



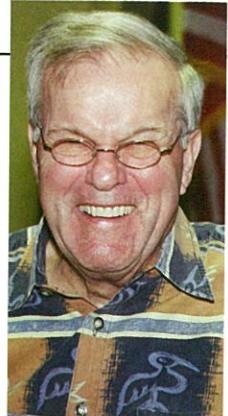
Spring 2011

GRAPEVINE

BIBLE TEACHING RESOURCES
by DON ANDERSON MINISTRIES

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**I've got my eye on the goal,
where God is beckoning us
onward—to Jesus. I'm off
and running, and I'm not
turning back.
So let's keep focused on that
goal, those of us who want
everything God has for us.
—Philippians 3:14-15 MSG**



COMMITMENT: Getting it Done and Finishing Strong

"Regardless of what came before or of what has yet to come, what matters most right now is how I choose to respond to the challenge before me. Will I lie down or will I fight? The choice is mine and I choose to finish strong."

—Dan Green¹

David Platt in the book *Radical* writes: "We were settling for a Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity is actually about abandoning ourselves."²

When it comes to an all-out commitment to Jesus Christ, we need to face reality. It is not going to be a romantic walk through the park or tip-toeing through the tulips.

Jesus in His resurrected body said to the disciples in John 20:21: "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (NASB).

In her insightful hymn "So Send I You," Margaret Clarkson expresses what it means to come to grips with the cost involved in following Jesus:

So send I you to labor unrewarded, To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown, To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing; So send I you to toil for me alone. / So send I you to bind the bruised and broken, o'er wand'ring souls to work, to weep, to wake, To bear the burdens of a world awear; So send I you to suffer for My sake. / So send I you to loneliness and longing, With

heart a-hung'ring for the loved and known, Forsaking home and kindred, friend and dear one; So send I you to know My love alone. / So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred, To eyes made blind because they will not see, To spend, tho' it be blood, to spend and spare not; So send I you to taste of Calvary.³

Jesus said in Luke 9:23: "If anyone wants to become My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (NET).

William Hendrickson explains that to "deny" oneself is to "substitute the discipline of Christ for the cravings of one's own sinful nature," and notes that this can be accomplished only by the "grace and power of God.... To be genuine, *basic* conversion must be followed by *daily* conversion."⁴

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* puts it this way:

"Whosoever will come after me, . . ." I must not confess myself and my own being, nor cling to myself, but abandon myself in a radical renunciation of myself, and not merely of my sins. I must no longer seek to establish my life of myself but resolutely accept death and allow myself to be established by Christ in discipleship.⁵

continued on page 11

GRAPEVINE

SPRING 2011

CONTENTS



Clipboard: Commitment: Getting It Done and Finishing Strong!.....	2
<i>Don Anderson</i>	
Catching Up with Ken Horton and Ministry Catalysts	4
<i>Jane Rodgers</i>	
FAX.....	8
<i>Galatians Series Updated</i>	
<i>Pearl's Reflections</i>	
<i>Donna's Delights</i>	
<i>Mailbag</i>	
Homework: What Parents (& Grandparents) Need To Know before a College Freshman Leaves Home	12
<i>Jan Miranda</i>	
GIFTS & SPONSORS	15

From the Editor

Spring is a transitional season, leading us from winter into summer. It is a time of new things. For us at Bible Teaching Resources, spring 2011 marks a time of transition as Don and Pearl Anderson adjust to life after serving for the past eight years at Hide-A-Way Lake Community Church. Ken Horton, former head pastor of McKinney Memorial Bible Church of Fort Worth, is also transitioning into a new ministry involving discipleship, mentoring, and teaching. We know you'll be interested in learning more about Ministry Catalysts, the organization founded by Ken and his brother, Ron. Says Don Anderson of this new season for the Hortons, "Ken is one of my heroes! He served well! Taught the Word effectively! Literally passed the baton to his successor. 27 years wow! Ken has been generous in letting BTR use McKinney's facilities for board meetings and Bible classes. A big thank you is in order!" One of the biggest transitions families face occurs when the kids go off to college. Our Homework section offers some sound guidance for this season of life from none other than Dr. Jan Miranda, veteran counselor and author of the college planning book *ACCEPTED!* Jan currently serves as director of college guidance at Prestonwood Christian Academy in the Dallas area. May whatever transitions you and yours experience this season be full of blessings and exciting opportunities. Thank you for your continued friendship and support.

—M. Jane Rodgers



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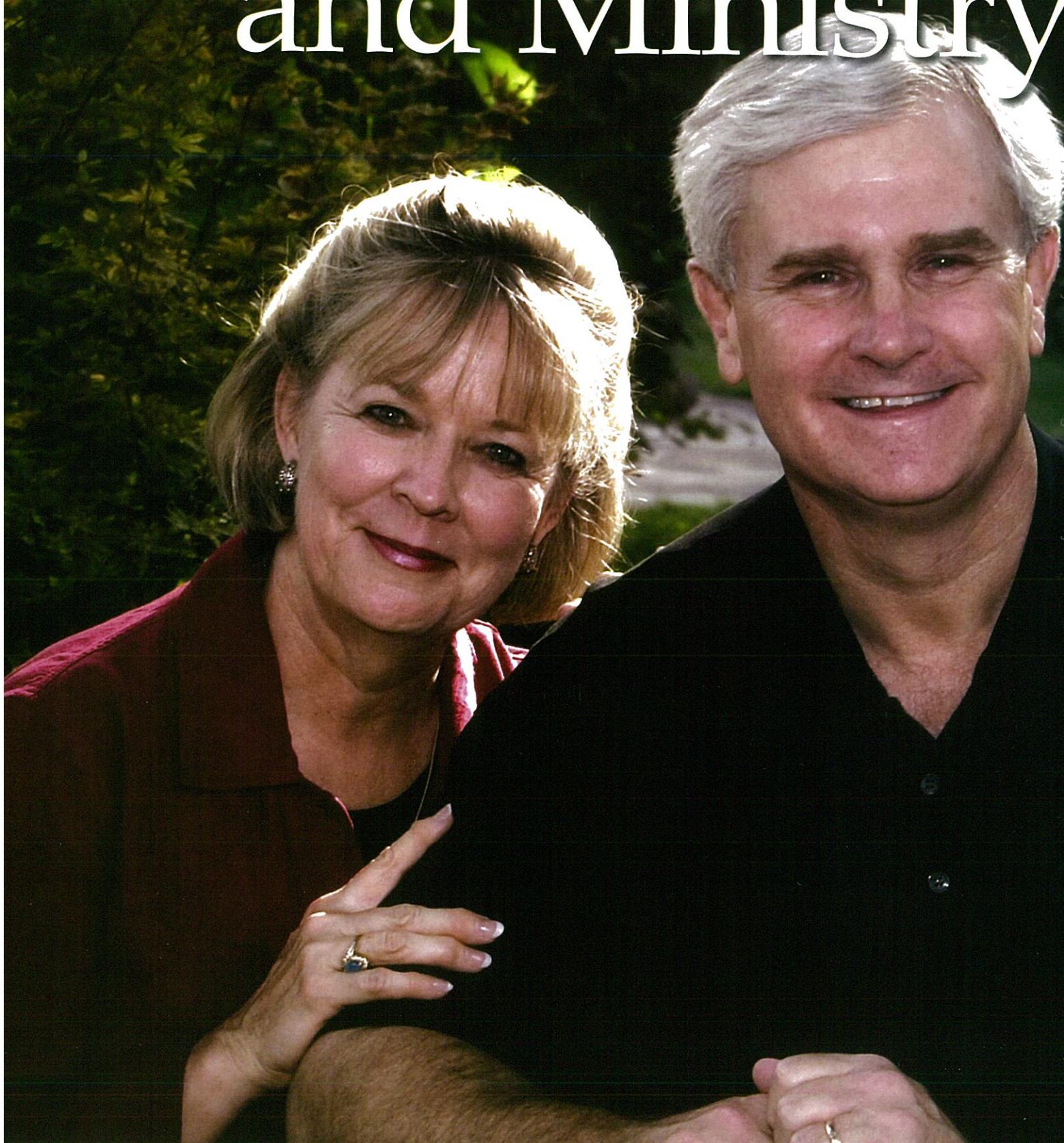
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A higher purpose.

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Catching Up with and Ministry



th Ken Horton Catalysts



HERE'S THE SCENARIO. A successful pastor spends nearly three decades at a prominent Fort Worth Bible church. The church grows significantly. Ministries flourish. The community is impacted positively. The pastor has a solid relationship with church elders, staff, and congregation. Yet years before retirement, the pastor approaches his elders with an exit strategy. He loves the church, loves being a pastor...but he does not plan to end his career at the church. He suggests the following. He can keep pastoring till he's ready to move on and the elders can then do a traditional search for the new guy...or the elders and church can begin a more intentional transition, finding the pastor's replacement and bringing him on staff earlier. When the time is right, the pastor will step down in favor of his replacement. Life will go on for the church. Life will change exponentially for the pastor.

The preceding is just what has happened at McKinney Memorial Bible Church of Fort Worth, as senior pastor Ken Horton has recently stepped down in favor of the new man, Chris Freeland, who has served on McKinney's staff for the past four years. So far, the transition has been not only intentional, but seamless and smooth—all too rare in any church nowadays. Thanks to our many friends and connections at McKinney, Bible Teaching Resources has long enjoyed a positive relationship with the church. Indeed, Don Anderson has held many Bible classes at the church, and current board members Pat and Cindy Hawkins, Brian and Karen Mills, Tom and Joan Cochran, and Barry and Julia Watts are members of McKinney. Don and Fran Saddoris and Clyde and Kathy Womack, current BTR board members, are past members of McKinney. We are grateful for McKinney and we are excited for its continued impact on the Fort Worth community and beyond. And we are also excited about Ken Horton's new ministry. We chatted with Ken recently over the phone and wanted to share his vision for what he calls his "next season"—a new organization, Ministry Catalysts--with our readers.

continued on page 6

Ken Horton does not shy away from change, as witnessed by the manner in which he has stepped down from the pulpit at McKinney and stepped away from involvement in the church, even though that has meant somewhat distancing himself from a congregation he and his wife, Kathy, deeply love. "We enjoy an ongoing collaboration with McKinney; the elders have invested in our [new] ministry and made it possible for me to retain insurance as a retired pastor...but we won't go to church there. The former pastor can't hang around and watch what happens. That makes it more challenging for the old and the new pastor," Ken explains.

Alabama native Ken came to McKinney 27 years ago, following a somewhat atypical route. After

"In a group, one guy will be fully prepared; one guy will be uncertain and will just watch; another guy will have a question he'd like to ask but is too hesitant."

in eastern Turkey." During this time, God confirmed to Ken that he should become a pastor. The Lord provided the perfect ministry partner in Ken's wife, Kathy. Ken received his Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1981 and earned a Ph.D. in church history in 1999. He counts among his major honors and significant involvements his current role as a member of the DTS Board of Regents. Ken also serves as co-chaplain of the Texas Christian University football team... more on his Horned Frogs involvement later. Ken and Kathy have two adult children.

Ken is not the only Horton involved in Ministry Catalysts. Ken's brother, Ron, also an Auburn alum and DTS graduate, has transitioned from a 23-year pastorate in Saginaw, near Fort Worth, in recent years. Ken calls the fact that both he and Ron were drawn to the Fort Worth area to minister and

graduating from Auburn University in 1973, he spent three years as a space surveillance officer in the U.S. Air Force... an experience which, Ken says, "stretched my faith as I learned about loneliness, especially during my year

raise their families "the providence of God." Ron and his wife, Terri, attend McKinney. Ken credits Ron with challenging him in the area of one-on-one discipleship, a discipline Ken, as McKinney pastor, had pursued less than group discipleship. Ken recalls, "When I became senior pastor at McKinney, I did more group discipling. I'd spend two years teaching a group of 20 to 30 guys, covering theological issues. The guys themselves grew spiritually, but when we were finished, they still weren't sure how to disciple others." Ken came to understand the importance of working one-on-one with men so that they could become confident in discipling others. Ken reflects that, when his son, a DTS student who works with youth in Plano, Texas, asked him what he'd do differently as a pastor, Ken replied, "I'd never stop focusing on one-on-one discipleship." Not surprisingly, promoting just this is a cornerstone of Ministry Catalysts, which was recently incorporated as a 501(C)3 organization.

The mission of Ministry Catalysts is threefold, Ken explains, involving individual discipleship, the mentoring of pastors, and ministry overseas. Ken and Ron work individually with businessmen and professionals in Fort Worth, each discipling eight or ten men at a time. Ken uses materials developed at McKinney; Ron prefers to work with Campus Crusade materials. The curriculums may differ, but their methods are similar. Ken spends 15-18 hours a week meeting with men to go over some 15 lessons involving Bible study, memory verse work, and life application. The process takes about 20-30 weeks, even up to eight months. "I am working right now with eight guys," Ken explains. "I'll meet with one at 7:00 a.m., another at 8:30, another at 3:30 in the afternoon. Some guys own their own businesses and can be flexible regarding meeting times; others cannot be."

On the advantages of one-on-one discipleship over the group dynamic, Ken reflects, "In a group, one guy will be fully prepared; one guy will be uncertain and will just watch; another guy will have a question he'd like to ask but is too hesitant." One-on-one discipleship precludes such reticence and encourages transparency. While Ken and his guys generally stick to the material, sometimes questions arise regarding job and family situations; discussion naturally follows as they work through the biblical issues. Ken remembers the wife of a man he had discipled commenting that her husband had become

a better husband since going through the material with Ken. "If you learn how to grow in Christ, it ought to make you a better husband," Ken muses. The primary purpose of one-on-one discipleship is, for Ken and Ron, to make *disciplers*, however.

Ken approaches men who express an interest in working with him with a few questions. First, he asks, "If I brought somebody to you who does not know Christ, could you share the gospel?" Most men reply in the affirmative. Then Ken asks, "Could you take a new Christian to a place where he is mature enough to help others grow spiritually? Do you want to learn to do that?" Ken says it becomes readily apparent who is interested and who is not. Many times, the man will exclaim, "That sounds exciting. This is what I've been praying for." These are the guys Ken works with. He recalls one man, who had been a Christian for about three years. As Ken and he were working through the material, the subject of whom the man would later disciple arose. He surprised Ken by saying, "I am already working with someone, my son." The man's son was in prison. Every time Ken and he would finish a session, this man would handwrite ideas and questions from the lesson and mail these to his son (prisons require that letters be handwritten, not typed). When father and son got to speak by telephone or in person, they would talk about the lessons. In this man's case, the multiplication of ministry had already started.

Ken's one-on-one discipleship process comes with a "lifetime warranty." He encourages men to call whenever they have a question. He tries to meet with former students every few months for coffee just to see how they are doing in their own discipleship ministries. Ken's and Ron's wives even get in the act—discipling older and younger women, including pastors' wives. "It's fun to watch them work," Ken says proudly of Kathy and Terri. "They are extraordinary disciplers who love each other. They stay as busy as they want to be."

A second component of Ministry Catalysts involves working with pastors. In this, Ken continues the type of work he has long enjoyed as a ministry coach working with the Leadership Evaluation and Development (LEAD) initiative at the Howard G. Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary. Ron, with more than 30 years pastoral experience, is also well qualified for the task of helping pastors. Ken describes his mission as a ministry coach thus: "I ask questions and try

to give pastors insights to help their ministries become more fruitful. Actually, sometimes I'll ask questions till they discover the insights." Many pastors appreciate such help, Ken says. "If you are not trying to sell a guy something, if you only want to help him be fruitful where he is, lots of pastors want this." Indeed, Ken just likes being a good friend and an encourager to pastors. He hopes that Ministry Catalysts will be able to make some homes in Colorado available to pastors and their families for a week at a time with no formal programs and healthy doses of encouragement.

The third component of Ministry Catalysts involves overseas ministry. Both Ken and Ron have significant contacts in Europe, the Middle East,

and Asia. Ron has taught at pastors conferences and provided training in discipleship methodology across the globe—including in Singapore, Honduras, and Dubai. Ken has traveled overseas for a week or

two at a time for years. With his Ph.D. in church history, Ken is invited to teach at seminaries and pastors conference. In the immediate future are commitments to teaching courses at the Israel College of the Bible and Seminary in Tel Aviv in June and at Bible colleges in the Canary Islands and India. As part of his work with Ministry Catalysts, he hopes to spend eight to ten weeks per year in overseas ministry...and even time in America's own backyard with outreaches in Cuba. Ken describes a recent conference in Cuba which more than 400 pastors attended. "Incredible things are happening in Cuba right now," he says enthusiastically. "As a church pastor, I could only devote two or three weeks a year [to ministry abroad]. Now we have the flexibility to be more involved."

**"Could you take a new Christian to a place where he is mature enough to help others grow spiritually?
Do you want to learn to do that?"**

continued on page 10

Bible Teaching Resources FAX

Galatians Series – Newly Updated!

Don has just completed teaching Galatians and the series has been updated and repackaged. Order item #CD735 or #MP735. Order form also available on page 10.

E-Newsletter

Want to receive our weekly e-newsletter? Each week you'll receive a short devotional, scripture, and illustrations. You will also be able to share in prayer needs with Don & Pearl. Just e-mail gen@bibleteachingresources.org or sign up using the form on page 10.

Resource Catalog & *A Great While Before Day*

Watch your mailbox in June! We'll be updating the resource catalog and sending out part 2 of *A Great While Before Day*. If you know someone who would benefit from being added to our mailing list, just let us know. Part 1 of *AGWBD* is still available. Order on page 10.

RECIPE CORNER

Donna's Delights

Pear Delight Salad

Here is a cool spring salad that is easy to make and which will be a family favorite.

1 small package lemon Jell-O
1 large can pears
1 8 oz. package cream cheese
1 8 oz. container of Cool Whip

Drain the canned pears and save the juice. Boil the juice. Mix lemon Jell-O in boiling juice of pears. Stir and dissolve well. Blend pears and cream cheese together in a blender. Mix together pear mixture, cooled Jell-O, and Cool Whip. Refrigerate

Note: Refrigerate in the container from which you intend to serve the salad. This salad is not as easily removed from the container as some congealed salads are.



Pearl's Reflections

by Pearl Anderson

Well, Don and I are "on the road again." In a limited fashion, that is! Don resigned as the teaching pastor at Hide-A-Way Lake Community Church. We were there for eight years. It was the right decision but difficult to leave some of the dear saints we have known for years and the new special friends whom we treasure.

We are taking the advice of Oswald Chambers:

Get up and let's go on to the next thing. In other words, let the past sleep, but let it sleep in the sweet embrace of Christ, and let us go on into the invincible future with Him." (*My Utmost For His Highest*, February 18)

The church was helpful with us financially. We have already taken some downsizing steps but want those who support us to know of the situation.

It is a great encouragement that so many are writing about their daily use of *A Great While Before Day*. We work many hours on that project. Thanks for letting us know it is helpful in your Christian walk and growth.

Requests for the *Life Recovery Bible*, workbook, and devotional are constant and steady from prison inmates. It helps to know the "system" seems to be promoting prisoner involvement.

Sometimes it seems the *Pearl's Reflections* should be called *Pearl's Report*. I want you to feel involved! That way you will pray!

My love always in Jesus for you all!

Some of our favorite letters from the **mailbag**

Due to my husband's profession, I tend to move around the country, four states in the last six years. But no matter where I am, you always manage to find me and send a *Grapevine* and devotional to me. I want you to know how comforting and encouraging this is.



Love my *A Great While before Day*, which is my daily companion about 5:00 a.m. each day! ...I am 78 and work every day... devotional from 5:00-5:45...work out 6:00-7:00 and work from 8:30-6:30 most every day!

Fond memories of good times at The Firs and you are part of them. Thanks for sending *A Great While before Day*.

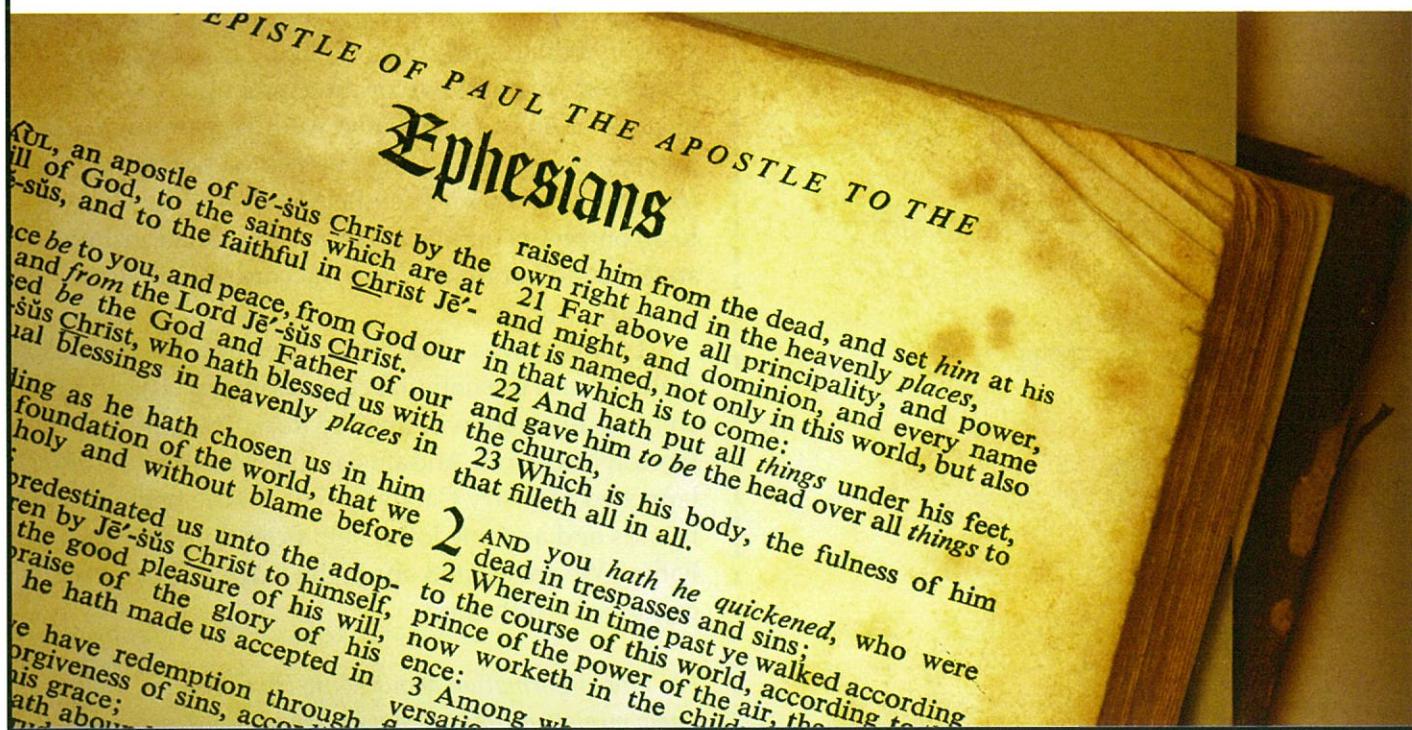
I want you both to know how much you have blessed Sheryl and me with your ministry and lives!

We love the devotional...in fact, because it's reusable (timeless)...we sent last year's copy overseas to a dear friend's husband who was deployed in Afghanistan. Their "chapel" at their Forward Operating Base (FOB) was destroyed by Muslims unsympathetic towards the U.S. troops and their Christian faith. Their only worship materials were their personal Bibles and any *Daily Bread* copies family sent. *A Great While before Day* was a welcome addition!

My great love for studying the Bible began with your teaching in a home in DeSoto, Texas, back in the seventies... Thank you for your part in lighting that fire within me.

It is a precious blessing to read and receive your resources. Thank you for the teaching of Galatians...at Brookhaven Church.

Thank you for being a faithful teacher of God's word in church and out of church.



Order Form

New! Galatians (12 studies)

- CD735 - CD set \$25
- MP735 - Mp3 CD set \$12

A Great While Before Day

- BK920a (Jan.-June) FREE x _____
- BK920b (July-Dec.) will be available June 2011

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Ministry Catalysts continued from page 7

Speaking of additional involvements, we would be remiss were we not to report on Ken's work as a chaplain of the TCU Horned Frog football team. Ken, who played football in high school, has always loved the sport. In 1994, the chaplain of the TCU team asked if Ken could "do home games." This started the connection, and when the original chaplain moved on, Ken assumed that post. Pat Sullivan was then the TCU head coach. Today, Ken shares the chaplaincy with Chauncey Franks, of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. In fact, Ken calls himself Franks's "helper." It's but another transition, and in typical Ken Horton form, one graciously accomplished.

Ken sums up his role as TCU chaplain thus. "In the off season, I go to practice some. During the season, I go to practice one or two days a week and hang around and visit. On Friday nights, I lead a chapel. There are 65 players on a travel squad. The chapel is totally voluntary, but we'll have 40-50 at a chapel, including coaches. It's fun to see how God has worked in a lot of guys' lives."

Not surprisingly, Ken says that what he has enjoyed most about his affiliation with TCU has been the opportunity to "build relationships with guys." He sees and hears from former players even years after their college days. Just the other day, two former TCU players, now in the NFL, saw Ken at a local restaurant and came over to his table for a visit. Another former player, who had not been spiritually motivated in college, approached Ken recently asking for help in starting a Bible study. Ken replied, "I won't teach it, but I will help you and two or three other guys learn how to teach it." Ken has performed weddings of former TCU players; he and Kathy have presented parenting classes for players and their friends. Again, it all boils down to an emphasis on relationships. And relationships—stateside and abroad—form the core of Ken Horton's ministry.

Last year was a big one for Ken and Kathy Horton. Auburn won the national championship. TCU football went undefeated, winning the Rose Bowl. And the Horton boys from Andalusia, Alabama, Ken and Ron, launched Ministry Catalysts with a little help from their friends and a whole lot of help from their heavenly Father. We are excited about the work and pray for its continued fruitfulness.

For more information about Ministry Catalysts, visit www.ministrycatalysts.com or e-mail Ken Horton at ken@ministrycatalysts.com.

To deny is to act in a holy, selfless way. It is to disregard oneself: to deny, to repudiate, to disown. It means to say no. Denial is essential to finishing strong and involves four components: passion, purpose, perseverance, and paying the price.

1. Passion.

The commitment to finishing the race well must be fervent, fiery, and forever.

Isaiah 50:7: "Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame" (NIV).

Isaiah 42:3: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice" (NIV).

Esther 4:15-16: "Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish'" (NIV).

Ruth 1:16-17: "But Ruth replied, 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me'" (NIV).

Fueling our passion must be preceded by a cleansing of those things in our lives that could potentially grieve or quench the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 7:1: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (NASB).

2. Purpose.

Philippians 3:10-14: "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by

Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

2 Timothy 2:3-6: "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs

of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops" (NASB).

Our ultimate purpose in doing these things is so that we can hear "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys I have prepared for you."

3. Perseverance

Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, since we are having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us" (DAV).

Romans 15:5: "Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus" (NASB).

continued on page 14

What Parents (& Grandparents) Need To Know before a College Freshman Leaves Home



The Real Cost. This is scary, but do total up the **REAL** cost of college. Tuition and fees are just the beginning. No surprises, please! Add to the tuition and fees: room and board; personal expenses (transportation, phone, entertainment, etc.); books and supplies. Depending on the major, supplies may be minimal, but if the student is studying something such as art or music, costs can add up very fast.

Scholarship / Financial Aid. Scholarships are awarded to students based on merit. Merit means something they have earned or performed at a top level of achievement in academics, athletics, or fine arts. The best sources of scholarship money come directly from each college.

nts)

ome *by Jan Miranda*



Check with each college early on in the application process to determine if there are additional applications required for specific scholarships.

Financial aid has nothing to do with merit and everything to do with the financial circumstances of the family. Families must file a government form called the FAFSA anytime after January 1 of the student's senior year of high school in order to be eligible for financial aid. Here is the link: www.fafsa.gov.

Financial aid can be awarded in the forms of grants, loans (subsidized and unsubsidized), and work study. Grants do not have to be repaid. A subsidized loan does not incur any interest until six months after the student graduates (or leaves school). An unsubsidized loan begins accruing interest from the moment the loan paper is signed. Work study is actually

a very good thing. Students may work on campus for about 10-15 hours each week. They often get to know professors and become the first line for internships once they have established a reputation for productive work.

Purchasing Books. Plan ahead and check for online sources for purchasing textbooks rather than buying them at the campus bookstore. Convenience often comes at a price.

Finding God on Campus. HE is there...but if you're attending a public university you may need to seek HIM. Investigate **before you go** opportunities for Bible study and Christian organizations on the college campus. Find out when these groups meet and note the places and times in your planner. Yes, you will need to track your time, not just for your daily schedule but to keep on target for bigger

projects due throughout the semester!

Parents (and grandparents). When you get the first panicky phone call or text message, do not get in your car and drive to the campus. When your college freshman checks in with you the next time, ask him or her about the issue, which you'll find will have most likely been resolved by then. In fact, the student may not even recall the earlier distress. ☺

*Dr. Jan Miranda is a veteran high school counselor who has been honored by Yale University and the North American Coalition of Christian College Admission Personnel. She is the author of **ACCEPTED!**, a college planning workbook, available at www.allaboutyourcollege.com.*



Romans 12:12: "rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer" (NASB).

Ray Kroc writes of his life as he embarked upon making McDonald's restaurants America's premier fast food franchise: "I was 52 years old. I had diabetes and incipient arthritis. I had lost my gall bladder and most of my thyroid gland in earlier campaigns, but I was convinced that the best was ahead of me." Kroc maintained an optimistic outlook and desire to persevere which led him to achieve. How much more important is it that we as Christians choose never to give up...especially since our commitment involves reliance on the Holy Spirit rather than the marketing of hamburgers.

4. Paying the Price

Passion, purpose and perseverance must be matched with a willingness to pay the price if one wishes to finish well.

Romans 12:11: "Let us not allow slackness to spoil our work and let us keep the fires of the spirit burning, as we do our work for God" (Phillips).

1 Corinthians 16:13: "Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, live like men, be strong!" (Phillips).

When thinking of what it means to pay the price, my mind turns to that great hymn "Rise Up, O Men of God!"

Rise up, O men of God!
Have done with lesser things;
Give heart and soul and mind and strength
To serve the King of kings.⁹

The apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus understood what it meant to pay the price.

In Philippians 1:20-21, Paul writes: "For I live

in eager expectation and hope that I will never do anything that causes me shame, but that I

will always be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past, and that my life will always honor Christ, whether I live or I die. For to me, living is for Christ, and dying is even better" (NLT).

Scripture records the following of Jesus in Luke 22:41-42: "Then he went off by himself, about a stone's throw away, and falling on his knees, prayed in these words - 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me - but it is not my will, but yours, that must be done'" (Phillips).

The following poem was written by John Baker five years before he was diagnosed with cancer.

Many thoughts race through my mind

*As I step up to the starting line
Butterflies thru my stomach fly
And as I free that last deep sigh,
I feel that death is drawing near,
But the end of the race I do not fear.*

*For when the string comes across my breast,
I know it's time for eternal rest.*

*The gun goes off, the race is run,
And only God knows if I've won.
My family and friends and many more
Can't understand what it was for.
But this "Race to Death" is a final test,
And I'm not afraid, for I've done my best.*

- JOHN BAKER¹⁰

Conclusion

During my marathoning years, my fellow runners and I always shared a phrase at the start of the race: "See you at the finish line!"

I remember well my last conversation with Dick Flaten, a dear pastor-brother from Austin. Terminally ill, he closed our final conversation with those very words, "See you at the finish line!"

On two occasions this could be interpreted as what Paul is saying in 2 Timothy 4:6-7: "As for me, I feel that the last drops of my life are being poured out for God. The glorious fight that God gave me I have fought. The course that I was set I have finished, and I have kept the faith" (Phillips).

The other passage is 1 Corinthians 9:26-27: "I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself" (MSG).

The Lord, the saints, the apostles have finished ahead of us. And their message to us is the same: "See you at the finish line."

1. *Finish Strong: Amazing Stories of Courage and Inspiration* by Dan Green. Naperville, IL: Simple Truths, LLC. Copyright- Simple Truths, LLC, 2008, p. 10.
2. *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith From the American Dream* by David Platt) Colorado City, CO: Multnomah. Copyright- David Platt, 2010, p. 7.
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6. "Cleanse Me" by J. Edwin Orr. *Sing to the Lord Hymnal* #516. Copyright – Lillenas Publishing, 1993.
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9. "Rise Up, O Men of God!" by William P. Merrill. *The New Church Hymnal* #219. Copyright – Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976.
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