



# CONNECTED

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I married this lovely lady on August 3, 1962. She's still lovely to me.

## POINT OF VIEW

Lazy ole Rip van Winkle got drunk and slept for 20 years. He had a hard time with perception. Most people do. Bad can seem good when it's fun and we're materially prospering; and good can seem bad, especially when things are tough and not going our way. We can find ourselves passing through life's Rose Garden complaining about thorns and never smelling a rose. God forbid that we lose sight of the enormous blessing and privilege it is to be a part of this journey called mortal life.

How we perceive things makes an enormous difference. Reality is what it is. Life is full of troubles, but it is also full of opportunities. For each of us, there are two horizons; one ahead and one behind us. May we never forget which is which. Life is up ahead; not back there. I intend to keep living until I die, and to enjoy every minute including the mountains and the valleys.

If you don't keep your eyes on the Lord, Satan will ferment your mind and turn you negative, and you won't even recognize it. You'll think you just got a raw deal in life, and it's all the fault of somebody else. Every boss you have will quickly become *incompetent*, you'll think nobody understands you, somebody else will always be

the culprit and deep down you will be upset at God. While everybody sees it, but doesn't want to tackle you, you will steadily morph into a negative and bitter *old biddy* or *ugly old man*.

Mrs. Hutson and I remain quite active: mobile, remarkably healthy for our ages, still of sound mind, maintaining an independent household, deeply engaged in the ministry of our great God and eating well. Yes, we're blessed. Any complaining would be highly unjustified.

Since the first day of January, I have taught a discipleship class every Wednesday night, conducted three funerals, spent over 50 hours upgrading my Israel tour guidebook, spent 100 hours working on this year's Holy Land Tour, traveled over 3,000 miles in ministry, given 3 units of blood, participated in a preaching workshop, helped ordain a preacher, preached for Bro. Thomas George in Missouri City, offered lots of counsel and guidance, published my newest book, prayed diligently for lots of people and visited my fair share of doctors. As this old fleshly house continues to wear out, we find ourselves becoming ever more familiar with the medical world.

*We'll Work till Jesus Comes* should not be merely a

April—June 2023

lofty church song. All that loud church talk about the grace of God being sufficient for every (yes, *every*) circumstance shouldn't suddenly be replaced with moans and *Why me* and *This is not fair* when we have a stroke or get cancer. Sadly, most Christians talk a far louder talk than they live.

I would like to be producing my best fruit just before I die. I'd like to be a living and dying example and testimony that the grace of God is truly real. We're not here just to decorate the scenery and live trouble-free lives of comfort and ease. We represent the great God of Heaven and Earth. Whether or not we recognize it, being His servant and rep is truly a royal privilege.

⇒ **History of Churches - *The Unbroken Line***  
Northwest Baptist, Houston  
April 27-30

⇒ **Rodgers Missions Conf.**  
Rodgers Baptist, Garland  
July 17-19

⇒ **Holy Land Tour**  
December 26, 2023 - January 4, 2024  
Email: [lesterhutson@gmail.com](mailto:lesterhutson@gmail.com)

**Contact us at:**  
**[lesterhutson@gmail.com](mailto:lesterhutson@gmail.com)**

## AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

It looks good to bystanders to say you know something, even though you know it hasn't really gotten hold of you. Back there over 60 years ago when I was a young preacher, I heard old preachers talk about *an audience of one*, and it sounded really good to me.

I must confess that it took lots of years for the gravity of that concept to sink into my soul. I'm not sure that even now I'm fully there. I want to be there, but there's usually a sizeable gap between *want to* and *arrival*. Sadly, it's a gap that most of us are not honest enough to admit. Usually, when we're painfully honest, we don't *look so good to bystanders*. Jesus spoke of "*the glory of men*" to "*be seen of men*," **Matthew 6:2, 5**. Obviously, the desire to impress and *look good* to others has a greater strangle-hold on us than we realize.

It sounds pretty lofty and pious for a preacher to say, *I really didn't prepare this sermon for you; it is my offering to the Lord*. Really? When you know who the big givers and strong personalities are, you're aware of popular people in the church who have a big influence, but whose lives are a reproach and you know you have merciless critics who are just waiting for one mis-step, there's a strong likelihood that this sermon is not wholly for the Lord alone. Do you really believe those singers who tell you before their *glorious performance* that their song is *just of the Lord*? Only God knows the heart, but He does know the heart.

Everything we do should be for one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. "*Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men*," **Colossians 3:23**. The Apostle Paul was speaking directly to people who were servants to a mortal master, but the application is to all servants of our heavenly Master. He said, serve "*Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men*," **Ephesians 6:6-7**.

Every sermon and song should first be to the Lord. Giving: at the church, to the hurting brother or stranger or time to prepare to do a better job; let it first be to the Lord. Our service at church or in the work-place must **never** be to receive praise from the boss or bystanders, even in the form of a raise. "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*," **1 Corinthians 10:31**.

When in the deep recesses of our heart there is purity, and all we are is to the glory of our great God (He is our audience, we're giving it all to Him), bystanders will be blessed. God can and often does use what's given to Him to touch and bless the lives of others. We want to be used of God to touch others with our sermons, songs and service; but our first objective is to please Him, our audience of one. "*No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier*," **2 Timothy 2:4**.

History of Churches  
Seminar  
By Lester Hutson  
Northwest BC  
Houston, Texas  
May 5-7, 2023

Little girl: "Mom, why are some of your hairs white?"  
Mom: "Well, every time you do something wrong & upset me, one of my hairs turns white."  
Little girl after considerable thought: "Mom, how come all of grandma's hairs are white?"

Holy Land Tour  
10-day tour of Israel  
Dec. 26, 2023 - Jan. 4, 2024  
Houston to Houston  
Double Occupancy  
Only 6 remaining seats  
There is a waiting list  
Email: [lesterhutson@gmail.com](mailto:lesterhutson@gmail.com)

## SPECTRUMS & BALANCE

As in a rainbow, the distance or extent between possible extremes generally holds a huge range of possibilities. There's a huge spectrum of ideas and beliefs about God: the consummate theist who sees God everywhere to the doctrinaire atheist who doesn't believe God exists. Somewhere between these extremes is the agnostic who is not sure.

Roads have a side (usually a ditch) at both sides. The center stripe is *the middle of the road*. Wise King Solomon said, "*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*," **Ecc. 3:1**. He's talking spectrums and the wisdom to know the difference between extremes. There's a right time to harvest fruits and vegetables. Pick a persimmon too soon and you'll be sorry. Let a pod of okra stay on the stalk a little too long and you can't eat it. There's an optimum time for most things. Start too soon and you're penalized. Swing too late and the ball is already in the catcher's mitt.

It took me awhile to realize that one end of a spectrum is about as bad as the other end. Which is worse: too slow or too fast? On a freeway you can get a ticket for either, and both can get you killed. Real quick! How much difference is there between a person who is afraid to try anything and a person who bites off more than he can chew, too pious or too sacrilegious?

You can rest assured that in this Christian world there are spectrums and extremes. Lots of them! Most Christians, particularly old ones, have a devil of a time with balance. For example, there's a baptism spectrum with infant baptism on one end and no baptism on the other. It gets even more bazaar with Baptismal Regeneration in there somewhere. There's another spectrum on God's sovereignty. One end says God made every choice before the foundation of the world. The other end has man making all the choices. Oh, what confusion we cause when we lose our balance; on the gymnast balance beam or in the Bible!

The right spot is usually somewhere in the middle. God didn't write the Bible to confuse people, so only a few extra-intellectual people could understand it. He loves the world, and His will is that all men be saved. He proved that on the Cross.

Always keep an eye on yourself. Yes, always! Be honest enough to see when you're *going to seed* on anything. Let the Scriptures keep you honest; they're NEVER in conflict with themselves. It's very honest and true to say they are quite balanced.



## A MEETING OF LIFELONG FRIENDS

It was October 18, 1964 when I arrived in Beaumont as pastor of the Eleventh Street Baptist Church. I immediately began looking for people to bring to the Lord. Before the HIPAA Laws, the Baptist Hospital kept a card file on hospitalized people who had no church affiliation. I was down there on the 28<sup>th</sup> and visited Lou Alice Huffman. She had given birth to Randy on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

We became friends, and before long Lou Alice and her husband Ken trusted Christ as their Savior. Ours has been a precious life-long connection. Our first child Mark was born December 14. He and Randy grew up in the nursery, fought like enemies and became inseparable friends. A few years later, Jeff came along as did our other children: Clint and Dena.

With the arrival of March, Ken Huffman went home to be with the Lord. Mark came down from Durango, Colorado to support his friend, Randy. Ken had requested that I conduct his funeral which was in Vidor, Texas. The interment was at the lovely Mount Pisgah Cemetery outside of Woodville.

After the cemetery, we rendezvoused at the famous Pickett House for dinner. In the picture from the left: Jeff Huffman, Randy Huffman, Lester Hutson and Mark Hutson.

## A SOON-COMING HOLY LAND TOUR

Lord willing, with the help of Mrs. Hutson, I will lead another Holy Land Tour. The 10-day tour is set to depart from Houston Intercontinental Airport on Lufthansa Airlines at 4:25 P.M. on December 26, 2023. The tour group is to arrive back in Houston on January 4 at 2:30 P.M. The price is \$5,250.00 based on double-occupancy.

To ensure that everyone can travel in one tour bus, the number is capped at 44. There are 6 remaining seats. Thirty-eight people have already reserved seats by submitting a *Registration Form* along with a \$1,000.00 non-refundable deposit.

A brochure with complete details is posted on the DuCar International Tours website: <https://www.ducartours.com/>.

Mrs. Hutson and I are committed to seeing that this tour is a great educational experience and most inspiring for every tour member. If you would like to be a part of this opportunity, let me know at [lesterhutson@gmail.com](mailto:lesterhutson@gmail.com). I have a waiting list.

## A BOOK I HAVE RECENTLY READ & HIGHLY RECOMMEND

### ***What Matters Most: Searching for Significance***

By Darrell W. Sparks

Theophilus Books in association with Barnes & Noble Press

Order from [darrellwsparks@comcast.net](mailto:darrellwsparks@comcast.net)

Softback \$15 & hardback \$22.00 plus S&H

For a clear, concise understanding of what many consider to be the most difficult book of the Bible, get and absorb *What Matters Most: Searching for Significance* by Darrell W. Sparks. It is by far the best commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes that I've ever read.

Darrell W. Sparks systematically moves through Ecclesiastes paragraph by paragraph and verse by verse. Sparks is a gifted speaker and writer, but not apart from a lifetime formal education coupled with deep study of the Bible which he believes to be the inspired Word of God. He is committed to expository teaching, preaching and writing. That commitment and his scholarship are quite evident in this commentary.

There are 27 chapters in this 315-page book which includes a bibliography of excellent resource materials. This commentary is testimonial to Sparks' commitment to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. That's especially striking in view of the fact that Ecclesiastes is a book of Hebrew poetry.

The biblical book of Ecclesiastes deals with the realities of life and death. The book *tells it like it is*; there is no veneer. It is one man's search for meaning in life and existence; but Ecclesiastes is everyman's search. Regardless of what people think, life is what it is. Regardless of his status, opinion or agreement with how things are, no person can change life or death. Without God and the salvation that comes through the gospel of Jesus Christ, life has no meaning. King Solomon, who Sparks believes to be the author of Ecclesiastes, had the power and wealth to seek purpose and fulfillment in all corners of mortal existence: wealth, power, education, wine, women and song. Apart from God, he found life to be absolutely meaningless and unfulfilling. Only the knowledge that there is God who orchestrates life (including what men think to be the good and the bad), and with whom all who trust Him will spend eternity in a place infinitely superior to a mortal lifetime gives meaning and fulfillment to mortal life and death. Once God is seen as the giver of all mortal life has to offer, day-to-day living takes on a new perspective. With God in the picture, people can enjoy food, family, health and all of the provisions of God while trusting God in the difficult times they do not understand.

Ecclesiastes is one of the wisdom books of the Bible. Sparks defines wisdom; and throughout his commentary, wisdom oozes like honey from a honeycomb.

*What Matters Most: Searching for Significance* can help anybody. Throughout it points men to Christ and the hope that is in Him. I can help people who are in hard times which seem to make no sense. I can help those who've become discouraged and defeated, who've lost life's luster. This book can put joy back into your life. It is a great book on perspective.

Darrell Sparks has a remarkable ability to express very difficult concepts in simple, easy-to-understand terms. If you've struggled with Ecclesiastes, you owe it to yourself to read *What Matters Most: Searching for Significance*. It is an extremely well-written book which is full of substance. I strongly recommend the book.

***“Deep in the night, when you are in a dark alley & hear footsteps over your shoulder, you’re not interested in what color his skin is; you’re interested in what’s in his heart.”***

**S.M. Lockridge**

## SELFISHNESS: SUBTLE & SINISTER

It is doubtful that any civilized person would defend selfishness, especially those who lay even a small and remote claim to being a Christian. Yet, there's a selfish streak in everybody, including the one in your mirror. The width of the streak varies in size, but it's always there.

It's rarely hidden very well. The *me first, my way, my comfort, be yourself, this car was made "just for you," life is really all about you* mentality has caught on. BIG TIME! After all, the bias toward *self* has fertile soil. The heart of man "*is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,*" **Jeremiah 17:9**. By the grace of God, our selfishness can be controlled, but it's ingrained in our old flesh. It's always there, exerting itself. Long ago, the Coasters sang a song about *Poison Ivy*. "*Late at night when you're sleeping, poison ivy comes a-creeping around.*" Poison ivy must be kin to selfishness.

It's in little kids who seldom play together; they usually play side-by-side, each one looking out for #1. It never goes away, and it gets really ugly in girlfriend-boyfriend dramas. It's inbred in the American Dream where *getting ahead of the Jones* is the way it works. It's even uglier in big business and politics. Have you ever considered how John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford treated their rivals? Have you ever observed wild animals in the rut? It will sure remind you of people, even of some of the squeaky clean Christians who control churches. Just push them a little and threaten their stronghold, and ole self will come right out.

How many alcoholics have you ever seen who thought they were alcoholics? Not many. Funny how good we are at recognizing the sins of others, but we have a hard time seeing our own. By the way, Jesus had a word about that: see **Matthew 7:1-5**. It's really hard to find a self-admitted selfish person.

I knew an old Christian man who thought he was one of the most unselfish men on the planet. When his wife died, he remarried; and then after 30 years she died too. For another 12 years, he lived alone until his invalidity put him into a nursing home. After the death of his second wife, the perspective of this 80+ old man turned amazingly inward. He lost his ability to drive. Most of his friends were dead. He lived alone, and watched TV. Most of his contact with the outer world went away. His world shrank, and shrank and shrank until it was mostly about him. He lived mostly in the past. He had no new stories. He even grew paranoid; somebody was out to *get him*. When his family came to visit and check on him, he eventually forgot how to be nice to them. When they entered his presence, he went straight to his shopping list of things he wanted them to do *for him*. He rarely expressed any interest in anything that might be going on in their lives. It was sad to watch, but it was all about him.

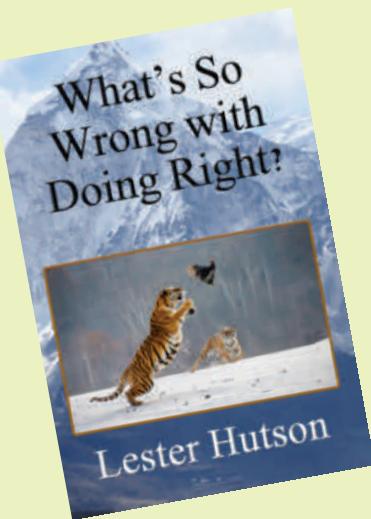
The Bible warns, "*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,*" **1 Corinthians 10:12**. Only pride would make any of us think we can't get there, that the deep selfishness in us is gone and can't come to the surface. Every one of us needs on-going grace, not just a one-time shot every now and then. May God deliver us from pride and the blindness that goes with it! The **only** way to keep self in subjection is to walk humbly before God with our eyes wide open to the reality of the selfish creatures we really are. Jesus said, "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me,*" **Luke 9:23**. Jesus knew that a cross has only one purpose: killing. Kill ole self today, and he's back tomorrow. Jesus knew that, and thus said self must be put on the cross "*daily*."

Yes, selfishness is subtle and sinister. You won't think it's there in little ole you. You'll be too busy looking out your windows instead of looking into your mirror. Before you know it, your good testimony will be gone; and you will be an *old biddy* or *ugly old man*. Jesus warned about this very thing. He said, "*Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased,*" **Luke 14:11**. You can count on it!

### FINALLY, IT'S READY

After much effort and a long string of backsets, *What's So Wrong with Doing Right* is now available on Amazon in both [electronic](#) and [paper formats](#). This 313-page book has 25 chapters and a 3-page bibliography.

You will find this description on the back cover:



On front after front in this world, social degeneration continues at an alarming rate: violence, hatred, civil division, political corruption, dishonesty, sexual perversion, the trashing of Planet Earth and a plethora of other evils. Regardless of your stance on God, it's obvious that a global meltdown is on the horizon.

*What's So Wrong with Doing Right* looks at the root causes of this drift to destruction, and at the only medicine with the power to turn the drift around. Issues such as honesty, unselfishness, impartiality, respect, character, earning your own keep, good science and peace are addressed.

The 25 chapters in this book look at where we are, where we could be and how to get there. The key is the heart. Until a person voluntarily chooses to do the right thing, there is no legitimate hope for substantial and lasting improvement. Activities that operate as "Christian" may not be what the Bible defines Christianity to be. This book will help you distinguish between the real and the counterfeit.

Jesus Christ transforms people who come to Him. You will see that true, Bible Christianity is far more than a secured eternal future; it improves the day-to-day lives of both individuals and societies. Biblical Christianity is extremely practical.

The central theme of this book is the power of true, biblical Christianity to successfully address the social ills that are currently destroying the people of Planet Earth. It approaches the crisis in which we find ourselves both individually and corporately.