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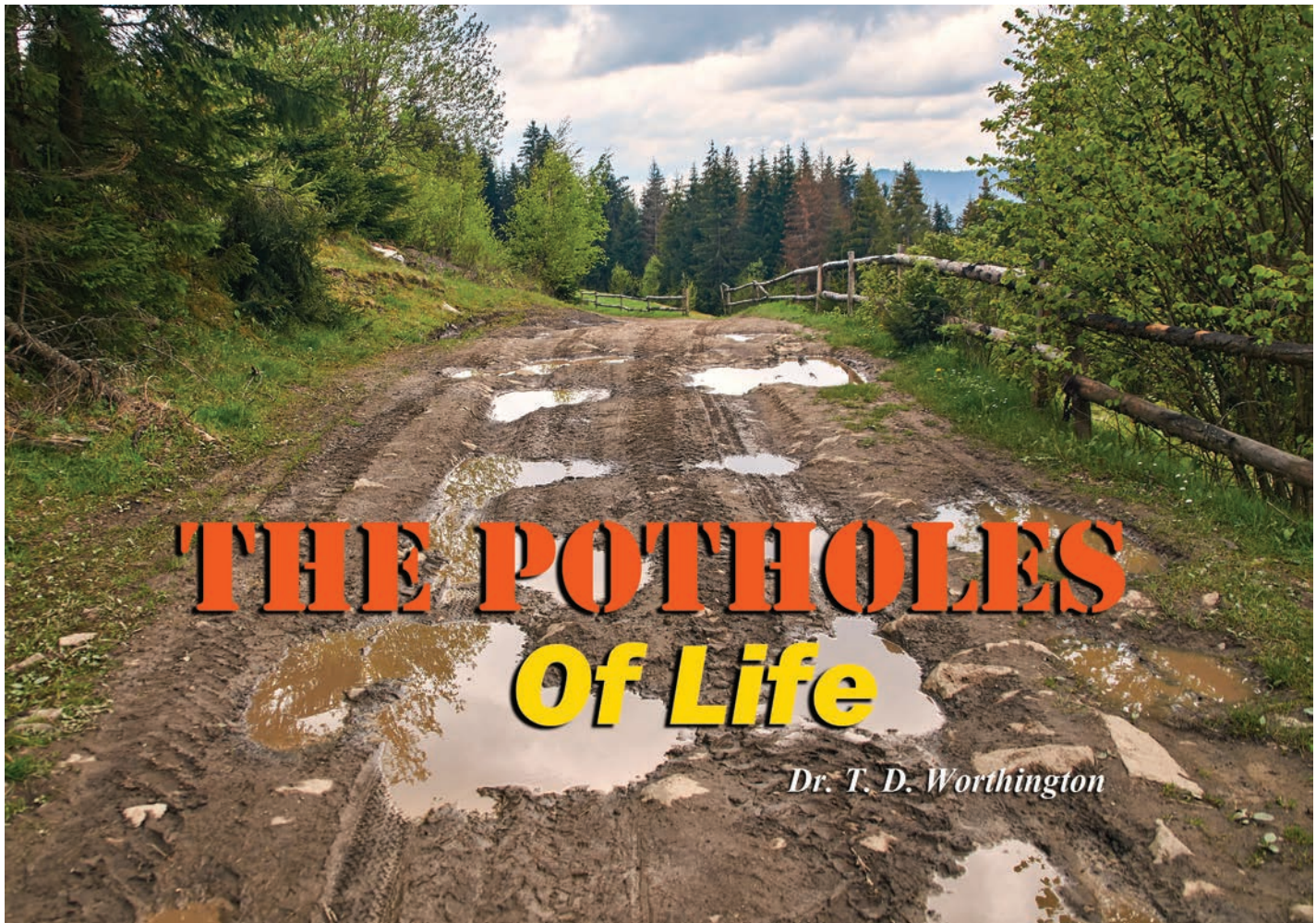
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“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Matthew 6:34

Have you ever suddenly hit a pothole? You didn't know it was there; it suddenly appeared. Had you known, you might have slowed down a bit more, allowing you time to swerve to the left or right to avoid it, but by the time you saw it, it was too late. Pow, and there it was! At the very least, it was annoying; it might even damage your car, or, at worst, you might lose control. Unseen potholes are a nuisance and perhaps even dangerous.

Life is also filled with potholes, and rarely do you get a heads-up

that they are coming. If you knew life's potholes were coming, there might be things you would have done differently, but seldom do you get advance warning. But why not? God obviously knows you are about to hit a pothole. He knows about the problems you will face every day of your life. A heads-up would be nice, *or would it?*

I think it might be a blessing that our Lord does not reveal to us all the difficulties we will face in the years to come on our journey with Christ. If I had known all the problems I would encounter in the ministry, it would have been far more tempting to remain in the secular world. That world, at least for me, was a lot easier and with a lot less pressure. I've made far more enemies and faced far more

opposition in the ministry than I ever did in the business world. So, in His mercy, God seldom reveals to us early on all the things that we will go through and have to face in life.

Of course, that does not mean we are never warned of the potholes we will face. Sometimes, God *does* offer His saints a fairly solid glimpse of what their lot will be. For example, in **Acts 9:13-16**, we read this about what God told Ananias about the conversion of Saul:

“Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy

name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

We know that Paul suffered greatly for his faith, enduring numerous persecutions and opposition. In this case, God warned him well in advance that this would be the path he must travel.

But generally speaking, most of us can't see what might be around the next corner. When we read Scriptures like **Psalm 119:105**, where the Bible says, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."* We here understand that we receive enough light for each step we take, and not always for all the miles ahead.

We have the general Word of God with us at all times, but specific guidance and particular divine leading might be harder to come by. One reason is that if we knew all the details in advance, we would not have to rely on faith. Not knowing much about the future means there is nothing or no one we can truly rely on but God.

Also, if a lot of stuff about the upcoming years were revealed to us long ago, most of us would have been too astounded even to want to take the next step. We might have told God that our burdens were too much for us to handle. We would tend to want to tell God, *"Please don't let me go through this, even if it is good for me."*

Or, perhaps we would spend all our efforts trying to avoid the very

problems God intended to use to make us champions. I might become so focused on protecting myself that I lose sight of the big picture of serving others and following Christ.

When I became a Christian nearly 50 years ago, I had no idea what would happen over the ensuing decades. I honestly didn't know specifically what God might call me to do. Whether it was missionary work, evangelism, or teaching, I had no idea what might lie ahead. The fact that I ended up being a pastor, working in Christian education, and Christian radio has all been quite a surprise.

Over the past half century, there have been various trials and hardships. If I had known about them in advance, I might not have been as eager to leave the secular world. Conflicts, betrayals, disappointments, and loss have all been part of my journey. We've faced budget shortfalls, fires, floods, and COVID lockdowns. We've fought against misguided policies and measures imposed by heavy-handed government officials

intoxicated with power and control. We've been under attack from outside and sometimes from within. And there's no sign of relief in sight.

Of course, we know that God grants us grace at the moment we need it, not in advance. You don't have the grace today for tomorrow's problems.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Matthew 6:34

That promise has indeed been fulfilled many times over the years. God has poured out abundant grace upon us, and it has always been more than enough. However, if I had known years ago about all the challenges I would face, in my weakness I might have reconsidered entering the ministry. And part of that grace was God not revealing everything to me ahead of time.

Corrie ten Boom, in her book *"The Hiding Place,"* recalls an incident





from her childhood when she was returning home on a train with her father. She had accompanied him on a trip to buy parts for his watchmaking business. Recently, she had heard the term “sexsin” in a poem at school, so she asked her father what it meant. Her father thought for a moment, then stood up and took down his suitcase from the rack. He said, *“Will you carry this off the train for me, Corrie?”*

Corrie stood up and with a child’s hand she tugged at the suitcase. It was packed full of the watches and spare parts he had bought on the trip. *“It’s too heavy,”* she said.

“Yes,” her father replied. *“And it would be a pretty poor father who would ask his little girl to carry such a load. It’s the same way, Corrie, with knowledge. Some knowledge is too heavy for children. When you are older and stronger, you will be able to handle it. For now, you must trust me to carry it for you.”*

As a wise Father, our Lord also knows when knowledge becomes too much for us to handle. He is

not being cruel or heartless when He withholds the full explanation. He is carrying our burdens (*1 Peter 5:7*). He promises that the burdens He gives us to carry will always be light (*Matthew 11:30*).

I realize my burdens have been relatively light compared to others'. Things have been pretty easy for me. Still, if I had known what lay ahead, I might have hesitated before stepping into the ministry. But God is wise and loving enough to tell us what we need to know and to withhold, at least for a time, what we do not need to know. God is merciful in not revealing everything to us. He gives us enough to sustain us if we trust Him, but often that doesn't feel like enough. Usually, we want to know more.

It is essential to note that this holds true not only for our personal lives but also for what is happening globally. God provides us with understanding of everything we need to know about world events, politics, and culture, but He does not reveal everything.

“Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.”
Habakkuk 1:5

God told Habakkuk that if I were to tell you all the things I am doing, you wouldn't believe it. If God were to tell us today what He's doing in the world or the things He's accomplishing in our lives, we couldn't understand it either. Don't think that God has given up or stepped down from His throne. He hasn't. He's still in control. And those of us who know Him trust in Him and Him alone. When everything else fails, crumbles, and shatters, He'll be there.

Chances are, you'll encounter a few more potholes along your journey. Most likely, you won't know when or where they'll appear. Pow, suddenly you will face another shaking! So, perhaps the best advice is the same as Paul gave the church at Ephesus.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,”
Ephesians 5:15

Be as prepared as you can, trusting in the Word of God to guide every step, and rely on God for the things beyond your control.



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry nearly fifty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College.

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THE FEAR FACTOR

Fear can be a healthy thing. Fear stops us from doing things that might harm ourselves or others. The fear of a wreck or even just a ticket stops us from speeding through traffic lights. The fear of pain keeps us from putting our hand on a hot oven pan. Fear can be good. It is a balance though. Too much fear can be crippling and cause us to shy away from things we shouldn't be afraid of. In God's Word, believers are told not to fear many things because our Lord is with us.

So many in the world today believe that God is solely a God

of love and not to be feared. They believe they can live how they want to, sin when they want to, disregard God's laws, and all will be well in the end because God is love.

Although it's true that God *IS* love (**I John 4:8, 16**), God is also just (**Colossians 3:25, Psalm 89:14**). He is a God full of mercy and grace (**Ephesians 2:4, 8**), but He is also a God of vengeance (**Romans 12:19**) and jealousy (**Exodus 20:5**).

Again, there is a balance. God is to be loved, respected, worshiped, and, yes, even feared (**Psalm 76:7, Jeremiah 10:7, Hebrews 10:31**). The fear factor needs to be real for all of us.

God's Word tells us that we are to witness to others with the same love and compassion the Lord has shown to us, but also

tells us that some will come to know Him through fear.

“And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

Jude 1:23

Fear God? Absolutely. Have respect for His holiness while also being thankful for the position we have been given by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.



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Exchanging Truth For A Lie

One of the toughest things about getting people to learn something new is getting them to unlearn the old way. What about us? How willing are we to unlearn the world that is pressing down upon us and our families every day? We are commanded to unlearn the world, and to relearn God's perspective (**Romans 12:2**). Do we love the world around us and want to drink in more of its ways? How much influence does the world have upon us? How steadfast are we in unlearning the falsehood that is everywhere around us in this world? How hard do we work at driving wrong ideas and beliefs away from ourselves and our families? How much of the world do we invite into our homes?

On the other hand, how much do we want to learn the truth of God so that it can be our compass guiding us through this life and into the next? How much are we willing to separate ourselves from the world and deprogram ourselves from the parts of the world we have embraced? How zealous are we in leading our children in the path of righteousness?

According to the Scriptures, God gives the "sword" to civil government. To the Church, God gives the "keys." But God gives the "rod" to parents in **Proverbs 13:24**. Like the shepherd's rod, this rod represents the rights and responsibility of parents to discipline, protect, and instruct their children.

God did not lead the children of Israel out of Egypt so they could one day become Canaanites. He did not save you from the world so that you could return to it. Indeed, you may live in Canaan today, but you are not to become a Canaanite.

The Canaanites, Babylonians, and Romans are the groups that have the most influence on our families today. And they are teaching them to be Canaanites, Babylonians, and Romans, and not Christians.

Do not accept the world's truth as absolute truth; there is but one absolute truth, and you should not exchange it for anything else.



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Laughter Is The Best Medicine...or is it?

Dr. Sherry Worthington

When school was almost out, one of my students started laughing. She was trying to control it, but the harder she tried, the worse it got. Then you can guess what happened. The student next to her started laughing, and soon the whole row joined in. Mind you, no one knew what she was laughing at. I made the statement. *“I want to laugh, too. Do share!”* I walked up to the student, and she was laughing so hard that tears were streaming down her face. By then, all the students and teachers in the room were laughing or smiling. I finally said, *“Okay. Let's get to work,”* with a smile.

Laughter is contagious. When someone is in a good mood and is smiling, it causes others to smile. According to the Mayo Clinic and

other medical sources, laughter boosts the immune system, reduces stress, improves mood, strengthens relationships, and increases pain relief. Pain relief was the most amazing of these findings to me. Laughter actually promotes the release of natural painkillers in our bodies. God has designed us with such a perfect body. Even laughter is a part of our healing. Isn't that astounding!

Laughter can bring so much joy, but laughter is not always good. When others laugh at us and not with us, it is hurtful. Many television shows have scenes of people laughing at the misfortune of others. Students who are the victims of bullying have scars they have to overcome. When a group gangs up on them because they are

different, it causes a lot of pain. Social media gains popularity at the expense of others. When a child comes home from school sad and dejected, the parent's heart breaks. Often, it is because other children laughed at them, or, heaven forbid, a teacher makes a snide remark. Don't get me wrong, we do need to teach our children to be tough, but harassment is not acceptable in any situation. Laughter is not always good medicine. Sometimes it is devastating.

When laughter is used the way God intended, it is a wonderful thing. It can make a dark sky beautiful, a frown turn into a smile, and a heart full of despair heal. God has many beautiful gifts for us. Unfortunately, Satan likes to pollute many of God's gifts to man. He has polluted

our beautiful earth, as well as the printed word, television, radio, and the internet. I can only imagine how he will ruin AI. Man has taken what was created to be wonderful and assisted the devil in using it for evil. These items are good and bad. Man has to be responsible in how he uses them.

Man has used laughter for good and for bad. We laugh at things that are funny and pleasant, and we laugh at things that are wrong. But to me, one of the worst things humans do is encourage Satan to laugh. Have you ever thought of how we make the devil laugh?

As Christians, we sit around and blame the devil for our problems. We think about his demons trying to defeat us. I don't ever look at the leaders in our Christian ministries who have fallen with disdain. I hurt for them, and I pray for them. I realize that they have such an impact on our world that the devil is hitting them with all he has got. Of course, when they do fall, he laughs. But what about when I fall? Satan laughs! But not for the same reason. He doesn't need to attack me because he knows my flesh is doing it for me. Lucifer doesn't need to send his emissaries in most cases. My own selfish heart causes most of my failures. He has very little time for me. He just stays in his realm laughing.

When people call themselves Christians, but they do not have any of the fruits of the Spirit, Satan laughs. **Ephesians 5:22-23** states that love, joy, peace, longsuffering,

gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are signs of Christians walking with Jesus. We are supposed to be manifesting these fruits in our daily lives. This lifestyle will demonstrate the Christian faith to others. Will we always have these characteristics in our lives? Of course not! We will only be perfect when we get to heaven. Unfortunately, most of us don't even try to serve Him and show others these fruits of the Spirit.



When we don't serve Jesus completely, we become Satan's assistants. We are the best helpers he has. Why does he need to waste time on us? Each time we sin, it helps him. Each time we don't witness, it helps him. Each time we seem defeated, it helps him. Each time we fail, he laughs. The devil delights in our failures because we cause our Lord grief. When I fail, I try to picture His tears and the disappointment they bring. And then, I imagine Satan laughing. It helps me to be stronger next time.

The devil has so many assistants. I wonder who they all are. If Satan had a party in the United States, who would be invited? If he rented a large banquet hall, who would come? I am sure he would ask his demonic assistants. They may be the ones planning the party and waiting on the tables. He would also invite the politicians of our country who are trying to destroy America. He would ask the people who are lost and living in sin. They would gladly come to his party. But who would be the guests of honor? Would it be you or me? I wonder if the people who do the most damage to the cause of Christ are the people who call themselves Christians but have no fruit. The people who attend church on Sunday often lead different lives during the week. Maybe it is the ones who call themselves Christians, but only go to church when it is convenient, who only give when they have spare change, or walk the fence on every issue.

Perhaps the ones that hurt the cause of Christ the most are the ones that serve him half-way. I realize I have failed my Lord so many times in my life, and I have caused the devil to laugh. By God's grace, I do not want to ever aid Satan to defeat the cause of Christ. Lord, may I never cause Satan to laugh again. Do you cause Satan to laugh?



Dr. Worthington has five children and twelve grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.



“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Romans 8:28

I have no doubt that many reading this think they would be willing to do any and every thing God would ask them to do. Because we love our Heavenly Father, we are already doing a lot of things that we know without a doubt He would have us to do. Things like reading our Bibles to learn, grow, and mature in the Spirit. Many are faithful in attending a local assembly of believers to worship and praise God together. There are those who pray, maybe not as much as we should or could, but we are praying. We all know God loves a cheerful giver and therefore we gladly give our tithes, offerings, and help those in need.

The list could go on of how we gladly serve God with our daily lives, gifts, and talents. I praise God for so many who are faithful to Him and love doing the things that please Him. While many are more than willing to do what God asks, my question is really, *“Am I willing to suffer so that God’s purposes may do done?”*

Let’s be honest for a moment while we evaluate our service to God. Is it mainly when it is convenient, or does it often cost us something? Remember David said he would not give God anything that did not cost him something. If we are truly the called of the Lord, then

we can expect suffering to be part of our service from time to time.

Allow me to use myself as an example. A while back, I caught a sickness that was going around. I don’t generally get sick, but this one hit me hard. It was the week I was participating in a conference with some awesome speakers. Even though I did not feel great, I did not want to miss the messages. During that week, I ate very little due to a lack of appetite. By Saturday evening, I decided I needed more medicine along with what I take daily. I got up Sunday morning and took a few medications along with the new medicine. I drank a little orange juice, but did not eat anything for breakfast due to lack of appetite.

Kim and I went to church and the service was really anointed. The presence of the Holy Spirit was flowing all through the house. I love to bow before the Lord during worship because it helps me focus more on Him. As I stood up, I started to feel faint and within moments, I momentarily passed out. To say I was embarrassed would be an understatement. Once I regained my composure, Kim insisted I go to the hospital. I felt my fainting was due to taking medicine without eating, so I convinced her to just take me to lunch. I felt if I ate something I would feel better. We went to eat, but it did not make me feel any better, so off to the hospital we went. The staff was wonderful. I was able to talk to them about Jesus and other spiritual things as they checked

me over. I was also thankful for the many friends who either came by or called to check up on me. When all the tests were finished, they reported that I had bronchitis and was seriously dehydrated.

But then something happened I was not expecting. One of the respiratory therapists came in to give me a breathing treatment. I could tell they knew the Lord, but I could also tell their heart was extremely troubled about something. The Holy Spirit led me in what to say and ask. Soon the heartache surfaced. The person had recently had patients who had passed away, of which they had no control, and they were carrying the burden of the loss. I could see the pain, frustration, guilt, and disappointment in their eyes. They were even considering quitting and doing something different in the medical field. But I also saw the heart of God in them and I was able to share that with them. I reminded them of who they were in Christ, and that their steps were ordered daily.

God had me tell them how pleased He was with them and the witness they were showing to every patient. God also had me to remind them that life and death were in His hands, not theirs. A ministry friend and I prayed for this sweet person's faith and confidence. Right before my eyes I saw this person's countenance change. The joy of the Lord was restored to their heart; God's love and peace filled their mind. I will never forget what happened as this spiritually renewed person left the room. When they approached the door, they turned to me and said, *"God sent you here today just for me, thank you."*

I was floored by that remark. I was sent there just for them. I must now be honest about how all this played out. I asked myself if I could have backed up time and started the morning over, would I have been willing to follow that same path? If God would have said early that morning, *"Glenn, son, today you will go to church, enjoy My presence in worship, pass out, and end up at the hospital because I have a person there I need you to minister My love to."* Would I have agreed? I might have questioned God and suggested I just meet the man in the parking lot or somewhere more convenient.

I can honestly say I would gladly go through that again, now knowing the end result. Even though God did not cause my situation (*I plainly did that by my actions*),

I do believe He can and will often allow us to suffer through something for the sake of someone else in need. And when those times come, it will not always be convenient or even comfortable. Most times we will not know up front where our problems, troubles, crisis, chaos, or frustrations may lead, but if we are faithful, they will always work out to our good and for God's purpose. No matter what we face or when we face it, look for God's purpose in the situation. Jesus said if we follow Him faithfully, we could and should expect times of suffering. Because you are called according to God's purpose, expect times of suffering to come. But know when it does, our Father God will turn it to your good while helping someone else in need. Hopefully, without reserve you can boldly say, *"Yes Lord, send me, I am willing!"*



Dr. Glenn Mills is a long time supporter of GoMix Christian Radio and a full-time Evangelist with Glenn Mills Ministries. More information is available at www.glennmillsministries.com



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Retirement

Last spring I decided to retire from teaching at Pathway Christian Academy. I did this with mixed feelings. I have been involved with Pathway in some capacity since its beginning, almost half of my life. I considered retiring for the last several years; but each year, God definitely sent me a clear message that it was not yet time.

Retirement has brought freedom to rest and catch up on projects that I have delayed for years. However, as the new school year begins, I am sure that I will sense a longing to be part of the team again. I still want to be part of the “behind the scenes” ministry of the school. I have invested too much to discontinue my involvement totally. During all of the retirement hoopla, I intimated to a friend that I am not sure that retirement is something to be celebrated. Although I was truly humbled by all of the recognition, I don’t want it to be the end of my ministry.

Sherry Worthington and I have worked together for a long time. We have become quite a team. I have learned a lot of wisdom from her in many professional and personal areas. Developing a David and Jonathan relationship, we have become more than coworkers. I will especially miss supporting her in the ministry.

I will also miss lending a listening ear when needed, being involved in the students’ lives on a personal and spiritual level, and knowing and praying for their needs. I will miss telling them to have fun with their math after I have helped them understand it. Most of all, I will miss seeking divine guidance as to how to best minister to them.

I searched for a Biblical example of retirement, and the only example that came close was found in **Numbers 4** where the priests, ages thirty to fifty were instructed to engage in the work in the tabernacle. Matthew Henry’s Commentary clarifies that at age 50, the priests “*were discharged...from the toilsome part of the service, particularly...carrying the tabernacle.*” For those of us retired or contemplating retirement, it is not the end of ministry. As I am, be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and look for ways to minister to those around us. Ponder that!



Mrs. Connie Peters has two children and resides in Princeton, NC. Now retired, she formerly served as an instructor at Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.

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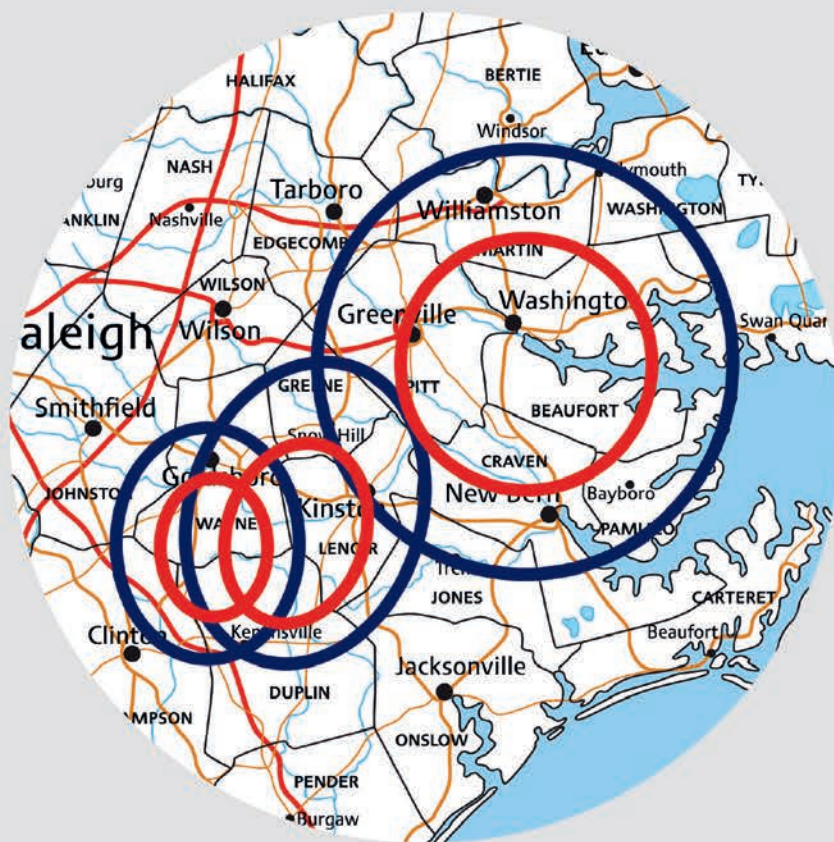
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