

TIDINGS

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WEST TEXAS DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

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Upward In Worship, Inward in Discipleship, Outward in Evangelism



From the Heart of the District Superintendent

The Depth of God's Love



*Glenn & Betty Beaver
Superintendent*

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthian believers in chapter two he is instructing them regarding the wisdom of God. One of the things which he does is to quote Isaiah 64:4, "What eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not entered into the heart of man, [all that] God has prepared (made and keeps ready) for those who love Him [who hold Him in affectionate reverence promptly obeying Him and gratefully recognizing the benefits He has bestowed]." Then in 1 Corinthians 2:10 he gives some powerful insights into the depth of God's love, "Yet to us God has unveiled and revealed them by and through His Spirit, for the [Holy] Spirit searches diligently, exploring and examining everything, even **sounding the profound and bottomless things of God** [the divine counsels and things hidden and beyond man's scrutiny]."

The depths of the ocean have been charted, since the early days of sailing, using a method called **sounding**. A sounding line, a rope that has a weight attached, is lowered over the side of the ship. When the weight hits the seafloor, the line goes slack and is marked at the water's surface. After pulling the weighted rope back on board the ship, the sailor then measures the rope from the water mark to the weight, thus telling them the depth of the water. Of course, in modern times sailors use sonar sound waves to accomplish the same thing. We must recognize the weight on God's rope of love is Jesus and He determined even before the world was formed that He was willing to give His only begotten Son and whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!

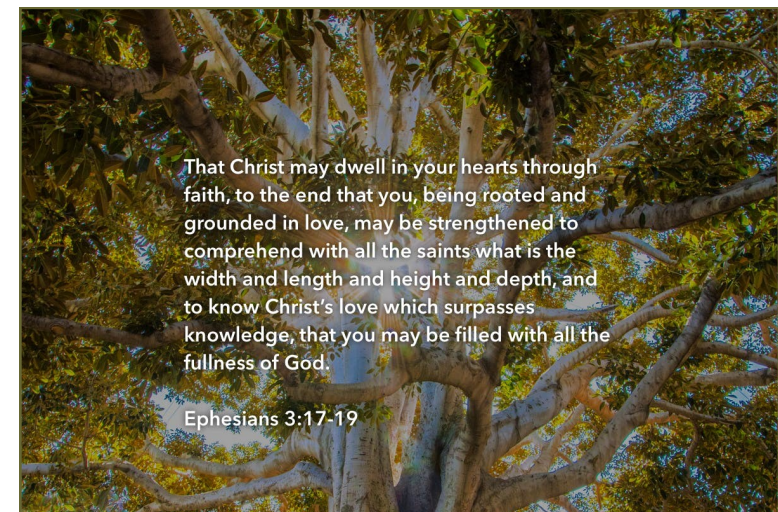
John 3:16 records the words of Jesus and His expression of the depth of God's love, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John wrote in 1 John 3:16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Paul describes the love of God to the Ephesian believers in Ephesians 3:17-19 NKJV, "That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." This passage in Ephesians describes how the love of God is an all surrounding love and calls us to consider how wide, long, deep and high is God's love. Paul is reflecting the same understanding which 1 John 4:8 records, "God is love."

In other writings of Paul to the Corinthian church in chapter thirteen he says, "And so faith, hope, love abide [faith - conviction and belief respecting man's relation to God and divine things; hope - joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation; love - true affection for God and man, growing out of God's love for and in us], these three; but the greatest of these is love." Jeremy Taylor reflects on verse thirteen in

this way, "**Joy** is love exulting; **Peace** is love in repose; **Long-suffering** is love untiring; **Gentleness** is love in society; **Goodness** is love in action; **Faith** is love on the battlefield; **Meekness** is love at school; **Temperance** is love in training. Love is the greatest thing that God can give us; for Himself is love; and it is the greatest thing we can give to God, for it will give ourselves, and with it all that is ours."

Often when Betty and I attend national gatherings of our fellowship we are invited guests during banquets. There is generally a person at the door to escort or direct us to our designated table. This is very helpful since there are many tables and large crowds. We appreciate their assistance. This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Thessalonian church in his second letter 3:5, "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ." The word **direct** is highlighted by Rick Renner in his book **Sparkling Gems from the Greek 2** in this way. "God does more than guide and escort us. He wants to meet us and lead us so our hearts don't wander aimlessly on the way to completion in His love. God Himself wants to put us on a straight path and steer us right into His love. God doesn't want us to waste time and energy or to take too long to get into His love. He wants to steer us right into His love. The Lord desires to put us on a straight path and be our personal Guide, escorting us into His love with no distractions or unneeded detours along the way." Once we are directed by the Father into the love of Christ we then must do what Jude admonishes us to do in verse 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." As we have experienced the love of Christ we can rest assured of Paul's writings in Romans 8:35, "Who shall ever separate us from Christ's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword?" Verse 37 records, "no" then verses 38 & 39 completes the thought, "For I am persuaded beyond doubt (am sure) that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

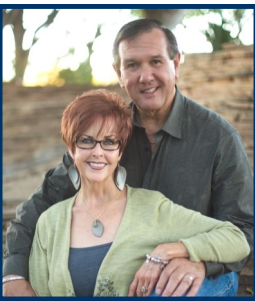
This my friends expresses the **depth of God's love for us!**



That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strengthened to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17-19

District Secretary/Treasurer



Billy & Bettye
Nickell

Stewardship Truths, Genesis 1:26-31

For students of Scripture the **Law of First Mention** is likely a familiar guideline for studying the Word. Many theologians recommend this method for better understanding the various laws and topics of the Bible, especially the **book of origin**, Genesis. In Genesis we find the seeds of most major doctrines; the Trinity, marriage, family, man's fallen nature, the devil's schemes, God's mercy and grace, as well as stewardship. The **Law of First Mention** calls for readers to go back to the first time a subject is mentioned and observe the setting and circumstances surrounding the event or occasion, which establishes the tone for the topic throughout the Bible. Genesis provides a plethora of examples, such as fleshly temptation, disobedience to God's command, murder, alcohol, drunkenness, and other themes. In each of these we see God's position on the matter, subsequent immediate and long-term repercussions and more. Genesis 1 is the first time the doctrine of stewardship is illustrated as it relates to man's responsibility to God, and indeed, the same tenor can be seen in all sixty-six books of the Holy Writ. While stewardship involves the time, talent, and treasury of the believer, this article is addressed to the latter of the three. It is ironic that the subject of money is so misunderstood among those who profess the Bible to be "the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct." Some of the questions worthy of being asked are, "Why are so many Christians opposed to the mention of money and stewardship in church when it is one of the top subjects addressed in the Old and New Testaments?" One source reports there are over 2,300 verses in the Bible relating to generosity, giving and stewardship. Approximately two-thirds of the parables of Jesus deal with one or more aspects of stewardship. "Why are financial principals misunderstood by so many in the church, while Scripture provides answers for giving, saving, investing, frugality, diversification of assets and more?" The wise man of Proverbs behooves, "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways and be wise!— Which, having no chief, overseer, or ruler, provides her food in the summer and gathers her supplies in the harvest" (Proverbs 6:6-8 Amplified). Just as Chris-

tians should not be "ignorant" concerning spiritual gifts and manifestations, neither should we be dull or ignorant of stewardship truths. Here are three of several familiar insights each of us should keep in focus.

Stewardship Recognizes God Owns Everything. While the word stewardship is not mentioned in the Genesis text, God's instructions to Adam concerning his responsibility to manage and oversee the garden is without dispute. The Creator's directives made clear to our first parents the fact of His ownership and their possession. "And God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it [using all its vast resources in the service of God and man]; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth. And God said, See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the land and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to all the animals on the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the ground—to everything in which there is the breath of life—I have given every green plant for food. And it was so" (Genesis 1:28-30 Amplified). Further evidence of Jehovah's ownership is seen in His warning of prohibition of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. "And the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and guard and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and blessing and calamity you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:15-17 Amplified). As Owner it was God's prerogative to give rules and set boundaries He required of Adam. He has never abdicated that position of Ownership. Years ago I heard a well known speaker admonish his audience to "transfer ownership" of time, talent and treasury to God." That sounds good, but in fact a person cannot transfer ownership of something they've never owned! This fact is stated repeatedly throughout Scripture! "The earth belongs to God! Everything in all the world is His" (Psalm 24:1 Living Bible). If I believe He is indeed the Owner of everything, I will acknowledge His ownership in every area of my life, bar none! If he owns everything . . . then nothing I possess is mine! That makes Him Lord of my family, CEO of my business, Governor of my time, Ruler of my relationships, and the final Authority of my every decision! He owns my every thought and He is Lord of every conversation! His ownership means He owns the ninety percent of what's left after I've given my tithe!

Note the two domains David mentions in this psalm. **First is earth.** It's been pointed out the reason God asserts his ownership over the earth is because it's the only place in creation that has trouble remembering Who is in charge! The other billions of celestial orbs give no question or protest as to who owns and controls them, only this little planet out in the boondocks of space - just a microscopic speck of dust in comparison to the suns, stars and satellites of the stellar heavens - hasn't learned this truth! He told the Israelites in Leviticus 25:33 that He owns the land. He announces in Psalm 50:10 that He owns all the animals on the earth, and He states in Haggai 2:8 His ownership of all the gold and silver! He owns the Redwood Forrest, the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, the Mighty Mississippi, the Great Lakes, the Rocky Mountains, the Shanandoah Valley and the Grand Tetons, and He owns you and me and everything that's part of our lives! The **second domain David identifies is the world.** Concerning both earth and the world, the writer states, "and the fulness thereof," a word that means, "that which fills entire contents." He owns **everything!**

Stewardship Realizes We Give Ourselves First. God has a plan for our time, talent and treasury and at the top of His priorities is for us to first and foremost give ourselves to Him. The apostle Paul provides insight to showing this in 2 Corinthians 8. There he writes about the Macedonian churches and explains important details about their giving/stewardship. "Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do" (2 Corinthians 8:1-5 NLT). The apostle used the Christians of Macedonia as a backdrop to motivate the believers in Corinth to join in generously helping the hurting church in Jerusalem. He points out a number of amazing things about these exemplary stewards: First, they had been severely tested. The word affliction used in the King James means, "to crush, press, compress, squeeze." Next, he points out they were desperately poor. Wycliffe Bible Commentary notes the meaning in the original Greek is, "down-to-the-bottom poverty," yet outward circumstances did not change their inward attitude! In the midst of extreme poverty and crushing persecution they experienced a God-freedom that only comes by understanding God's ownership of their lives and possessions. Paul first brings to light how the stewardship of the Macedonian believers was done with abundance of joy. Second, they gave lavishly! Wycliffe says, "They gave sacrificially beyond their means." We would say today, "they gave what they could not afford to give." Third, Paul says they gave passionately. "Beggings us most insistently for the favor and the fellowship of contributing in this ministration for [the relief and support of] the saints [in Jerusalem]" (2 Corinthians 8:4 Amplified). Abundance of joy, lavish generosity, in the midst of down-to-the-bottom poverty and crushing troubles is only possible by freely giving oneself first and recognizing **God Owns Everything!**

Stewardship Reaps Blessings Or Curses. George E. Brazell explains in Dynamic Stewardship Strategies, "A very early use of the term steward was to describe a person hired to care for pigs. Later, the term was applied to anyone who managed the property of another." We are God's stewards and how we oversee and manage determines if we enjoy rewards or experience curses. Adam failed in his stewardship of the garden and his rebellion invoked God's curse. When the Israelites lived as responsible stewards they were greatly blessed and highly favored by the Sovereign and respected of other nations. When they disrespected and despised God's commands the result was defeat, servitude, poverty and death! Like Adam, we have been given dominion! Jesus has given us the Keys to the Kingdom, however, we do not determine our future, contrary to popular thinking. We determine how we will steward what God has placed in our hands and our stewardship determines our future!

Director of Church Ministries

The Joys of Ministry



Tracy & Cara Lynn
McWilliams

Statics abound everywhere regarding the pressures of ministry and the negative impact it can have upon the pastor and their family. Every pastor knows all too well about the perils of dealing with conflict, long hours, budget woes, neglect, and burnout. Ministry can be stressful at times, but there seems to be, at least in my opinion, an unfortunate emphasis on the negative side of pastoral ministry. Pastors need to be guarded and resist the temptation of letting the stresses and demands of ministry to quench the great joy we ought to have for the great service we have been entrusted with by Jesus Christ. No one knew the hardships of ministry better than the Apostle Paul (See 2 Corinthians 11:23-28). Yet in writing to a young pastor by the name of Timothy, who was facing the heavy burden of responsibility in the church at Ephesus, he wrote the following, "**And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry**" (1 Timothy 1:12). Ministry is not just something that is to be endured; rather it is something to be enjoyed. Please allow me to highlight some of the Joys of Ministry.

1) The Joy of Purpose. Ephesians 4:11 teaches that pastors are part of a group of leaders that God gives to the church. Ministry is unique in that it is not something that you choose, but rather, it is something that chooses you. Most ministers can still vividly recall when they first felt the call of God into full-time ministry. The call of God will sustain you through the highs and lows of ministry.

2) The Joy of Pastoring. Joy in ministry will be determined largely by how you define success. There are many church growth models that stress the importance of being a good leader, visionary or CEO. While there may be some value in studying these things, they fail to really encapsulate the essence of what God has called us to be. When studying the Scriptures, one will discover that the term *pastor* is not so much a title as it is a function. The New Testament uses the Greek word *poimen* for the word *pastor* which is most commonly translated as *shepherd*. Peter builds upon this analogy when he writes, "**Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly**" (1 Peter 5:2). One of the great joys of pastoring is simply doing life with the church family. Salvations, baby dedications, weddings, funerals, and discipleship create a tapestry for some of my fondest memories of being a pastor.

3) The Joy of People. When writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul observed, "**After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! Yes, you are our pride and joy**" (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). Ministering to people can cause some of our deepest pains, but they can also be the source of some of our greatest joys.

4) The Joy of Provision. No one enters into the ministry for the money. I have always lived by the adage, "Where God guides, He provides." There have been times when we were financially tight and we wondered how we were going to make it; however, God always supplied for our needs. In our first church, there was a man who rose up against us and the church. He started spreading all kinds of rumors and tried to turn others against us. One summer we were going through a tough time financially. There was a lady in our church who sold pies at a little grocery store in the next town, and it just happened to be the same store where this man worked in the meat department. She knew our situation so she would go in the store and explain that she knew a couple going through a hard time and asked if they had any day-old bread or cheese, they would be willing to donate. This man heard about what she was doing and loaded her down with meat and even gave financially. My wife and I have often laughed at how God provided for our family. The man who was against us was unaware that he was actually helping us.

5) The Joy of Preaching. I love both the preparation and presentation side of preaching. Preaching, at times, can be both frustrating and frightening, but it can also be enjoyable and exciting. It is exhilarating when we see the Word of God working in and transforming people's lives.

6) The Joy of Perpetual Rewards. "**And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away**" (1 Peter 5:4). What we do in ministry does make a difference and will pay off with eternal dividends.

To be called into the ministry is one of the highest honors and privileges I can imagine. And, with the Apostle Paul, I can say, "**I'm so grateful to Christ Jesus for making me adequate to do this work. He went out on a limb you know, in trusting me with this ministry**" (1 Timothy 1:12, The Message).



Around West Texas

West Texas Bible Institute

Ministers

February 11, 2023

Certified: New Testament Survey

Licensed: Acts

Ordained: Prayer & Worship

March 18, 2023

Certified: Intro to Theology

Licensed: Prison Epistles

Ordained: Corinthians

Deadline to register for the March class is February 24, 2023. Contact Tracy McWilliams for more information.

Annual Church Ministries Report

Please submit your church's ACMR by paper through the mail or online at acmr.ag.org. All churches are encouraged to submit their information.

Available for Ministry:

Gene Benningfield	806.456.2029
Emilio Bustamante	432.385.5626
Larry Boyd	806.778.7677
Kelly Breckenridge	806.787.0355
Eric Brooks	940.473.1297
Danny Brown	806.577.3580
Brad Froese	806.928.2815
Margie Gonzales	806.282.0534
Byron Jones	432.258.3873
Mike Matheny	806.200.9959
J.C. Owen	432.254.8629
Jerry Pollard	806.330.0969
David Sasse	806.300.8717
Marcus Tanner	903.330.1560
Justin Unwin	806.220.3200

*I have loved you
with an everlasting*

LOVE

Jeremiah 31:3

PROVERBS 3:3

³ LET NOT STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS FORSAKE YOU;
BIND THEM AROUND YOUR NECK; WRITE THEM ON THE TABLET
OF YOUR HEART.^{ESV}



Avery Dunlap and **Cullen Williams** were united in marriage on December 18, 2022 at Athens, Texas. Cullen and Avery serve as Chi Alpha missionaries to Texas Tech. We pray God's blessing on their marriage but also on their ministry.

Prayer Requests: **Gene King**, complete recovery from having stones removed from his bladder and prostate; **Becky Nenstiel**, complete healing from cancer; **Sarah Garrison**, (daughter of Joe and Becky Nenstiel), complete recovery from surgery on a blocked artery from her heart to her stomach; **Andrea Unwin**, recovery from surgery; **Sondra Bocchieri**, (retired World Missionary and daughter of Kay Stafford), had a heart attack and had surgery to implant two stints; **Kay Stafford**, full recovery from a stroke; **Marvin Gilbert**, malignant tumor, wisdom for doctors for treatment; **Mylin-da Wood**, (sister of Tracy McWilliams), is facing having a feeding tube placement due to the progression of ALS; **Annette Newberry**, recovery from hand surgery & dementia; **Regina Gonzalez**, medical issues and Ankylosing Spondylitis (an autoimmune disease); **Chuck & Judy Redger**, complete healing and return of energy; **Charlotte Boyd**, Alzheimers; **Rey Rodriguez**, Muscular Dystrophy; **George Mullins**, recovery from a stroke; **Cliff Houghton**, autoimmune disease, asthma; **Patsy Anderson**, (mother of Kevin Anderson), heart issues; **Sue Stevens**, (mother of Darla Anderson), Dementia; **Brenda Van Hoose**, Ankylosing Spondylitis (an autoimmune disease); and **Perry Shuffield**, healing & strength.



Christian Sattesahn
Women of Purpose
Director

WTX WOMEN

Spring Conference

SATURDAY, APRIL 1ST

\$55

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

PLAINVIEW FIRST ASSEMBLY

1300 N I27

COFFEE | WORSHIP | TEACHING | FOOD | CUSTOM HAT BAR

DOORS OPEN AT 9:30 AM

REGISTRATION OPENS ON JANUARY 23, 2023

WWW.WTWOMEN.COM/EVENTS

RYAN HUGHES
KIDS CAMP 1
May 31-June 3

SCOTT BERKEY
KIDS CAMP 2
July 12-15

EDDIE NESBY
YOUTH CAMP 1
June 5-9

JOSH WELLBORN
YOUTH CAMP 2
July 17-21

FOLLOW

ROARING SPRINGS CAMP

thumbnail.jpg

**Nick, Alicia,
Nash, & Anna**

Need more info
about our events?
WWW.WTXNEXT.COM
has everything you need!

SUMMER SOUTHERN
ASIA AIM TRIP

WITH OUR FRIENDS,
Chris & Carey

JUNE 17-26, 2023

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Come serve our Texas Tech Chi Alpha team and learn what it looks like to be a Tech student, reconciling other students to Christ.

INTERESTED?
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AIM

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\$65

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*ADDITIONAL \$10 PER EXTRA CATEGORY

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2023
WTX
DISTRICT
FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY 24-25, 2023

LOCATION: CHRISTIAN LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD - LUBBOCK, TX

PK RETREAT 2023

The retreat took place at Roaring Springs Camp on January 14-16, 2023!

We had so much fun at this retreat!! We love our PKs and love when we have the opportunity to pour into their lives!

H.A.M.R.
High Altitude Men's Retreat

February 16-18, 2023

**Bonita Park
Ruidoso, NM**

Tim Enloe
Evangelist

Phil McGechie
Men's Ministry Director

\$160 - Early Bird Rate
\$175 - After 2/03/23
(Includes 2 nights stay and all meals)

****No more cabins available****

****Only 12 private rooms left (out of 28) - \$100/room****
(Reserve online)

For more info and to register, go to: wtmen.com

RENEWAL REVIVAL REFRESHING

Don't miss this weekend with men from all over West Texas!

Register now!