can use this to reach out globally." Is that where you guys stand?**

**K /** Absolutely, man. I think I'd say that's very well put. We've been working with

Compassion for years now, almost since the beginning of the band, definitely back... I forget what year we actually started with them. Every one of us individually has Compassion kids. My wife and I sponsor a couple.

Our singer and his wife have sponsored a girl who actually just graduated from the program. I'm trying to remember.

They sponsored her when she was just a little girl. I think it was before they even got married. I think

they had started sponsoring this girl, and they've watched her just basically grow up. Then they got to go down, and they visited her. It's just unbelievable.

We go on these Compassion trips, and we went to Ecuador a couple of years ago and got to see some of the work they're doing down there. I always believed in Compassion, but then I think going on those trips you realize the work and the dedication they put into every single one of their kids. They're just so thorough. Like

I could go down there and look up my kid's book and find every penny they've spent, whether he bought a Band-Aid or a toy. I know exactly. It's all just documented. It's just unbelievable the amount of care they give these kids.

The same reason we started the military project is because it's just like, "What are these things we can do beyond just being in a band? Like now that we have been able to create this platform God has given us, what are these areas we can reach out to? In what ways can we do more than just go play guitar and sing songs?" Honestly, it's all of those things that then in turn tend to usually make new songs happen, and that's what kind of fuels us to then continue on in touring, so it's kind of an awesome circle.



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## VALENTINE'S DAY IDEAS FOR COUPLES

By Mary May Larmoyeux



Is it more important to love ... or to be loved?

Most of us would agree with George Eliot's words, "I like not only to be loved, but also to be told I am loved."

Valentine's Day is the occasion when you can experience both. We asked FamilyLife Facebook friends to share some of their favorite Valentine's Day ideas.

With a little help from our friends, here are 25 creative ways to tell your spouse, "I love you."

1. On small pieces of paper, write down every kind of kiss that you can think of (examples: passionate, on the cheek, etc.). Then fill an inexpensive red felt bag with your "kisses" and give it to your spouse. Ask your spouse to pull several pieces of paper from the felt bag, and then give your sweetheart whatever kind of kiss is described.
2. Make a book about why you love your spouse and why you are thankful for him/her. The woman who sent this idea wrote, "He loved it! Said it was the best gift he has ever gotten. And it helped me to focus on the things I love about my husband and not his shortcomings."
3. Take your sweetie on a scavenger hunt. Ask him/her to answer riddles to find the clues to items that you

placed somewhere around town. The last item should give instructions that lead to your Valentine's Day activities.

4. After enjoying a candlelit dinner for two at home, give your spouse a massage and watch a romantic movie. The woman who suggested this wrote, "Last Valentine's Day when I got home from work, my husband ... had our bedroom set up with a candlelit table for two. He is NOT a cook but he made an awesome meal ... grilled steak, sautéed shrimp in lemon, garlic, and butter, a vegetable, and [he] bought a chocolate fountain that was flowing—surrounded by fresh fruit for dipping. After dinner he led me over to his homemade massage table. ... We ended our special night with a romantic movie."
5. Surprise your spouse with a special getaway together. The man who suggested this made reservations at a bed and breakfast, arranged for childcare, asked for time off from work for himself and his wife, and packed his and her bags. When he asked his wife to go to lunch on Valentine's Day she was in for a wonderful surprise. "The little bit of effort I put into that weekend paid off huge for weeks to come."

6. Give your wife a dozen roses. On each stem attach a note for a future date—to do something that she would enjoy (example: Go to the symphony).
7. If possible, go on a date with your spouse to a restaurant that you enjoyed when you first met. After you order your meal, take some time to write down favorite memories from the past year. Then share your lists.
8. Have 11 roses delivered to your wife, and then give her a 12th yourself while reading her a love poem.
9. Fill a large box with helium balloons and special gifts for Valentine's Day. The woman who suggested this said that her gifts included "new sleep shorts for him and a new nightgown for me, a box of chocolate-covered strawberries and red napkins ... some new candles, and a romantic CD."
10. Create an intimate Valentine's Day evening at





home, without the children. The woman who suggested this idea said that she and her husband "enjoyed planning the menu, shopping for the meal, and ultimately preparing the meal together. Cooking to soft, romantic music can really be a turn on! While dining, the same



soft, romantic music is a wonderful mood-setter. Dinner was followed by just the two of us having the whole dance floor, our den, to ourselves."

11. Order food from a take-out restaurant and have a picnic for all the Valentines in your family on your living room floor. The person who suggested this said, "The kids look forward to this every year. When we tried to change it, they wouldn't allow it ... it has become a tradition. The kids see the

value of family and a loving marriage."

12. Privacy and weather permitting, watch a romantic movie on your deck or patio.
13. If you are separated across the miles, send a care package filled with things that are red.

14. Make a meal with symbols of love. Examples: Write I love you with string beans, make a tart in the shape of a heart ...

15. Hide little heart candies in your spouse's shoes, coat, car, etc. The woman who suggested this said that she's been doing this for decades. "Now a couple of the grandkids help me with delight."

16. Wives, show up at your husband's office before lunch. Call him from the parking lot and tell him you are going to take him for a lunch rendezvous and that you will be waiting for him whenever he can take a break. Wear a nice outfit. Take him to a nice place for lunch and back to the office. Give him some great kisses telling him how glad you are to be married to him.

17. Fill a jar with Valentine candy and notes for your spouse. Examples of notes are: Good for a backrub, 10 kisses, etc. Notes could also express your love and respect: "I am so glad that God blessed my life with such a great husband like you." Individually roll each note and tie it with a ribbon.

18. Surprise your spouse by taking a vacation day from work and enjoy Valentine's Day at home. Have a relaxing morning together on the porch, deck, or patio. Then go to a favorite restaurant for lunch. The man who suggested this idea had also reserved a spa treatment and tanning session for his wife. "While she was doing that," he says, "I went home and made her a special dinner."

19. Write a poem for your spouse and frame it.

20. On individual note cards, write why you love your spouse. Insert these cards in a small photo album. The woman who suggested this idea began her album with a honeymoon picture and introductory note card, and ended it with a love note.

21. With roses in hand and permission from your wife's boss, go to her workplace and read a love poem

to her. The woman who shared this idea said, "I am a teacher in an inner city school. Last year my husband dressed in my favorite suit and tie, came to my school with roses in hand. He got permission and assistance from the office staff to open the speaker system into my classroom and proceeded to read a long and beautiful love poem to me. He then came to my classroom and presented me with the bouquet of roses which I received while wiping my tears of joy and love for this wonderful man whom I have been married to for just under 30 years."

not meant to be given and received on just Valentine's Day. Instead, it's to be practiced every single day of the entire year.

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22. Make a special "14 Reasons I Love You" Valentine's Day breakfast for your sweetheart. On his/her plate, leave a letter or card listing 14 reasons that you love your spouse.
23. If possible, send a card postmarked in a town that has a romantic name such as Loveland, Colorado; Valentine, Texas; or Romance, Arkansas.
24. After your spouse goes to bed, tape notes to his car's steering wheel with reasons that you love him, or decorate the bathroom mirror with lipstick kisses or Valentine's window clings.
25. Have fun on February 14, and remember: Love is



By Mary May Larmoyeux





# FINDING GOODNESS

ENABLING OUR KIDS  
TO "BE GOOD"

By Joshua Straub

Growing up, my sister and I often went to our grandmother's house for sleepovers. As our parents dropped us off, they would threaten us with that infamous warning, "Now you kids be good, do you hear?"

How often have you said that as a parent? Right before you offer up that desperate prayer that your children won't embarrass you. Again.

As a pastor and counselor, I see parents try anything to get their children to "be good." One of the most common tools parents use is to punish bad behavior and reward good. But is this really enough to instill in our children the "goodness" described as a fruit of the Spirit? ([Gal. 5:22](#))

A rich young ruler once asked of Jesus a similar question: "Good teacher, what good things must I do to inherit eternal life?" ([Matt. 19:16](#); [Mark 10:17](#)).

Jesus' reply is fascinating, "Why do you call me good? No one is good—except God alone" ([Mark 10:18](#)). The young ruler had followed all of God's commandments, yet it wasn't enough. Jesus told him, "Go sell everything and follow Me" ([Mark 10:21](#)).

In his question, the rich young ruler asks how to do good, using a Greek word referring to moral behavior. However, the "goodness" described as a fruit of the Spirit means much more. True goodness is "excellence of character." It combines our attempts to "do good" with God's character of "being good." This kind of goodness is not attainable in our own strength, so Peter encourages us, by God's divine power, to make every effort to add to our faith goodness ([2 Peter 1:5](#)).

This means that teaching our children to just "do good" can look very much like legalism—especially when we only reward

them for good behavior. The rich young ruler was trying to do good to earn his way into heaven, yet he was lacking the most important thing—an underlying love for the Rule-Maker. This love is what compels us to follow the rules in the first place ([2 Cor 5:14](#)).

Though we can try to make our kids do good, the only way for them to be good is to first develop a relationship of love with us as parents and rule-makers. Josh McDowell agrees that rules without relationship leads to rebellion, but rules with relationship leads to respect.

Goodness begins by obeying and modeling the greatest commandment of all—loving our Rule-Maker with all our heart, soul, and strength. Goodness is love in action.

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[www.thrivingfamily.com/](http://www.thrivingfamily.com/)



The logo for 'iBelieve MAGAZINE' is centered on a background of diagonal stripes in shades of brown and tan. The word 'iBelieve' is in a large, white, sans-serif font, with the 'i' being lowercase and the 'B' being uppercase. Below it, the word 'MAGAZINE' is written in a smaller, white, all-caps, sans-serif font.

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