



CONNECTED

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Fishing for Lake Trout with Mark in the Great Slave Lake, Northwest Territories, Canada

"INTEGRITY COMES WHEN CHARACTER IS TESTED; KEEP TRUE AND NEVER BE ASHAMED OF DOING WHAT IS RIGHT"

George Washington

In the whole of my life, I've never experienced anything quite like June through September, 2023. Late Wednesday, June 21 Mrs. Hutson and I came back to Houston from a wonderful two weeks vacation with two couples who have been dear lifelong friends. Our son and daughter-in-law also joined us in Southwest Colorado.

The next day, I had lab work and pre-op for surgery to implant an Inspire generator. I have dealt with sleep apnea and a CPAP machine for several years. The following day (Friday), Mrs. Hutson and I flew with our pastor to Panama. Saturday, we ordained a missionary. Sunday, I preached the morning sermon in Las Margaritas, Panama. We caught an afternoon flight to Houston and I had the Inspire implant surgery at 7:00 AM Monday morning. Wednesday, June 28, I preached the funeral of a dear friend, [Randy Cook](#). While we were in Colorado, Randy died an agonizing death at the hands of Mesothelioma. Our missionary friends from Belarus arrived in town on Friday. Great fellowship!

On July 15, Bro. Andy Ohman picked me up at the airport in Colorado Spring. He's pastor of [Heritage Baptist Church](#) in Pueblo, Colorado where I was privileged to teach and preach on Sunday morning. He and I joined four other dear preacher brothers for 3 days of great trout fishing (and some pretty heavy theology) in the lofty mountains of Central Colorado: Chuck Bigler, Collin Hirsch, Jerry Locke and Brian Withrow. I got home just in time to attend the Missions

QUITE A SUMMER

Conference at [Rodgers Baptist Church](#) in Garland, Texas.

Margaret and I drove to Houston on Thursday. On the Sunday following, just as we got home from church, our son Mark from Durango, Colorado called. Through quite a twist of events, an opportunity had opened for me to fish with him at a remote fish camp on the Great Slave Lake in Canada's Northwest Territories. I met him at Vancouver on August 10, and we flew together to Yellowknife, the providential capitol of the Northwest Territories. From there we flew in a bush plane to a small dirt airstrip neat the Frontier Lodge. It's about 100 miles from the Arctic Circle.

My! For three days, we caught fish. Lots of big Lake Trout; about 125. Most of them were in the 15-pound class; a couple came in at 20 pounds. What a privilege to spend quality time like this with my son!

This adventure was not without drama. At the same time Hawaii was on fire, Canada was ravished with forest fires. At the fish camp, smoke filled the skies. It got worse. Mark and I caught the last bush plane out; those not on this flight had to stay until the danger subsides. There's no cellular service up there; we have not yet heard from them. He and I made it back to Yellowknife; but due to forest fires, Yellowknife was on emergency evacuation notice. We were unable to make our connections in Vancouver. After a tense night in Yellowknife, we were able to fly out. Two days later, 19,000 of the 20,000 residents of

Yellowknife were evacuated. I got home at 3:00 AM Thursday morning, just in time to conduct the funeral on Friday morning of one of my dearest sisters in the Lord for over 50 years, [Betty Whitehead](#).

A mountain-sized backlog of work awaited me at home. I was blessed to finish August preaching for Pastor Thomas George at [Lighthouse Baptist Church](#) in Missouri City. On Sunday, September 17, I preached for Pastor Mike Bragdon at [Gateway Baptist Church](#) in Gatesville, Texas. On Sunday, September 24 I was honored to be the guest speaker at the 59th anniversary of my home church, [Northwest BC](#).

JUST AHEAD

- ◆ Sunday, October 8 – Guest speaker: Rodgers Baptist Church, Garland, Texas
- ◆ Friday night – Sunday, October 20-22 – *History of Churches Seminar*, Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas



OFF TO ISRAEL

What a dream! Going to Israel, the land of the Bible is a thrilling experience unlike any other. Lord willing, on Saturday, December 30, 2023, 44 of us will lift off from Dulles Airport in Washington, DC in route to Austria and on to Tel Aviv, Israel. We will spend 7 glorious days walking where Jesus walked. Pray for us as we give ourselves to watching the Bible come alive right before our eyes.

PLANNING FOR ETERNAL SUCCESS



By observation and experience, I continue to learn that time is one of the easiest of all things to waste. Sometimes, it's not total waste; it's using time doing good things at the neglect of more important things of an eternal nature: letting the good steal time for the best. For years, I've been too good at this failure.

The mortal end for any person of any age can show up at any minute. When you're a couple of years past fourscore, there's not much guess-work in the picture. Before I depart for my eternal home, there are at least a couple of major undertakings which I need to finish. (1) I have several books available on Amazon and I have several other books already written. They need editing and a few upgrades. I know that if I don't do the work and get these books up there, they will

die with me. (2) I would like to make all of my books available as audio books on Audible. Both these projects are quite daunting, and require lots of concentration and time.

I have re-thought and am adjusting my day-to-day schedule. Moving forward, I plan to essentially sequester myself for four days most weeks; Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Lord willing, those days I will give my phone to Mrs. H who will watch for emergencies. I will give myself fully to the two aforementioned projects. Sundays, I expect to be consumed with church just as I have been for the last 82 years. Wednesday nights, I will teach my regular Bible Class at Northwest Baptist Church. Before Wednesday church and on Fridays, I hope to answer calls, texts and emails.

I am aware that there are no perfect or *in-stone* plans. When you get where I am, doctor visits and health issues become increasingly a part of life. I don't move as fast or have the stamina I once knew. I also conduct lots of funerals, and preach in several churches around the country. I'm also pretty involved in the life of my home church and with my pastor. I also have a family, and plan to stay deeply engaged in their lives.

Time! Everything takes time. I'm keenly aware that being casual about whatever I expect to finish, especially the two big projects which are uniquely up to me means they won't happen. Before God, I feel I must get these things done.

It is not my intent to be offensive or hard-to-get. Loftiness and hard-to-touch stances go against my grain. Until God brings me into His presence, I expect to be willing and available to help everybody I possibly can. I just may not be instantly touchable and able to do it *right now*. Or ever. Conversations and visits may be a bit shorter. Emails and texts will be the best avenues to reach me. I hope my friends will realize that I'm on a mission to finish two major projects which will hopefully outlive me and help people until Jesus comes. I'm asking our great God to give me a little more time; not to squander, but to use to His glory in every way, especially in the books and recordings undertakings.

BEYOND YOUR POWER

Life can be cruel, harsh and unfair. People can disappoint and hurt you. Hurt you really bad! With words! With despicable deeds! The hurt can be intentional or unintentional. Back stabs! Betrayals! Unmet expectations. Evil for good. On occasions there's nobody to blame. Circumstances seem to conspire to dish you a raw deal: a disease takes you down, you lose a trusted and needed person like your mate or child or means of support.

It's done. You can't do one thing to change it; not one thing! I stood by the lifeless body of my own son who took his life. What a painful, empty, helpless feeling! Like it or lump it, right or wrong, some things are absolutely beyond your power. All of the ranting, raving, crying, self-pity, anger, remorse or bitterness won't change one thing. Not one thing! It is what it is. You can't undo the injustice, bring back the dead person or plead your case to anyone. It's done! Over! Forever!

Job was pretty upset with God. Due to no fault of his own, he lost his wealth, health and family. It pained him to the core that he couldn't get an explanation from God, or set up arbitration in which he might plead the injustice of his case. Read Job 23.

With or without you, and regardless of how you feel about it, life goes right on. Not always, but many times crushing, heart-breaking, harsh, cruel and unjust situations are beyond your power to change.

How you respond is your choice. You can get mad, bitter and ugly. You can accept reality, forgive the offenders, turn the matter over to God to deal with as He sees fit and go on with your life. That's your choice.

The difference between winners and losers, bitter people and beautiful spirits, those full of anger and resentment and those without baggage is response. Sooner or later, everybody faces a Goliath: a gut-punch, an injustice that seems more than it's possible to bear. Losers get mad, negative and bitter. They blame. They seethe on it. They suck their thumbs. Not one thing changes what happened. Not one thing! That which happened is still what it was. It's the person who hung on to it who pays the price. The family and those around also feel the bitter sting of failure to forgive, take injustices to God and move on.

How we deal with the realities of life makes a practical day-by-day difference in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Forgive, and let God deal with things beyond your power. Move on. Don't hang on to things you cannot change.

Outside of Jesus Christ, I know of no person who suffered more injustices than the apostle Paul. Yet, he carried no malice, and his good spirit and joy were off the charts. He learned to trust God to handle matters beyond his control. He was content, even on death-row for crimes he did not commit. He refused to allow injustices to steal his joy. In spite of a lifetime of evil treatment, disappointment, betrayals and heartaches often at the hands of close, trusted friends, he died a hero without baggage.

Friend, things beyond your control do not have to defeat you and sour your life. Bitterness can spring up in a hurry, and wreck you. Like an infection, it can spread. You can make life miserable for yourself, and for everyone around you. You don't have to let it happen.



Dr. David Jeremiah

Another mighty man of God, a giant has fallen.



"Lord, help me to catch a fish so big that I don't have to lie when I tell about it."



While fishing at the Great Slave Lake in Canada 100 miles from the Arctic Circle, this big boy showed up.

Canadian Musk Ox

A personnel manager advertised a great job opening. At the time appointed for interviews, a very large crowd showed up. The first young man was ushered into her office, and she began to explain the job. *"We need someone for this job who can really think on his feet. Can you show me that you are capable of doing that?"*

Without a word or hesitation, the young man got to his feet, stuck his head out the door to the waiting applicants and announced, *"Okay, you guys. You can all go home. The job has been filled."*

Integrity - Doing what is right; not what is easy. There is no higher value in society than integrity.

**Contact us at:
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**The
Gospodarevs
From
Belarus
Were
In
Town**



A BOOK I HAVE RECENTLY READ & HIGHLY RECOMMEND

Facing the Giants

Eric Wilson
Thomas Nelson Publisher
2007
ISBN: 9781595544322

Facing the Giants is full of action, drama and intrigue. Unless a person has a true bias against God, Christianity and Christians, he is certain to find this book fascinating and well-spiced with laughter and tears. It is a highly emotional book. I found it delightful, down-to-earth and very inspiring.

Facing the Giants is a metaphorical David and Goliath story of a young football coach fresh out of college. He and his newly-wed wife are starry-eyed about his new job as head coach at Shiloh Christian High School in Albany, Georgia. Though not based on a true story, *Facing the Giants* is a realistic look at the problems of real, everyday life; and what can happen to a person who comes to grips with his problems. It's a story of faith in the face of long odds, and the need to align our priorities with God's. It has been criticized and condemned as unrealistic; however, the amazing events seen in the story are things that have been often seen in real life. It is an excellent story of life as portrayed by the young football coach and his wife. Their example had a profound impact on those around them.

After six years without a winning season, Coach Grant Taylor's job is on the line. Unless the Shiloh Christian Eagles turn things around in a hurry, he's history. Shiloh's leading scorer has just left for a rival school. The team has lost its faith, inspiration and drive. The pressure is on. Coach Taylor finally commits himself to God and giving his best. Win or lose! His personal turn-around is spectacular; and his devotion and personal leadership turn around the team, the school and the community.

Facing the Giants is full of great football action and excitement, but you can't miss the Christian message. Its theme is *with God, all things are possible*. It is unapologetically Christian. It's honest; but clean, positive and with great redeeming value. You will find yourself in this book. It will speak to your heart.

It is noteworthy that *Facing the Giants* was turned into a screen play. Hollywood does not produce movies like this. This movie was produced by Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia on a budget of \$100,000.00. The actors were church volunteers, not professionals. They used one camera. When the movie aired in 2007, it immediately grossed over \$1 million, and went on to make more than \$10.2 million. DVDs have produced much more.

Facing the Giants is available on Kindle and as an audio book.

I highly recommend this book. It's a good read for everyone, but especially for young people.

A shopper was in a supermarket with his tightwad friend when two men held up the store. As the robbers started going through customer pockets, the man's tightwad friend tried to hand him something. He whispered to the friend, "Don't give me a gun. I won't use it." The tightwad said, "It's not a gun. It's the \$50.00 I owe you."

VAGUE WHEN CERTAINTY COUNTS THE MOST

When traveling abroad, a passport is a **must**. Yes! A **MUST!** You can't cross the border, get on the cruise ship or board the plane without it. Nada! No way! The best excuses are worthless. No amount of pleading matters in the least, even with tears. There's no sympathy.

Over the years, I have talked to thousands of people about their eternal destiny. For every person, it's heaven or hell. It seems everybody wants to go to heaven.

Most people are aware that the only way to go to heaven when they die is through Jesus Christ. He said it Himself, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,*" **John 14:6**. The apostle Peter said, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,*" **Acts 4:12**. Of all things which are clear in the Bible, the clearest is that to be saved and go to heaven when you die, you must trust Jesus Christ. He's the only one who can get you there.

Trust is not merely believing that He exists or that He can take care of your everyday needs. It's not baptism, joining a church or saying a prayer. It's not quitting sins and being a better person. No number of good works or intentions will do it. *Trusting Christ* is depending wholly and solely on Him as your only hope for heaven. It's a moment of desperation, a moment when you realize that in spite of your best efforts, without Christ you will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. You come to grips with the fact that He died for *your* sins, paid your spiritual death penalty with His own blood and that He rose from the dead so that you might live, be saved from the eternal damnation of Hell. In that moment of desperation, you give up on all you are and can do for yourself. You depend on Him, *trust* Him and Him alone to forgive your sins and give you eternal life. He becomes your hope, *your only hope*.

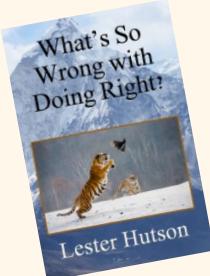
At that moment, you are saved, born again into the family of God. It's a definite, distinct moment in time when the greatest transformation possible in a person's life occurs.

Yet, of the thousands with whom I have talked about this most important of all matters in their life, most are vague. "*I think it happened; I'm not sure just when.*" "*I was baptized and joined a church.*" "*I had a really emotional religious experience. I was sincere, and I cried a lot.*" "*I felt saved.*" "*I hope I'm saved.*"

Time and again I've asked, "*When did it happen. Was it on a Sunday; a Friday? Where were you; at home, at work, at church? Were you alone; somebody with you? Tell me about it. What brought you to that pivotal moment? I simply want to hear your testimony of salvation.*" Too many times, I've encountered uncertainty, hedging and vagueness at best.

Oh, my soul aches! On the most crucial issue of life for every person, there is uncertainty. On the matter that determines eternal life or eternal damnation, "*I don't know for sure. I can't give you a clear testimony of my salvation. I don't know for sure where I was, who was there or what really happened. I'm not certain on the details of when I think I got saved. I'm not even sure just when; there were several times in my life when it might have happened.*" Death is certain. At that instant it's either heaven or hell, but "*I don't know for sure. I have no clear testimony of salvation.*" The Bible says you can know that you are saved, "*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God,*" **1 John 5:13**. Note well those words, "*that ye may know that ye have eternal life.*"

If you don't know that you are saved, you need to come to Him now, and get this most important of all matters settled once and for all. Stop holding on to a straw, some mystical time of which you are not certain. Nail it down once and for all. Make that decision which will determine where you spend eternity. Take out the uncertainty. There's too much at stake for you to remain uncertain.

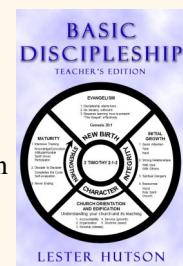


You really ought to read this book. You won't particularly like it, but you'll know it's true. You will also know lots of people in your life who ought to read it, and you'll wish everybody would read it. Twenty-five chapters, 313 pages of common-sense, basic Christian thinking which America and this world desperately need.

BASIC DISCIPLESHIP REVISED AND AVAILABLE

Both my *Basic Discipleship Teacher's Manual* and *Basic Discipleship Student Workbook* have been edited and corrected for grammatical errors.

The *Teacher's Manual* is available in electronic format from Amazon. The *Student Workbook* is available as a free download on my personal website in Products > Free Resources.



Margaret and I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a blessed and beautiful Thanksgiving, a VERY Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

