

DAVID DOUGLAS DIAMONDS: JESUS AND JEWELRY

# CHRISTIAN

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# Golden *Glory*

By Lisa A. Rice

*David Douglas Diamonds creates unique settings while getting to know the exceptional people God sends their way.*

*What is a man to do when his world always seems slightly off-kilter? When things just don't seem to gel in business? Doug Meadows asked these questions a few years ago, and God answered by bringing him through his own personal training course – the School of the Holy Spirit 101.”*

## All in the Family

Doug grew up in the jewelry business. His grandfather from England started it all in 1903 when he settled in Canada and later opened a wholesale repair trade shop in Detroit. His sons, Doug's father and uncle, took over the business years later, and Doug would work at the shop after school and summers. All seemed to progress beautifully until Doug became a believer and started clashing up against his uncle's unbelief. It became increasingly difficult to work alongside those without a spiritual compass. Doug decided to leave and go work with his brother in Dearborn, Michigan, but that was short-lived as the brothers got an invitation to move down to Atlanta.

## Family Skeletons Surface

Normally, a move from the cold north to the sunny south would be a good thing, but there was a problem in the Meadows family. Grandma was prejudiced, and the south was filled with black folk. Grandma was so prejudiced that on earlier trips to Florida, she would stop and gas up at the Tennessee/Georgia border, tell the kids to wash their hands, and they'd drive straight through the state, practically holding their breaths. So, a move to Georgia would be

quite unheard of and quite disapproved of.

However, a friend soon invited Doug to Atlanta, and he had a blast in the scary south. The guys sailed at Lake Lanier, saw the sights at Stone Mountain, and did the fun, touristy things of the city. "I fell in love with Atlanta," says Doug. "It reminded me of northern Michigan, so me and my bride of four years packed up and moved on down."

## Unequal Partnerships

Doug went into partnership at age 23, and though he was trying to seek God and should have remembered how uncomfortable it was to work with his unbelieving uncle, he realizes now that he continued to violate some basic biblical principles about not going into partnership with unbelievers. The partners had a store in Cumberland Mall for five years, but after losing their lease, they moved to the Vinings area. Doug kept praying that God would get him out of the bad arrangement.

Soon he was able to talk his brother, Dave, into moving down from Michigan, and the two started David Douglas Diamonds & Fine Jewelry in Marietta. Shortly thereafter, Kaminski Jewelers approached the brothers about leasing space inside their store. At

the time, David Douglas Diamonds & Fine Jewelry was doing alright, but it was always a struggle. So they combined forces with Kaminski's and did custom design, repair, and warranty work. "God blessed it, and it took off," says Doug. "We added jewelers, added space, and it got bigger and crazier. As a matter of fact, it was great for about fourteen years. And again, God began working some discontentment within Doug, and he began praying to be released from another unequally yoked partnership.

“Customers tell us they’ve visited other jewelry shops seeking purity rings, but the employees have no idea what they are. We make quite a number of them here.”

— DOUG MEADOWS



Photographs by Robin Nelson



Glenn Meadows examines the brilliance of a 3 carat diamond ring

The brothers found a store in Woodstock and leased it to do repair work for other jewelry stores, while continuing to work with Kaminski. They called their business Cherokee Jewelry. Incidentally, Doug laughs as he remembers when an out-of-state Cherokee Indian man called him one day to chew him out for using the name Cherokee in his business. When Doug told him it was just the name of the county in which they worked, the man got quiet and quickly backed off.

#### **It Takes a Village**

Just as many believe “it takes a village to raise a child,” so it seems to be true in business. “In a multitude of counselors there is wisdom,” Proverbs states. Doug and Dave joined the Wise Council, a group of Christian businessmen with whom they could share their situation and ask advice. The brothers didn’t tell the group they’d been praying for God to get them out of their deal with Kaminski, but all ten guys said, “You’re crazy. Get out!” Again, Doug repented for getting into a partnership with unbelievers, and he and Dave realized from the confirmation of the Wise Council that it was time to knock the dust off their feet and move forward. Shortly thereafter, the brothers went on a mission trip to Fiji, and

when they got back, Kaminski’s asked them to leave. So God had answered the prayer without them having to create a major conflict.

Doug began looking in Marietta for a larger location, and he soon found a little shopping center he’d never paid much attention to because it contained lower-end stores like Big Lots and Cici’s Pizza. But there was a perfect space on the end of the strip where a hairdresser had been for 24 years. It was visible and available. After a lot of prayer, the brothers decided that’s what they needed to do. There was a peace that God had called them to this location, area, and community.

#### **God Restores**

Since then, the company’s had struggles and challenges – and has even had to sort through some internal corruption, but God has continued to teach them lessons and restore the business through it all.

One of the favorite things Dave and Doug’s does is to hold the “Why Mom Deserves a Diamond” contest. Doug came up with the idea to commemorate his own mother, who passed away years ago. The last contest had 1100 entries, and the company gave away 3 diamonds and 100 gemstones to the runner-ups. “We had so

much fun with this. We had kids coming in and picking up their prizes with their proud parents. Everyone really had a good time.”

#### **It’s all About People**

Over the years, the company has undergone a change. The brothers’ background and training had been more repair and service, but it’s switched now to more retail, and the brothers have found that they really enjoy dealing with the public. As a matter of fact, all the face time with people has served to make Doug more outgoing and bold in general. On a recent missions trip to Africa, Antwerp, and Switzerland, Doug emailed a church and asked if anyone would be willing to put him up. He stayed with a couple in Antwerp, hit it off, had a blast, attended a home group bible study in their home, and learned some praise songs in Dutch.

“God has put so many neat people in my life,” says Doug. “The Wise Counsel group has helped me as I’ve cried out to the Lord and sought his leading. The Fellowship of Companies for Christ International has been really instrumental in my life. They basically help men get out of trouble and turn them into heroes. God hooked me up with another jeweler



Doug Meadows carefully finishes a gold purity ring for a teen customer.

in Virginia, David Nygaard, and he's served as a personal mentor to me – not only with business, but also with sharing about the Lord and about family matters. We both have lots of kids, including adopted children."

Doug's family consists of a Mexican baby, whom they adopted from missionaries, as well as four other children that the doctors said they couldn't have!

David Nygaard put Doug in touch with lots of good jewelers, including a jeweler in Ottawa, Canada, who invited Doug up there. While there, Doug got to reconnect with his roots and spend time in the places his grandfather lived. The man took Doug under his wings and taught him about keeping the right mixes of inventory.

"Another person God blessed me with is a business coach," says Doug. "We meet once a week. He's just transformed and challenged me with the things of God in business... how to create a strategic intent." Dave and Doug's official strategic intent is, "We're a profitable business that is intentional about honoring and blessing all who God brings our way." The brothers run all decisions through that framework. With every major decision, they ask, "Does that honor and bless everyone God brings our way? This filters down to inventory decisions and relationships with suppliers, customers, and advertisers.

As Doug began implementing the principles he was learning from his mentors

and the Christian groups with whom he was associated, God began really blessing the business. "We've only been at this location one year, but I've got more orders than I've got time to take care of." Former customers have found the new location and are frequenting the shop of the men they've come to know and love.

*Doug attends Restoration Life Christian Fellowship*, a missions-oriented church that was formerly Southern Baptist. The church is focused on living from the overflow of relationship with Christ. They're exploring the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the spirit-filled life, and hearing the voice the God.

Doug feels so blessed that he's no longer in bad partnerships, or hidden in the back of Kaminski's. "I used to sit on a bench, away from all the people, but now I'm having so much fun talking to people, and praying for them." Recently Doug got to befriend a young man coming in to purchase a diamond set for his fiancée. The young man was involved in missions work, like Doug, and he had some financial concerns. The two had a great time working out a unique solution to the dilemma. "Jewelry is for special times in our lives," says Doug. "We love putting together anniversary sets, sturdy rings that can be passed through the generations, and even purity rings that parents can give their teenage children. And the stories behind each are as unique as the settings."

Doug feels so blessed to have his father

working at the store as well. Though he's had a couple heart attacks and a couple of bypass surgeries, he's going strong by God's grace. "It's a huge blessing to work side by side with my dad," says Doug. "We get to have some good conversations that we wouldn't get if we weren't working so close."

Along with business relationships, God has tremendously blessed and increased Doug's family relationships. Though he and his wife struggled for some time with infertility, the moment they got the adoption wheels turning, his wife became pregnant. Their first child, Drew Geoffrey, is a delightful son from Mexico, and the other children include three boys and one girl – Joseph, Peter, Samuel and Emma. "My wife is a wonder woman, and I'm such a blessed man. She probably gets tired of hearing that."

Doug and his wife are home schooling all the children, and they live only three miles from the store. "I feel so blessed," says Doug. "My community's all here. My work, the shop, our church, and our home are all right here."

It's amazing, indeed, to see how God took a guy on a lonely repair bench, whose life was filled with bad partnerships and unbiblical principles, and turned it all around. He showed Doug that it's all about relationships – with God, family, customers, and mentors. How rich is such a life!

*See our ad on the back cover.*

**"It's a huge blessing to work side by side with my dad," says Doug**





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