



CONNECTED

April—June 2022

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This is a picture of the 1964 Chevy sedan I was driving on December 7, 1967 when in dense fog I ran head-on into an 18-wheeler oilwell workover rig.

I took my 1st step in April of the following year. It was during my convalescence that *Basic Bible Truths* was born in my heart.

God has been very good to me! Sometimes God's best lessons hurt.

A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR OF OPPORTUNITIES

It's so good to be alive and deeply into a new year with so many opportunities. I start 5 or 6 days almost every week with a 2+ mile walk followed by an hour of lower back exercises. A few people have gotten a little ticked off because they couldn't reach out and touch me before 10 o'clock in the morning, but this physical regimen has helped me more than I can adequately express.

For me, 2022 started in Colorado with time with my family. It was also a good time to reflect, to critique and analyze my own schedule and use of time. All of us need to keep a pretty keen eye on self. You can be assured that *old self* is a rascal who is very prone to wasting time and an undisciplined lifestyle. I decided to impose better structure into my own life and schedule. Every day except Sunday, I spent the first 3-4 hours of my day taking better care of this whole body which I will need till the day I die. I have become increasingly aware that if I don't take care of it, I will probably die sooner. And, probably full of a lot of needless aches and pains. I made an arbitrary decision to spend more uninterrupted, quality time with the Lord, and in the preparation of written materials which will hopefully outlive me and help lots of

people. To do that, I have to turn off my phone for substantial periods of time. I can't constantly be interrupted with "good things;" and still accomplish the special, specific work which God has given me to do. Up there in Colorado, I decided that I'm running out of time; and that to get it done before I cross the finish line, have to get more serious and disciplined about it. I'm doing it; but I can assure you that old Satan is constantly testing my resolve, doing his best to get me off track with a constant flow of "good things." More and more, I am realizing that *good is always the biggest enemy of the best.*

It was truly a blessing and enjoy to be a part of the 10th Annual Missions Conference at Northwest Baptist Church. Bro. Ron Thomas was our keynote speaker. Excellent! He's a racehorse; not just a plodder. It's such a joy to hear a man of God who has something to say, and says it well! Missionary Ed Fort was down from Chicago. This man of God will light your fires. Randy Winesburgh came up from the Dominican Republic, and George and Jackie Wyatt were here from South Africa. I pray to God that I will die before I lose my heart for missions.

I continued to preach funerals; one a month so far in

2022. My pastor keeps me pretty involved in the preaching here at Northwest Baptist Church. I wish I could tell you that I'm doing a better job staying out of doctor offices. It seems to be a losing battle.

It is my joy to say that to my ongoing writing efforts came to a tangible head in this first quarter of 2022. I was able to finish all of the editing and upgrading of my little commentary on Ruth: *Outlines on Ruth*. It is now available in both electronic and paper formats from Amazon. While the Ruth project has been in process, I've also been working to produce an *International Version of Basic Bible Truths* in Spanish. With the help of lots of dear people, in the States as well as in Spain, this book is now available on Amazon. Oh, I pray that our great God will use it to bring many people to Himself!

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He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

A CALLING FROM GOD

When I was in Lufkin high school, we were asked to choose careers. Back in junior high, when I was 13, I had already publicly committed my life to the gospel ministry. It was not a matter of choosing careers; it was a matter of saying *yes* to what God wanted me to do for the rest of my life. Gospel ministry is not merely a job or career choice; it's a divine call. After 68 years in the gospel ministry, I'm with the apostle Paul that said, "*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,*" **1 Timothy 1:12**.

The IRS and society in general, classifies gospel ministers as "professionals." During all of my life in the gospel ministry, I have never thought of myself as a *professional*. Oh my, how I have wanted to do a professional job! My life's motto has been *Routine Excellence*. I have wanted to do my best, a good job; but ministry has never been merely "*a job*" for me. It has been my service to God who chose me to do this work.

I am so glad that I never preached sermons, visited sick people, preached funerals, oversaw the business of the church or took care of other spiritual business because it was my job to do so. No! No! I wanted to do it. I wanted to do it for the one who loved me and died in my place. I wanted to please Him who put me in the ministry. That is what has kept me going through these years. It's never been about the money, the job, prestige or duty.

King David had lots of great soldiers; however, some of them were in a league unto themselves. 2 Samuel calls them *David's Mighty Men*. Second on the list was "*Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day,*" **2 Samuel 23:9-10**. Did you notice those words? "*His hand clave unto the sword.*"

I know that feeling. Sometimes the gospel ministry can be overwhelming. Our hands can become very "*weary*," especially as the years take their toll; but we can't *lay down the sword*. Somehow, it cleaves to our hand. A few years ago, my dear pastor friend, Dwayne Phy said, "*Bro. Hutson, I'm still preparing sermons, and acting like a pastor. I just can't quit.*" He was old and had been the pastor of First Baptist Church of Clute, Texas for years. *His hand clave unto the sword.*

Maybe it's the difference between a job/career and *calling*. We don't write sermons are books, preached funerals, pray with and for people, give godly counsel, win people to Christ and seek the welfare of our church for a paycheck or because it's our job. We never did. We do it because the love of Christ constrains us.

When I surrendered to preach at age 13, most of the *old folks* thought it was so cute, but just a child's fantasy. Just as I was entering my 20s, a close family member pulled me aside and passionately plead with me to get a *real job*. I am aware that most people will never understand what I have discussed in this brief article.

PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS

"*My mind is made up; don't confuse me with the facts.*" Does that sound like anyone you know? Most people who have bought into *Darwin's Theory of Evolution* are there. A lady once looked me straight in the face and said, "*My children are always right.*" I happened to know all 4 of her children quite well. It's shocking when you realize how many people there are who would say, "*That's true because it's what I've always believed.*" "*That's what my parents believed.*" "*That's what my church teaches.*" Not too long ago, I heard a man say, "*I was born Catholic; I'm going to die Catholic.*" That's about the same as saying, "*I was born a Baptist; I'm going to die a Baptist.*"

Why are so many people given to *Preconceived Notions*, and turn off their own brains to not think for their own selves? It seems to me that there are 5 main reasons why.

1. **Subconscious assumptions.** Simply grew up thinking this. Never thought it through.
2. **A very respected person believes this.** Often, a respected pastor, educator or friend.
3. **My parents and family believe this.** That's the way I was taught; they can't be wrong.
4. **Persons of authority & credentials say so.** They have a PhD. They're experts. Scholars, scientists say it's true.
5. **The majority of my friends and peers think this is true.** They can't all be wrong.
6. **Fear of possibly having to admit that I have been wrong.** Pride. It does strange things.

King Solomon said, "*He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him,*" **Proverbs 18:13**.

I really hate to think that I am small enough to believe anything just because my parents, teachers, preacher, friends or some scientist said so. Much of what some of these held as true may indeed be true; but it shouldn't be just *theirs*; it should be *mine* because I see it for myself. Ruth said to her mother-in-law, "*Thy God*" shall be "*My God,*" **Ruth 1:16**. Preconceived notions keep that from happening. You will never be sure anything is *true* until you see it for yourself. You will never be saved because your mom & dad were saved; in your heart you have to trust Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. Yes, you have to *see it for yourself*.

Preconceived notions won't allow you to see things for yourself. They blind you and lock you in. The ramifications are enormous and all bad.

Keep your mind open. Listen. Inquire. Don't allow yourself to become *locked in* because "everybody else believes it." The Bible says, "*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil,*" **Exodus 23:2**. I suspect that includes thinking wrong just because others do. Think for yourself. Let God through His word be your final authority. "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,*" **Psalm 119:105**.



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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*



"CALL ME WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO"

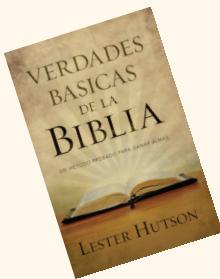
Many years ago on a Tuesday morning, a dear and well-intentioned man dropped into my office at the Eleventh Street Baptist Church. "I thought I'd just stop in and visit when you didn't have anything to do." For most of the next hour I stopped work on the sermon I was preparing, and just listened to him ramble around lots of subjects. I had just begun my first full-time pastorate. It didn't take me very long to figure out that there are lots of people who have that mentality.

Thousands of times over the years, I have heard similar statements. Few people seem to comprehend that the gospel ministry is a consuming lifestyle. It has been my life for almost 70 years, and I cannot remember one single night when I went to bed with everything done. Throughout the years, I have *averaged* approximately 12 hours every day in intense ministry work. There have been a few *days off*, and occasional vacations; but even during those times my mind has been at work on church and ministry matters. I can tell you that it's hard to *turn it off*. The pressure to meet more needs, prepare better sermons, keep the church healthy and on track, follow up on prospects, answer phone calls, prepare for meetings, stay informed and meet expectations is always there. Even now that I am in "*retirement*," my cup runneth over with good work that needs to be done.

The idea that a man of God is just sitting around waiting for somebody to talk to is a myth. *When you don't have anything to do*. Really? There is no such time. If there's a need, a true man of God will *make time*. It may take a little while; but he will let something else go, run a little faster or work longer hours to make time. If he's a true man of God, he will never be simply sitting around waiting for something to do. Never!

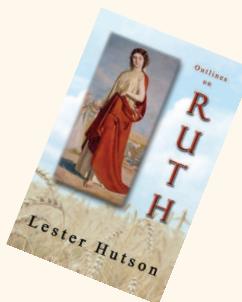
Always respect your pastor. Cut him a little slack. Give him time with God, to rest and be with his family. Never take anyone for granted, including their time.

BOTH TITLES NOW AVAILABLE ON AMAZON



With the help of many dear yoke-fellows in the Lord, both in the States & in Spain, the newly updated & re-translated *International Spanish Version of Basic Bible Truths* was released on Amazon in both electronic & paper formats. [Paperback copies](#) are \$9.99. [Kindle copies](#) are \$4.99.

Thanks especially to my yoke-fellow Philip Rice, *Outlines on Ruth* has been completed edited and updated. This little commentary on Ruth is also available in both electronic & paper formats. [Paperback copies](#) are \$9.99. [Kindle copies](#) are \$4.99.



A POPULAR BOOK I HAVE READ AND DO NOT RECOMMEND

The Pilgrim's Progress

John Bunyan

Audible

First published 1678

Judith E. Markham's books

ISBN: 9780524102022

Next to the Bible, *the Pilgrim's Progress* is one of the most widely read books in the history of mankind. It has been translated into more than 100 languages. It is a true classic, and every educated person should read the classics; however, I recommend the reading of this book because of its stature in literature, not for its biblical theology.

The Pilgrim's Progress is the allegorical story of a man named *Christian* on his journey from his earthly *City of Destruction* to heaven, the *Celestial City*. Along the way he encounters an incredible number of obstacles from people to places. The obstacles represent the day-to-day problems faced by Christians in any age as they seek to live a godly life before they reach heaven.

The Pilgrim's Progress is laced with Bible terms and concepts. The characters you meet are *Christian*, *Evangelist*, *Graceless*, *Piety*, *Prudence*, *Obstinate*, *Pliable*, *Sloth*, *Simple*, *Presumption*, *Worldly Wise Man*, *Envy*, *Superstition*, *Money-lover*, *Carnal Policy*, *Talkative*, *Say-well*, a giant called *Despair*, *Temptation*, *Faithful*, *Helpful* and a host of others. Likewise the places have allegorical biblical names such as *City of Destruction*, *the Celestial City*, *Swamp of Despondence*, *the Walls of Salvation*, *Museum of Artifacts*, *the Valley of Humiliation*, *the Valley of the Shadow of Death*, *the Mountains of Delectable*, *the County of Deceit*, *Enchanted Ground*, *the Moat of Death*, *Beulah Land* and the town of *Vanity Fair*. *Lord Hate God* was the judge in *Vanity Fair*. *Beelzebub* was chief of the fair. *Christian* was almost killed here.

Helpful became *Christian*'s most faithful friend and fellow-traveler. As they travelled, they faced a continuous flow of death-defying obstacles and challenges. They faced one calamity after another; rarely was there a moment's rest, and those rare occasions were short-lived.

As they travelled ever closer to the *Celestial City* they had many intense discussions about Bible doctrine and concepts through which Bunyan cleverly taught his beliefs. Their discussion in Chapter 47 on belief and coming to Christ is a fair presentation of the plan of salvation. *Christian* and *Faithful* shared their ideas about *Temptation* and other Bible issues. Their discussion on hypocrisy flushed-out *Talkative*. Their discussion with *Ignorance* was particularly lively. There is a very good look at the thinking of *Temporary*.

To build this story Bunyan was quite loose with hermeneutics. Bits and pieces taken from various places of the Bible sound good, but many times they are used completely out of context. In this very colorful story, sound doctrine sometimes takes a broadside. Part of the allegory advocates salvation by grace while on the other hand many times *Christian* and *Helpful* are in peril of losing their salvation and never reaching the *Celestial City*. Inherently salvation by good works and faithfulness is woven into *the Pilgrim's Progress*. By his faithfulness and perseverance, *Christian* eventually reaches the *Celestial City*. That's a bad message, and the main reason why I do not recommend the book for sound theology. There is a lot of truth in this book; but it has enough error to make it very dangerous, especially to a world which is bent on works for salvation.

AT THE END OF THIS MONTH



Annually at the transition of April and May, Northwest Baptist Church hosts a learning event called *Answers That Build Faith*. Each year there is a different theme.

This year I will present a seminar which I call *The Reliability of Your Bible*. We are going to take a serious look at (1) how God gave his Word to the human race, (2) how he preserved and kept it pure through many centuries of time and (3) the challenge of translating His Word into many languages.

This seminar will provide a sound, academic approach to those who would like to evaluate the translation they use. We will take in-depth looks at such issues as source texts and target texts, formal equivalency and dynamic equivalency, older texts

and younger texts, the Majority texts and the Minority texts, the Masoretic texts, the Septuagint, *Textus Receptus* and the Revised Greek Text of Wescott and Hort, lower and higher textual criticism and the proliferation of English translations.

The seminar will be conducted live in the main auditorium of Northwest Baptist Church at 1710 W. 34th St., Houston 77018. It will be live-streamed and offered later on the church's YouTube channel. Two sessions will be offered from 7:00-9:00 on Thursday and Friday nights, April 28-29. Two sessions will be offered on Saturday, April 30 from 10:00 – noon. My session on *The King James Bible* will be presented to a joint youth – adult Sunday school on Sunday morning, May 1. The 50-minute session will begin at 9:45. The title of my Sunday morning sermon is *The Book That Shall Never Pass Away*. The seminar will conclude with a Sunday p.m. session beginning at 2:15. This session will include a number of conclusions as well as a question-and-answer time.

NEVER QUIT LIVING UNTIL YOU DIE

We're mortals in a mortal world. Every believer has *eternal* spiritual life, but even the godliest believer does not have eternal mortal life. "*It is appointed unto men once to die*," **Hebrews 9:27**. We have mortal life from conception until death. Sometimes we call it *physical life*.

All of us know there are seasons of mortal life: spring, summer, autumn and winter. For a while, the body grows bigger and stronger; but there comes a time when it seems to *top out*, reach an apex. For a few years it holds its own. Then comes a long decline with increasing intensity all the way to the grave. Adjustments must be made. vanity and pride make people think they are just as physically capable and attractive at 60 as they were at 40. Some of them still think it when they are 75 or 80. Doctors and young people snicker. Paul said, "*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content*," **Philippians 4:11**. Most of us have never learned that.

More and more, I see a strange phenomenon even among God's people: people giving up, and basically opting out of life before they die. What a sad, senseless and needless tragedy! Regardless of where we are in life, we can always give the best we have. It may not be very much, and bystanders may scorn it, but not God. That little boy's lunch (5 loaves and 2 fishes) seemed like almost nothing in view the need (**Luke 9:10-17**), but he gave all he had, and that mattered to God. From **Acts 3:1-10**, I preach a sermon which I call *Yes! You Can*. It has 3 points plus an admonition: (1) Start where you are, (2) Do what you can and (3) Give what you have. Peter did that with the lame man, and every one of us can do those things regardless of where we are or the circumstances. The admonition is *Do it now!* My! It's easy to wait. Too long!

No friend! Don't quit living until you die. Give it all to the Lord until you cross the finish line. Every day! You may be only a shell of your youth, but give and use 100% of what you are. When I cross the finish line, my top speed may be only one-half mile per hour, but God forbid that I'm not wide open! Never, never, never give up and act like you're already dead.

Just like people, old fruit trees have a lifespan. After about three years, they reach maturity, and begin to produce fruit, lots of fruit. After a while, they grow old and there's not as much fruit, but in those last few years before they die, they produce the biggest, best and sweetest fruit of their entire lives.

No! No! Don't die before you die. Keep on living and giving your best every day. Make *routine excellence* your practice.



My son Mark & his mom

Black Mountain Lake

Rio Grande National Forest—Southwest Colorado