



CONNECTED

January—March 2022

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ONE FULL YEAR

The work of our great God is endless, and thank Him that it is. For all who have eyes to see and ears to hear, there is plenty to do. It is not uncommon for people to say to me, “*Do you have anything to do on this day?*” The truth is always, “Yes.” I may not have an appointment, a deadline or something that *just has to be done at this particular time*; but I always have things that need attention and to be done: people in need of prayer, my Bible readings for today, a good book I need to read, somebody I need to reach for Christ, a friend who needs a call of encouragement, a good text or email to simply care for someone, quality time with my dear Margaret, attention to exercising my

body lest I find myself prematurely in a wheelchair (I’m stopping here because there’s not enough room to complete it). In my case, finishing the next chapter in my newest book is always pressing me. I can’t remember when there were not phone calls, emails and text messages to return, some hurting person needing a visit or someone seeking advice and counsel. My mother used to say, “*An idle mind is the Devil’s workshop.*” It’s hard for me to imagine how any sound mind could be “idle.” There’s too much good work to be done to permit idleness.

I am at the anniversary of one full year since I gave up my lifelong role as the senior pastor of one of the Lord’s churches. Age has taken its toll, and I can barely do at all what I once did with ease; but I am blessed to still be quite mobile and active. My life’s about as full as I can handle. For a while after December 31, 2020 I faced a few big hurdles. Both Margaret and I went through health issues that decked us for a little while, and limited productivity; but our status has greatly improved.

Since our last *Connected Newsletter* I conducted six funeral services, completed the revision of my little commentary on Ruth, negotiated an upgraded

translation of *Basic Bible Truths* into Spanish and found myself involved in lots of work here in my home church. Margaret and I spent two weeks in Durango, Colorado visiting our son and daughter-in-law. A church pastorate can be hard on a pastor and his children. In my years so often when I had plans for my children, some pressing church matter stole it. Preacher’s kids can become resentful while the average church member doesn’t have a clue. I can’t go back, but from here to the finish line I am committed to more quality time with my family. I am most grateful for every opportunity I have had to preach and teach God’s Word.

Please keep me in your prayers as I am involved in several projects which will hopefully insure the longevity and availability of good Christian materials beyond my lifetime.

You can reach us
at

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**Right after a good Thanksgiving lunch,
a good nap will help nearly anybody,
even an ole Pa & a wonderful grandson.**



God Bless America!

THE BIG RED WASP

Talk about a formidable, punch-packing foe, the big red wasp is there. Dynamite in a small package. You may not be aware that the big red wasp is bigger just before he hatches out of the wasp nest than he will ever be for the rest of his life. Really! At that point he's a big, puffy, uncoordinated worm. Soon he becomes a much smaller, but highly coordinated and potent flying stinging machine.

One of the men who came to comfort Job spoke of *"the secrets of wisdom."* He said that, *"they are double to that which is!"* **Job 11:6.** Everywhere you look in the natural world there are parallels, analogies to the spiritual world.

I have observed that in many cases (not all) there are people just like the big red wasp. When they first get going they seem to know everything, far more than they will know a few years later. These *instant authorities* who have walked in nobody's *moccasins* are quick to open their mouths with *expert* advice. My mom used to talk of *"going over fool's hill."* I don't know what it is about the teens, but so many during those years become so much smarter than their parents, teachers, our founding fathers and most everybody.

Does it amaze you that many of the greatest experts on childrearing are young preachers who have either no children or children who are far from grown? Sadly, it is young preachers who are often *the greatest authorities* on most everything including doctrine and practice.

I have long thought it strange that a big percentage of seminar professors who teach young preachers how to preach and pastor a church have never pastored a church. And there are the *experts* on soul-winning who rarely (if ever) win a person to Christ; and the lives of the greatest critics of Christians are often of the raunchiest, most reprehensible sort. Chances are that you have one of those *experts* in your life, somebody pretty close to home. Does it amaze you that they are almost always ready to offer their *two cents* even when they're not asked?

There's something pretty profound to be said about open minds, realizing that issues are often more complex than they may at first seem, being aware that you don't know a lot more than you do know, accepting the fact that God was pretty smart when He said, *"Be swift to hear, slow to speak"* (**James 1:19**), waking up to the reality that you are probably not the brightest light in the room and that it's unlikely that you have the last word on anything. Most of us know far more about monologs and dominating a talking session than we do about conversation. We joke about *"Don't confuse me with the facts; my mind is already made up"* when too many times we're the butt of our own joke. How long has it been since you've observed two people (including preachers) reason together without anger and emotion about anything, especially where they differed? There is something fundamentally wrong with being a *know-it-all*, especially one who seems bent on making sure everybody know he knows it all. Pride! In any form or fashion, it's a big enemy of everything that's good.

"I HAVE STOPPED LISTENING; WHY ARE YOU STILL TALKING"

Not so long ago I saw these words on a T-shirt. Based on lots of experience I instantly thought, *"That is so true of most people most of the time."*

You're trying to finish a sentence, make a point or answer someone as succinctly as possible; but in the middle of what you're saying someone seizes the floor, and takes off in a completely different direction. You were talking, but obviously they had stopped listening.

It happens with great frequency in church. The preacher is thundering away; but some are snoring. And for every snorer, there are several whose minds are already at lunch, meditating on a problem or last week's experiences, analyzing others in the pews or in some other place. *The Rev* is waxing eloquent, but listening has stopped.


Don't be too pious when I bring up phone conversations. We all have our list of people with whom we dread to get caught on the phone, many who we love and with whom we want to speak; but getting off the phone is almost always a challenge. Little, if any, sense of discretion: right in the middle of a meal, right when you're squeezed to the limit on time or when you're dog-tired. Have you noticed that so many phone conversations are 90%-10%; during a 30 minute or hour call, one person did 90% of the talking? And, it was mostly about them and their life, and very little about you and your life.

It's a pretty sad commentary on most of us. We almost always FAR more interested in what's on our minds and what we have to say than on what *anybody* else has to say. Yes, *"anybody"* including God. It's hard to find listeners, people who will hear-you-out. It seems to me that Fox News and those talk shows where butting right in and cutting off people right in the middle of what they're saying has ruined intelligent, respectful conversation. It has exposed the self-centered, arrogant side of human nature. *I don't need to listen to you; you need to listen to ME.*

Who do you know who really listens? Who? Name them. When your list is finished, you'll probably still have a few unused fingers. That's sad, but it's too often true. While we're on this taboo subject, I should ask, "Where do you see yourself to be in this picture?" As I think on it, I don't recall ever meeting anyone including myself who would own-up to *"I have stopped listening; why are you still talking?"* I have also observed that being truly honest and objective about self is pretty rare, but that's a subject for another day.


Oh yes, I'm well aware that there are quite a few loud-mouths who get the floor and don't know when to quit. Many of them have very little to say, but that's rarely a deterrent. I have observed that generally those who have the least to say take the longest to say it, and that includes preachers. I know that some people need to be *cut off in the middle of their endless verbal streams*; but among intelligent people who seek wisdom, learning and common respect, *listening* is vital. God is pretty smart, and He said, *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath,"* **James 1:19.** It seems to me that there's a strong message in the fact that people have two ears and two eyes, but only one tongue.

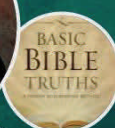
We are not on this planet to merely occupy space and use up time.



LESTER HUTSON



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SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS, SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS

- New Testament Churches from Jesus until Now
- The Reliability of Your Bible: the Translations Issue
- Improving Your Preaching
- Improving Your Home
- Basic Bible Truths Training
- The Pastor's Financial World



BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS IN SPANISH

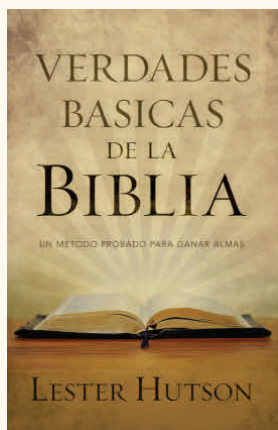
In any language the gospel message of Jesus Christ is glorious. For many years it has been on my heart to produce a vintage international translation of *Basic Bible Truths*. There are lots of Spanish-speaking people on this planet. Many of them live in Spain; but they populate most of Central and South America. Thousands of them live in Houston and across the U.S.A. They don't all speak the same brand of Spanish. My goal is a Spanish translation which would be acceptable to Spanish speakers wherever they are.

That dream is within a few weeks of being a reality. In early fall a dear friend in Houston finished a re-translation of *Basic Bible*

Truths including the new chapter. Another friend in the Barcelona, Spain area proof-read the translation. Two other capable people in Spain assisted him. Their goal was to make it as international as possible without compromising the message. They also looked for typos and cleaned up the grammar.

The new translation is due here in Houston by the end of January. A dear yokefellow here will format the layout and paging. It appears that sometimes near the end of February, the new Spanish version will be a reality and available in both electronic and paperback from Amazon.com.

We have hundreds of precious Spanish believers across this planet. There are millions of Spanish-speaking people who need to be saved. Please pray that God will use this tool to bring many, many souls to Jesus Christ.


**A BOOK I HAVE READ
AND HIGHLY RECOMMEND**

To Kill a Mockingbird, By Harper Lee, Harper Audio/Caedman 2006
Portland, Maine, ISBN: 9780061808128

To Kill a Mockingbird is one of the most intriguing and uncanny books I have ever read. It is not a book for readers who are seeking a shallow thrill, lofty romance or an escape from reality. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a book for thinkers who are unafraid to face reality as it truly is, and who are not afraid to have their own deepest make-up and secrets probed. There is a high likelihood that you will find in this book much that is deep inside you.

Harper Lee is among the most articulate, imaginative and clearly expressive writers I have encountered. This book is dynamic. Scene after scene constantly moves across the mental screen ever weaving a probing web of piercing reality. Ms. Lee's ability to capture details is uncanny; details which enrich the story, and which any informed reader will recognize to be *spot-on*.

To Kill a Mockingbird is a fictitious story which informed readers will see as eerily real. The story unfolds in the imaginary Deep South town of Maycomb, Alabama during the Great Depression of the 1930s. It is not accidental that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is about people on the buckle of the *Bible Belt*. Of all places model Christianity should have been routinely on display in this place. Instead, fewer places on the planet would constitute a better display of rank hypocrisy than is seen in this story. Oh yes, there were the churches and the pious claims; but prejudice, racism and social injustice ruled the day and the hearts of these people. This typical "*Christian*" community could knowingly condemn an innocent and bodily impaired black man to death one day and go back to business as usual two days later. The elite "*Christian*" ladies of Maycomb could excuse their communal crime by suggesting that it was the lustful nature of all black men to commit rape. Yes, *To Kill a Mockingbird* deals with many of the darker, but very real issues of life and society. To one degree or another, all of those issues are still with us.

Cleverly Ms. Lee tells her story through the eyes and words of a little girl. From the first grade until she was nine Jean Louise Finch was in the gearbox of the life of Maycomb. This extraordinarily smart and perceptive little girl had a front-row seat, and she didn't miss much. Through her feisty little eyes readers can view a deliberately illiterate family living in squalor, a black community at the edge of town, a worship service in a black church, a social meeting of the upper crust ladies of the town, a dramatic courtroom scene in which justice fell flat on its face and the death of a dog with rabies. There is much more.

Best of all *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a picture of a remnant of integrity and real Christianity in practice in a sea of evil. There are few equals to the godly example of Attorney Atticus Finch whose faith was tested to the max on many fronts. This widower was rearing his little girl and small son in a cesspool of corruption on multiple fronts; a cesspool that wore a "*Christian*" face. Ms. Lee points out that a mockingbird is innocent and harmless. The mockingbird sings songs for all. There is no justifiable reason to kill a mockingbird. Some have reasoned that Tom Robinson is the *mockingbird* in this story. He's the young and innocent Negro father who was falsely accused of rape by a lazy white man named Robert Ewell who routinely fathered children whom he beat and kept in ignorance and abject poverty. Simply because Robinson was black and Ewell was white, a 12-man jury of "*Christians*" in Maycomb knowing convicted Robinson and sentenced him to death. Before his bizarre death Bob Ewell was intent on the destruction of Atticus Finch. Some think Atticus was the real *mockingbird* in this story.

There is a reason why some books are called "*classics*." *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a *classic*." You owe it to yourself to read this book.

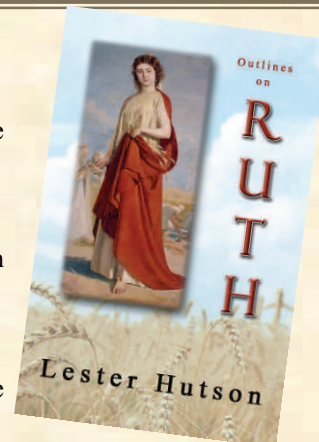
COMPLETELY RE-EDITED & UPDATED

What a joy it is to announce that my completely re-edited and updated publication of *Outlines on Ruth* is now available on Amazon.com. To see this little commentary on Ruth in better language, layout and design is such a deep comfort to me.

The message of Ruth is potent and thrilling. Ruth's theme is redemption. Most Bible scholars agree that Boaz is the best, most complete and graphic foreshadow of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer. The nearer kinsman is a prophetic picture of the Law's inability to redeem a less than perfect person.

Ruth has been called the perfect short story, complete with a theme, setting, characters, point of view, plot, conflict and resolution. Many think it's the greatest short story ever told. Benjamin Franklin once introduced Ruth to a group of literary friends. They raved about how good it was, and were shocked to find it was a book of the Bible.

You can find *Outlines on Ruth* in both [electronic](#) and [paperback](#) formats on Amazon. I would greatly appreciate any comments you might have for the better or the worse as you rate the book on the Amazon feedback section.



FAITH! WHAT'S THAT?

Like a good many other Bible words such as "*repentance*" and "*chosen*," the word "*faith*" gets batted around in pretty careless ways. The common idea of *faith* is just believing something in a really strong way. "*Do you know that you know that you really know you're saved?*" Yea! *Just psych yourself up, and it must be true!*

It will help if you base your *faith* on a Scripture or two, and tell yourself *this is a promise to me*. I know a little something about *faith*, and am well aware that I (and most people) don't have nearly enough of it. I have felt that the Lord had me in mind when He said, "*Oh, ye or little faith.*" Many, many times I have prayed with the apostles, "*Lord, increase our faith,*" **Luke 17:5**.

In spite of the weakness of my own faith and my other shortcomings, I know that it is a big mistake to misuse and misapply Scriptures and Bible words. In determining whether believing something is truly faith versus a matter of presumption requires two basic considerations: (1) is my belief based on a Bible promise that is applicable to me or (2) is my belief based on a the character of God as clearly revealed in the Bible? If the answer is *yes*, then the belief is a matter of faith. If the answer is *no*, then the belief is a matter of presumption. That is true regardless of the passion with which one holds the belief.

Faith is not merely a matter of believing something passionately. Faith is a matter of believing a matter because (1) God directly promised it in His Word or because the belief is (2) in total harmony with the character and behavior of God as seen in His Word. "*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,*" **Romans 10:17**.

A classic illustration of the difference between *faith* and *presumption* is seen in **Deuteronomy 1**. On their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, Israel came to the southern edge. God promised to give them the land, but they did not believe God's promise and were afraid. God withdrew His promise to that generation, **Numbers 13-14**. When from Moses they heard God's judgment upon them because of their unbelief (which is what a lack of faith is), they changed their minds and decided to take the land. In a bloody battle with the Amorites they were miserably defeated. As they wept over their defeat God accused them of going, "*presumptuously up into the hill,*" **Deuteronomy 1:43**. Earlier God told them to go up. If they had done so, it would have been an act of faith. Once He withdrew His promise, theirs was an act of presumption. It's always that way. Apart from (1) a promise from God or (2) trust in the character of God, a belief or act cannot be a matter of faith. As to the character of God, it is faith to believe He will NEVER do anything contrary to His character as set forth in His Word. For example, He is *good*. Faith is believing that He will never do anything evil. (It should be noted that He allows evil, but He is not the author of evil.)

All of the promises of God stand sure, and believing them is *faith*; but it is easy to misapply those promises, and that is not faith; it's *presumption*. There are Bible promises to Israel. Those promises are not to anybody else including us. The same is true with several promises to the apostles. They are limited to the apostles, yet I hear many good Christians claiming those promises for themselves. That's presumptuous. God has not promised to heal all sick people or make rich everyone who serves Him well. *Name it & claim it* theology is not of God, and it is a far cry from *faith*.

Beware that you do not get too far carried away in the name of *faith*. Be sure that you are claiming real promises which apply to you. To call our *presumptions* faith really hurts the cause of Christ especially when bystanders see failure in what we called faith.

BUMPER STICKER OF THE MONTH

"I can read your mind, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

13th Annual

Feb 4 Friday night

5pm Soups and Salads at Lake Worth Baptist Church
7pm "The Call to Preaching Reexamined" Zac Hatton
Wives welcome for a time of teaching & fellowship

Feb 5 9:30am – 2:30pm

9:30am "The Centrality of Preaching Reclaimed"
Jerry D. Locke
10:30am "The Challenge of Preaching Reviewed"
Jerry D. Locke
11:30am "Contemporary Preaching through 1 Peter"
Darrell W. Sparks

Lunch by Chick-fill-A

1:30 pm "The Constraint of Preaching Revisited"
Lester Hutson



Jerry D. Locke Darrell W. Sparks Lester Hutson

Go to www.lakeworthbaptist.org Click...Resources...Preaching Workshop...Register 817-781-8723