



CONNECTED

October-December, 2022

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A Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas Everyone



THIS MUST BE THE PLACE!

JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER WITH THE HUTSONS

I'm so glad the Lord lets me continue in His service. I'm fully aware that He doesn't need me; His work will go right on when I'm dead and gone. I need Him, and realize that it is only by His amazing grace that at this age I am still mobile, of sound mind and quite active in His service. You can rest assured that every day I thank and praise Him in my heart.

The highlight of these months was unquestionably celebrating 60 years of marriage to the love of my life, Margaret. Unquestionably she has been God's greatest mortal gift to me. Not long ago, a friend asked me, "What do you consider to be the greatest era or years of your life?" I didn't even have to think about it. I told her, "Right now. These years where I am in life." There are many reasons why I say that, but the biggest is Margaret Hutson. With her, I have come to realize that true love never stops growing. After 60 years, I love her more than I ever have. We spent a couple of weeks in August in cool Colorado; just the two of us along the mighty and beautiful Rio Grande. What a joy to reminisce about so many great blessings and outstanding experiences God has given us! So many good years! Great friends who traveled with us like Earl and Paula Baugh, Leland and JoAnn Lanier, Bill and Joyce Jackson and so many more. Most of them are in Heaven. We visited many places particularly special to us. We spent considerable time making decisions and plans about this final stage of our lives.

A highlight of a different sort was the annual [Rodgers Baptist Church](#) Missions Conference.

My, it was so uplifting, informative and inspiring. On Wednesday night it was such a privilege to preach the concluding message. My appreciation to Pastor Ron Thomas and the Rodgers Baptist Church.

I was also privileged to teach a group at [Northwest Baptist Church](#) in Houston how to teach *Basic Bible Truths*. From time to time, I conduct this training seminar. What a blessing and joy to teach others how to effectively bring people to Christ! Quite often I receive reports from people around this world who are using this simple tool to bring people to Christ. Hallelujah! To God be all the praise and glory.

In September, I started a new 8-session series on *God's Prophetic Calendar* at Northwest Baptist Church. Except for two, all of the sessions will be on Sunday afternoons at 2:00. In September, I was also privileged to spend a weekend with the Highland Missionary Baptist Church in Dublin, Texas. Awareness of the reality that my days of being able to travel and speak in other churches is limited makes occasions very special to me.

My gratitude to each of you who reads this *Connected Newsletter*. My life has been blessed and enriched by the kind feedback from so many of you. If you know someone who would like to be notified when these newsletters are posted, please ask him/her to email the correct email address to me.

You can reach us at lesterhutson@gmail.com

A TIME OF REFLECTION

During our special quiet time in Colorado, I did lots of reflecting, both backward and forward. Back in 2008 one of the closest friends I've ever had fly-fished with me in Beaver Creek just out of South Fork. Just before we left the trout stream, we were at a nice pool. A good-sized trout kept rising. "Leland, drop this renegade right over there." He lifted his fly right into a mighty fir tree. I tied on another fly. We left three flies in that tree, and the trout in the pool. The following May, I preached the funeral of my dear friend and buddy.

I had to go back to that pool. The big fir tree has been cut, and the pool is now a rapid. I sat on the stump a long time; just reflecting on what a treasure I had in Leland Lanier. So many great memories! I felt like I touched his soul. For me, it was a powerful, moving moment. Back in 2008, I never dreamed that would be our last trip.

Mortal life is now! God forbid that we take our dear loved ones (and other glorious blessings) for granted! When is the last time you told someone what they mean to you? Friends, don't neglect until you have to send your roses to the funeral home.

I've told lots of people, "I'm not nearly as interested in how many days I have left as in how I spend each day I have left." I'd rather have 10 good, fruitful days than 1,000 wasted days living for self.

It's good to take a look at your life. What are you doing for Heaven's sake? Is your house in order? Have you made preparations for your death: a will, a burial policy, how you want your estate handled, an executor? I've watched lots of people die, and conducted hundreds of funerals. So far, I've never observed children happy about having to pay for a parent's funeral and make choices about personal goods which the parent should have made.

God Loves You

MY NEW BOOK SHOULD BE READY BY YEAR'S END

For almost two years, my central work focus has been on writing a new book which I have called *What's So Wrong with Doing Right*. This effort has dominated my thoughts, and consumed much of my time. Thanks to you who have been patient with me.

I am so happy to tell you that the book is in the editing stage, and should be available in both electronic and paper formats on Amazon by year's end. Find [Amazon](#) on the Internet. In the *Books* window, enter my name. You will find this book along with others which God has allowed me to place there.

In the second, third and fourth centuries, the government of Rome was making life for Christians extremely hard. Christianity was largely misunderstood, and Christians were being falsely accused of cannibalism, incest, disloyalty and many other evils. A few Christian men began writing answers to the allegations. They showed how untrue the charges were. Their writings were known as apologetics. The apostle Peter wrote these words: *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear," 1 Peter 3:15*. For "answer" he used the Greek word *apologia*. Greek scholar James Strong says it means, "a plea ('apology'): - answer (for self), clearing of self, defence."

What's So Wrong with Doing Right is a Christian apologetic. It tells who true Bible Christians are and distinguishes them from empty professors. We find ourselves in an age when the existence of God is largely denied worldwide. Huge numbers of people view Christianity as corrupt, narrow-minded, bigoted and bad for humanity. As sad as it is for me to say it, many professing Christians in the name of God have made Christianity look really bad.

I am VERY passionate about this book. It's a book every Christian would do well to read, but *What's So Wrong with Doing Right* was not written primarily for Christians. This book is aimed at people who have become disillusioned with God and *the church*. There are thousands who have walked away. In this book, I admit the sins of too many professing Christians and plead with those who have become disillusioned to take a second look.

Society is sick; unraveling: violence, lawlessness, corruption, greed, selfishness and troubles everywhere. Is there hope? Is there a medicine that can turn around this world's steady march to certain destruction? *What's So Wrong with Doing Right* says there is. The only medicine that can turn around individual lives, this nation and the world is found in true, biblical Christianity. This is not a book of sermons or Bible studies, and it's not written to Christians; it's a common-sense, reasoned appeal to people who know there's trouble; but who have written-off Christianity. It's especially aimed at young people.

On the back cover of this book are these words: "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.*"

"The person who won't read has no advantage over the person who can't."

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Isaiah 46:3

I HAD TO DECIDE WHAT I WOULD DO WITH ME

A few times in my life, I have experienced a catharsis moment. At an unsuspecting time, a light bulb seemed to turn on in my mind. Suddenly, I grasped insight that transformed my thinking for the better from that point forward.

One of those moments happened one weekday in 1966 when I was waking up to at least a little of what it meant to be a fully vocational pastor of one of the Lord's churches. I was about two years into my pastorate at the 11th Street Baptist Church in Beaumont. As reality set in and a sizeable number of bubbles had already burst in my head, I was feeling pretty overwhelmed; and quite incompetent for the responsibilities that were now mine.

Not long before, I had been asked to preach at a preaching conference made up mostly of pastors and missionaries whom I held in highest esteem. As I stood up to preach in front of those men, I had never felt so intimidated. For me, the bar was too high. I knew I could never preach like they did, or know all those great truths which seem to ooze from them. I have to admit that it was a hard time for me. I felt very low and discouraged.

A few days later as I meditated on these things, many things began taking shape in my mind. (1) I faced up to the fact I couldn't preach like those men, and that their scholarship was far, far beyond me. (2) I came to grips that God didn't expect me to be them; He expected me to be me, and to give Him my very best. Routinely! Not a 75%-80% effort, but 100% all of the time. That's all. He wasn't comparing me with them, and I shouldn't either. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, I would be judged for how I served Him; not on how I stacked-up against others. Yes, that day I came to grips with the fact that it's God and me, and that my assignment is to please Him.

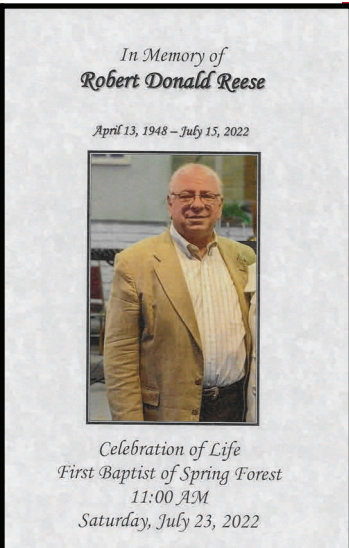
As that light turned on, (3) I realized that I could love just as much, work just as hard, study, learn and dedicate myself to the people who God placed in my life just as much as anybody including my greatest heroes. That day, I determined before the God who purchased me with His blood, that I would invest my all into His work. I would do all of the things that He place within my power to do, and let Him take care of the preaching, scholarship and wisdom which were so weak in me.

For me, that was a revolutionary day. I committed to do the things which were within my power to do, and do them as good as I possibly could. I determined to do them first for Him, and hoped that others would be blessed. That day routine excellence to the glory of my great God became a part of me. I haven't always succeeded, but it's my heart. When I got my eyes off others and on the Lord, it was liberating. Suddenly, the pressure was on me to please Him, not my peers.

It wasn't a Sunday or revival, and I wasn't on my knees *down front*; but in my heart, I was prone before God. For me, it was a life-long commitment to my Master. It's not the emotional shows we put on in front of others which really count; it happens in the heart when it's honest and broken before Him from whom nothing is hidden. Yes, it was just Him and me. I had to make a decision, and I did.

"Without God, there is no reason to say 'no' to anything."

C. S. Lewis



This dear pastor brother and friend of mine touched many, many lives for the better. First Baptist Church of Spring Forest, Texas

"If you must get your parents' permission to go on a field trip or to take an aspirin in school, but not to get an abortion — you might live in a nation that was founded by geniuses, but is run by idiots."
 Jeff Foxworthy

DOUBLE EASY

The way of salvation (forgiveness of sins and eternal life) is truly double easy.

It's easy to be saved. Just *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," Acts 16:31.* When you face up to the fact that you are a sinner who cannot save yourself, and recognize Jesus Christ as your only hope because He died, was buried, and rose again for you, you can simply trust Him as your own personal Savior (believe on Him), and He will save you. It's that easy.

It's also easy to completely miss salvation (forgiveness of sins and eternal life). It's easy to think you're saved because you're a "good person," you were baptized, you believe in God, you're a member of a church, you're sincere or you do lots of good works. The way of salvation is not in what we do or how good we are; it's exclusively in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's easy to miss that.

It's so easy to be saved, but it's also easy to be lost; and everybody is either lost or saved.

In a London department store:
BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS...

A BOOK I HAVE READ AND HIGHLY RECOMMEND

Atomic Habits
 By James Clear
 Penguin Random House, LLC
 New York, 2018
 ISBN: 9780735211292

Oh, how I wish I had encountered this book much younger in my life. Books produce a variety of impacts. Some are very informative. Others are highly educational. There are funny books, those that are intriguing, others entertaining and a few are inspirational. *Atomic Habits* is in a rare league; not quite like any I've ever read, but better than most.

It challenged, inspired and pushed me to the core. *Atomic Habits* will motivate and urge you to a higher plane, make you believe you can be a better person and show you how. Step-by-step! This is not a *new fad* or *get-rich-quick* piece of salesmanship. *Atomic Habits* is about as practical and applicable as books come. In short, it deals with the enormous long-term power of good habits and how to develop them.

After a short section talking about habits and how they shape your life and identify who you are, *Atomic Habits* moves into the heart of the book: *how to build better habits in 4 simple steps*. I was struck by the book's simplicity. Anybody can do it. Anybody! Before finishing the book, author James Clear presents in order the 4 laws for building good habits, and thoroughly explains each one:

- Make the habit obvious.
- Make the habit attractive.
- Make the habit easy.
- Make the habit satisfying.

As I moved through the rationale for each step, I couldn't help thinking of the great parade of people whom I have encountered throughout my life. Everybody has habits; and it's virtually impossible to not see the habits of the people around you, good or bad. Most of the time, winners and losers are the products of their habits. As you read *Atomic Habits*, you will know that Mr. Clear has your number.

This book is extremely straightforward and succinct. The thinking, logic and development is remarkably clear, and the conclusions are self-evident. The book is easy to read, and compelling. The positions advocated by Mr. Clear are backed by scores of references to well-known and proven discoveries and to a multitude of great examples.

Atomic Habits is not a religious book; but as I read the book, I saw Bible teaching after Bible teaching come to light. I wish I could say that I am practicing all that Mr. Clear teaches in this book. To my own loss, I must confess that I still have a long way to go; but I can say that through serious study of the Bible, I have arrived at many of the good practices advocated in *Atomic Habits*. So much of what he advocates is right there in the Bible.

James Clear is an internationally recognized authority on self-improvement, particularly in helping individuals and companies become more successful. He is a regular speaker at Fortune 500 companies, and his work is used by the NFL, NBA and MLB. He is an author and speaker focused on habits, decision-making, and continuous improvement. Through his Habits Academy he has taught thousands of managers, coaches and teachers. His website receives millions of visitors each month, and hundreds of thousands subscribe to his email newsletter. Throughout *Atomic Habits*, he refers to dozens of helpful habit-building resources which are available on his website.

In my life, I have read many books; some great, and some not so great. *Atomic Habits* is a REALLY good book, one of the best, most helpful book I have ever read. This book receives one of my strongest recommendations. Regardless of where you are in life, you would do yourself a favor to read this book.

BOOKS NOW AVAILABLE ON AMAZON

Here are some of my books which you can find on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). They are available in both paper and electronic formats.











MEETING EXPECTATIONS

They may not admit it, but nearly everyone has expectations of how you should behave and what you should do with your time. Yes, you read it right. They have expectations about “*how you should behave*,” and “*what you should do with your time*.” Yes, “*You*.” They may not consciously *think it*, and certainly they’re unlikely to “*say it*.” Until you *mess up* or don’t behave like they think you should. At that point, the expectations which were there all along start coming to the surface. “*Would you believe that?*” “*I’d have never thought it.*” “*That’s so out of character.*” “*Oh boy, you never know.*”

It’s not that you do something that is wrong or sinful; what you did or didn’t do just wasn’t what people expected. The family thought you’d go to A & M, but you went to Texas. They thought you’d become an engineer, but you became a missionary. You let your hair grow too long, and you got a tattoo. Your convictions about true, biblical Christianity just didn’t allow you to buy into the American Dream.

Don’t imagine that expectations do not affect us; they do. To some degree, we’re all sensitive to what other people think and expect. Many sociologists think *mores* are the most powerful of all social influences. Not many people like to stand out and be the odd-ball, especially when the behavior is bucking expectations. We all like to “*fit*.”

That sensitivity doesn’t go away when we get old; we still want very much to meet expectations, including those we have for ourselves. I still expect myself to work just as many hours every day, be at every church service and workday, be available to everybody all of the time and be as productive as I ever was. I still feel that jab when somebody calls at 8:00 A.M. and asks, “*Did I wake you up?*” Questions and comments tell you what people expect: “*Are you coming to that meeting?*” “*Did you make that call?*” “*That hospital visit?*” “*Follow up on that visitor?*” “*I sent you an email, but . . .*” “*I haven’t heard from you in a while.*”

A long time ago, I had to come to grips with the fact that I cannot meet most expectations. You will remember that wise old saying, “*You can please some of the people all of the time, and you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can’t please all of the people all of the time.*” After 68 years of full engagement in the work of the Lord, most of those years as a pastor; I can vouch for the truth of that wise old saying. Expectations are simply too many, too varied and too high.

What relief I found when I got hold of the truth that my job is to please one person, Jesus Christ! I want to meet the expectations of others and please them; but my first goal is to please Him who purchased me with His own blood. I can rest in that even when many are not too happy with me because I didn’t meet their expectations. As long as I “*do those things that are pleasing in his sight*” (1 John 3:22), other expectations seem to pale. I may not be always able to talk on the phone, meet with people or take on a new assignment; but I cannot allow the expectations of others to take me away from time with God in His Word and in prayer. I must pray for my family, people who are sick and hurting and for my yoke-fellows in the work of the Lord. I must give serious time to reading and meditation. I must win souls and leave behind materials that will reach and help people once I’m out of here and with my Blessed Redeemer. I cannot neglect my dear mate who has stood by me for over 60 years, and there must be a place for my family.

Do all you can to meet expectations, but never forget who is first in line. ALWAYS let your primary focus be on meeting God’s expectations. Some people will never understand, and you will feel the heat. Don’t let it get under your skin, and don’t fret. Be nice and kind to everybody, and do all you can to meet their legitimate expectations; but first and foremost, live for Him whose name is above every name. “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,*” Matthew 6:33.

DESCRIPTION: WHAT’S SO WRONG WITH DOING RIGHT

On front after front in America and 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, self-policing, good science and peace are addressed.

The 24 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.

What’s So Wrong with Doing Right is a Christian apologetic. Much that operates as “*Christian*” is not at all what the Bible, the Christian manual, defines Christianity to be. This book will help you distinguish between the real and the counterfeit.

There is extensive information in this book about a true one-on-one meeting with Jesus Christ. He transforms people who come to Him. You will see that true, Bible Christianity is far more than a secured eternal future; it changes for the better 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 which are currently destroying the people of Planet Earth*. It approaches the crisis in which we find ourselves both individually and corporately.

Grace to you, Pastor Hutson:

It is a joy to receive your newsletters and to see you and your Dear Margaret are well and continuing to serve our Great God. Particularly, I am encouraged by your frank discussions on finishing this race well. This is something I mediate on and ask God to give me the grace to finish well, not to miss any assignments He has for me, to live a holy life before Him -- not to waste my life.

You are one of the few people speaking openly about dying -- most people, even older, don’t talk about it. Death is a part of life that is ignored -- people want to live as though it is not coming -- I guess they are tied to the world in their minds. I want to live for Him and die well -- testimony intact. I want those who know me to have no doubt that I am with the Lord when I leave here. I want the memory of my life and gospel conversations to cause the lost I’ve encountered to cause them to repent and put their faith in Christ. I pray that every tract I’ve given will find its way into the hands of a lost soul that God will redeem.

Thank you for “*12 Things I Don’t Want As I Grow Old*.” It’s a keeper! Much love to you and Margaret. I pray the Lord will arrange things so we may travel to Texas sometime in 2023 and your schedule will allow us to see you both. God is Sovereign. If we don’t see you on this side again, we will see you in the presence of our Dear Lord Jesus Christ -- we are His children and His promises are true.

By His Grace,

Charma Dudley