



The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



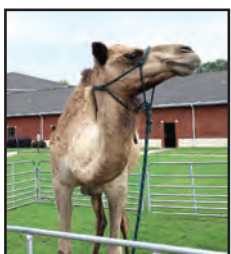
Orphan-care advocate explains attachment issues, offers tips for volunteers

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Tallassee pastor receives unusual retirement send-off

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Ministering to

YOUNG ADULTS *amid COVID-19*



Restarting small groups

ADULTS

- ▶ 29% of Protestant churches currently hold in-person adult Bible studies
- ▶ 18% plan to restart small groups by September
- ▶ 42% of pastors haven't made a decision yet

STUDENTS

- ▶ 23% say groups are meeting now
- ▶ 16% plan to start back by September
- ▶ 51% of pastors are undecided when to restart

CHILDREN

- ▶ 12% say groups are meeting now
- ▶ 17% plan to start back by September
- ▶ 57% are undecided when to restart

Survey: LifeWay Research, photo: 123rf.com, graphic: Lauren C. Grim

Some student, family ministries on hold as pandemic continues

By Shawn Hendricks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For many church leaders, there seem to be more questions than answers when it comes to navigating ministry to young adults and families seeking a new normal amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Young families, college students and professionals

fresh out of school may be particularly vulnerable in this struggling economy, according to a June report from the U.S. Census Bureau. Adults in lower-income and younger households who suffered job losses during the pandemic “have less confidence they can pay the next month’s rent or mortgage on time and suffer more mental anguish and food insecurity,” the report says.

Two Alabama church leaders also shared a variety of other concerns from mental health issues to parents being able to disciple their own children during these uncertain times.

For many graduating college

seniors, finding a full-time job after a less-than-typical semester can be particularly difficult, said Allen Tate, lead pastor of The Well Church in Florence. Many students have experienced a rollercoaster of heartbreaking disappointments, finishing classes online, missing friends, cancellations and isolation.

‘Emotional toll’

“The emotional toll for them was significant,” said Tate, who ministers to college students at the University of North Alabama. The collegiate church, a campus of Highland Baptist Church in Florence,

averaged about 150–200 students before the pandemic. It now averages about 30 students since some have returned to their hometowns until the fall semester begins while others have set off to start their career.

It hasn’t been easy for jobseekers. Tate told of one student who was planning to start an internship with full-time potential, but everything fell apart when the pandemic forced many businesses and churches to close. She had to intern online instead.

“The prospects of future job employment there are really (See ‘Community,’ page 14)



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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.

Showcasing TAB Media masks during pandemic



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

TAB Media staff members Jennifer Davis Rash (left) and Debbie Campbell are set for traveling across the state during this time.



Photo by Richard Maddox

A.J. loves having a mask exactly like his Pop.



Photo by Rob Jackson

TAB Media board of directors chairman Rob Jackson wears his TAB Media mask while out and about in his role with Volunteers of America.



Photo by Chris Roberts

TAB Media board member Chris Roberts keeps his mask nearby.



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

Alana Grim was tickled to receive a child-size mask to match her mom's.



Photo courtesy of Tim Cox

Alabama Baptist State Convention president Tim Cox, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, showcases his TAB Media mask while at Walt Disney World this summer.

TAB Media

"If ye continue in My word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32

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MY RASHIONALE

By **Jennifer Davis Rash**
President and Editor-in-Chief

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Thanks for stopping by for our weekly chat; sending you a virtual hug

As part of the editing process of the July 23 issue of TAB, I trimmed the article we ran on page 4 by Susan Lafferty to fit the space.

Her story about how her dad picked Psalm 119 for her to read to him on the day she was super busy made me laugh — and then a few days later on July 23 a similar thing happened to me.

Several weeks prior during a TAB Talks interview with literary agent Bruce Barbour and his wife and author Karen Moore Barbour (who has been sharing her “Got 10 Minutes?” devotions with TAB recently — see page 17), Bruce inspired me to try something.

He mentioned how Billy Graham would read the proverb that matched the day of the week plus five psalms, which meant he would read through both books each month.

To know which psalms to read, take the day’s numerical date (1, 2, 3, etc.) and multiply it by five to know which psalm is the first of your five to read.

Guess which psalms land in the reading for day 23 of the month?

Yep, 115, 116, 117, 118 and 119. Of course, the longest psalm would show up on the day I was running behind, just like in Susan’s story.

But even more than it being a funny tie-in to what that week’s issue of TAB showcased, I was intrigued by how two different aspects of what I had experienced with TAB played out so close together.

This type of thing actually happens to me all the time. Various topics we’ve covered connect randomly, sometimes on the same week, sometimes a little later, but God uses the content of the paper in so many ways in my everyday life.

The Sunday School lesson commentaries always have several nuggets of wisdom that stand out to me.

Theology 101 keeps me learning and growing in God’s word.

Feature articles give me ideas and opportunities to pray. Some also spark personal memories.

For instance, Brenda Gantt’s biscuits story reminded me of my Granny McCaig and how she spent one summer when I was 12 or 13 teaching me to make her homemade biscuits. Sure wish I had practiced more.

Media Reviews gives us suggestions for the next movie or TV series to watch — or book to read.

The Your Voice spread helps me understand a variety of points of view and expand my own thinking.

News stories help me stay informed with the basic facts so I

can comprehend what’s happening without getting distracted with too much emotion or spin.

Page 2 provides a community bulletin board for the publication with various updates.

And page 3 is my weekly chat with you. I always think of you when I’m writing and imagine we are in the same room together, sharing a cup of coffee (or my go-to, hot tea). I hope you feel the same.

When you flip to this page and see my photo, imagine I’m waving hello and sending a hug. That’s how I think about it. 🌈

CELEBRATING TAB THIS MONTH

We need your help, encouragement to celebrate our annual Read TAB Day, set this year for Aug. 23

We have a lofty goal for this year’s Read TAB Day emphasis — we want to double our engagement by the end of 2020.

But we can only make this happen with your help.

The idea is to take the evangelistic concept of “each one, reach one” and share at least one part of what we offer through TAB Media with a friend or family member not already connected to us.

While TAB in and of itself offers multiple opportunities to point people to the gospel, we focus most of our efforts on serving and equipping the saints in order to help believers grow in their individual faith journeys.

As believers deepen their own spiritual walks, we are confident church families and congrega-

tions as a whole will be stronger and more likely to make a major Kingdom impact.

Please be thinking about ways you could share TAB.

1. Help a friend get a subscription to the print edition — which comes with an enhanced PDF edition and an all-access pass to the website as well as discounts on events and workshops sponsored by TAB.

2. Share our social media platforms with family members so they can follow us — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

3. Check out the TAB Media Group channel on YouTube.

4. Visit our blog for young adults at theropetab.com.

5. Maybe you’ve been listening to one of our weekly podcasts but haven’t slowed down to officially subscribe. It’s free to subscribe,

and each new show will cue up for you when it is released.

6. We also have the Monday–Wednesday–Friday email newsletter (TAB Highlights) with the latest headlines in the world of religion. Sign up on the home page of tabonline.org.

Many options exist to help us double our reach. Be thinking about what you might share with someone and let us do the heavy lifting to help you in the effort.

Call us at 800-803-5201, ext. 118, or email us at support@thealabamabaptist.org. You also are welcome to reach out to us through any of our social media platforms.

We are here to make it easy for you and are excited to see what we all can do together.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

Your Voice



Share your comments, letters to the editor, blog excerpts, social media posts

Visitation limits in times of medical crisis 'cruel'

By Pastor Bryan Taunton
ChristPoint Community Church, Sylacauga

Imagine your aged mother becoming ill and being rushed to a hospital. Upon arrival, you are told that you cannot go back and be with her. She has a history of mental illness and dementia, and you fear she may not be able to effectively communicate her medical history. She has no advocate.

The ER is so busy that effective communication with the family

cannot be at the top of their priority list. You are left stunned with frustration, many questions and very few answers.

Then she, your only living parent, still dealing with numerous other issues, has a heart attack and is moved into ICU. The unit is on lockdown, and your parent awakes alone and confused.

This horrific scenario is the very one my family has endured.

Due to mandates put in place to

slow the curve of COVID-19 across our nation, thousands of people have not been allowed access to sick, hurting and, in some cases, dying loved ones.

Since starting a petition to change such policies, I've received numerous comments, calls and messages from people who have been forced to endure similar and worse situations: from a father barred from being with his 2-year-old child while he bled out in his mother's arms, to a husband having a heart attack, spending many days in ICU and finally leaving this life without his wife beside him.

It's not the hospitals or the medical personnel who are to blame but the system. In many aspects, they are also victims.

Obviously, we need to take necessary precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but it must be in a manner that is humane and does not take away our civil liberties.

This practice of not allowing people to be with family in times of extreme illness, especially when COVID-19 is not involved, is a cruel and inhumane practice. A person has the right to have a family advocate by his or her side during times of sickness and injury, and a child deserves both parents by his or her side.

To find out more about our petition, visit our Facebook Page at GoAPFA. Together we can make a difference.

In a culture where mainstream media continues to face an identity crisis and competition from expert bloggers and TV and podcast show hosts, Southern Baptist media outlets have the opportunity to offer our communities a model for living by the highest of journalistic standards, while also striving for excellence in the craft in general and shining for Jesus in the process.

It truly is possible to report straightforward facts, be fair in the presentation and trust people to handle the information responsibly.

We hope that engaging with *The Alabama Baptist* and TAB Media offers a glimpse of hope and reminders of how much good really is happening amid the chaos.

Our goal is to offer accurate and fair reporting of news and information, helpful resources for surviving life's difficult circumstances and hope-filled encouragement and inspiration along the journey.

We love sharing the stories of God's people doing God's work in Alabama, across the nation and around the world.

We pray your time spent with TAB is calming, peaceful and fulfilling — and that it prompts you to shine for Jesus, share His love and demonstrate the amazing grace He modeled for us.

Jennifer Davis Rash
TAB Media President
and Editor-in-Chief

Letters to the Editor

A couple of TAB issues have caused me to have negative responses. Leaders like some who have been quoted in TAB need to quit trying to put the onus on white people and put it on themselves to change. Very few first responders are racist.

It was with great pleasure I read the July 9 issue. It was very uplifting. In particular were the articles on page 5, "What Would Jesus Do?" by Danny Cotton, and on page 6, the feature on Lindsey Wood and "Bows that Bless."

It was also comforting to know a dozen state AGs are "in support of America's law enforcement personnel." I wonder where the other 38 are.

Tony Berry
Foley, Ala.

Thanks for not spinning traditional wheels at this time of the year (editorial in the Back to Campus issue, July 30).

Rather, you placed some practical and personal pitches on the field which reflects your common concern for touching lives in a most thoughtful way. Your closing paragraph also clued readers in on the nature of this edition and delivered as promised.

Your words flow with such smoothness and kindness. Even in the past when you have shared some challenging ideas, fraught with convictions, your love and compassion have shone brightly in chosen words to convey what needs to be said — and heard.

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper, Ala.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“We ought to be concerned. ... But don't let your concerns consume you.”

PASTOR ADRON ROBINSON
Hillcrest Baptist Church, Country Club Hills, Illinois

“You never lose by being nice. It seldom costs anything. Except a little time, thought and energy.”

—**Dr. Ben Carson**
Retired neurosurgeon
U.S. Secretary of Housing
and Urban Development

In this new normal, how much of what you're doing is impacting your faith and spiritual growth positively? Or negatively?

For parents, these weeks of uninterrupted family time can be an excellent opportunity to grow as the chief disciples of your children. And for churches, this is an ideal time to train parents how to do that.

There are a variety of ways to institute [training] for parents right now. We have the technology and

the time, and an opportunity we couldn't have anticipated.

Let's not neglect discipleship now, even though our methods and our questions will be different. As Christians, let's commit to steward our time for His glory. As leaders, let's help the people we lead use this time to grow closer to Jesus.

—**Excerpt from the Illinois Baptist newspaper, article by Jack Lucas, director of leadership development for Illinois Baptist State Association**

The most important man a boy needs in middle school and high school is his father. ... Here's what the church decided to do: Bright idea — let's take middle school and high school boys, quarantine them

from their dads and men their dad's age and expect them to know how to be men. And then we'll shame them when they go to college because they play video games too much. ... So dads, go get your sons. Go grab them! They need you more than any other man in their lives.

Excerpt from video by Anthony B. Bradley in his Twitter feed @drantbradley

Whether rich or poor, whatever nationality or language, people just need someone to love them. It is said that no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. The truth in this is amazing.

Jeff Bush
Missions.tips

How many of you are familiar with the children's book by Judith Viorst titled, “Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day”?

As the back cover of the book explains, “Alexander knew it was going to be a terrible day when he woke up with gum in this hair. And it got worse ... His best friend deserted him. There was no dessert in his lunch bag. And, on top of all that, there were lima beans for dinner and kissing on TV!”

Do you feel like you're stuck in a “terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day” ... after day ... after day? This year's pandemic, combined with national unrest and possibly daily, personal crises, have left many of us discouraged and disheartened.

How can we as believers maintain our faith in such difficult days? Think about this one word: “Whatever.” That's right: “Whatever.” In Philippians 4:6–7, the Apostle Paul exhorts Christians to “be anxious for nothing” and to pray “with thanksgiving” about everything. In return, he promises the incomparable peace of God.

He then immediately launched into his practical “whatever” advice. He wrote, “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

As Christian leader Daniel Darling said recently, “Don't catechize calamity.” Instead, focus on the blessings of life and the goodness, compassion and sovereignty of God; think about “anything worthy of praise.”

We can still be realists about what is going on in our world, in our communities, even in our homes, but the reality of the crisis at hand doesn't have to consume our every thought. Instead, we can follow Scripture's advice and purposefully focus our hearts and minds on goodness. As we do so, God's peace will still our troubled souls.

Margaret Colson
TAB special assignments editor

From the *Twitterverse*

@garyfenton07

We learn to listen to others before we learn to listen to God. When we deliberately ignore the words of all others and listen only to ourselves, we will ignore God as well.

@DerwinLGray

In unprecedented times, we need unprecedented kindness.

In a chaotic culture, we need peacemakers.

In hostile times, we need merciful people.

@richardblackaby

Watching the news makes me grateful God left us a Bible to base our lives on and not a panel of “experts.”

@TinaBoesch

In this moment of crisis, there's

a tendency for the church to turn inward. ... But God often used crises to humble His people back into faithful relationship, to remind them of the distinctiveness of His kingdom, or even to send His people out. ...

@ricklance

During this unprecedented pandemic and all the other challenges we face, Alabama Baptists have continued to be faithful in giving through the (Cooperative Program). This is making a world of difference!

@AshleyUnzicker

“Whatever your worries are, let your worship become greater!”

@revandyfrazier

“If you ask, ‘Why is this happening?’ no light may come, but if

you ask, ‘How am I to glorify God now?’ there will always be an answer.” — J.I. Packer

@SpurgeonMBTS

“Grace is as a fire in the soul, and he that hath much of it, so as to become an advanced Christian, cannot but have a heart boiling with earnestness.” — Charles Spurgeon

@desiringGod

Seven lessons for productivity:
1. Know why you are here. 2. Embrace your role as a sub-creator. 3. Distinguish between sloth and rest. 4. Make peace with imperfection. 5. Act promptly. 6. Chop a little each day. 7. Get excited for what's ahead.

@JohnCMaxwell

Leadership is like swimming. It can't be learned by reading about it. It takes practice!

Planning a trip to help an ORPHANAGE?

Advocate explains how to care well, guard children from attachment issues

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

In her work with orphans around the world, Amanda Howard has heard a lot of stories, but she says one in particular sums it all up. It's about a baby who really needed some love and a young woman who really wanted to help.

The woman went on a volunteer trip to serve at an orphanage, and the workers there asked her if she could help get a new baby on a schedule. The baby was eight months old and had only been at the orphanage for a couple of days.

She said yes. And while the usual caregivers were doing all the other day-to-day tasks of keeping the orphanage running — cleaning, preparing meals and caring for the older children — she focused on giving that baby the best start she could.

"This woman poured her heart and soul into that baby for the three weeks that she was there," Howard said.

But when she left, something happened. The baby lost its stability.

"That baby was so dysregulated that they ended up having to take it to urgent care," Howard said. "It took three months to get that baby back on a schedule, but not only that — it threw off the equilibrium for the entire baby home."

It's a common problem, and one that's easy to create without meaning to, said Howard, a developmental psychologist and assistant professor of psychology at Samford University in Birmingham.

Heart for orphans

People have a heart for orphans, and they volunteer in orphanages because they want to help. But experts now say there's research to support the idea that not every volunteer orphan-care trip is created equal.

Sometimes the best way to love children in need isn't to love them directly — it's to offer support to the caregivers who have an ongoing presence in the kids' lives, Howard said. That principle can cut down on the problem of children developing attachment issues.

"The CEO of that organization



Pixabay.com

(with the dysregulated baby) said looking back, he realized the young woman would've had just as much of a fulfilling experience supporting the caregiver [while] the caregiver took care of the baby," she said.

Howard said she's not advocating for volunteers to stop going — in fact, she said she would love to see more and more people involved in orphan care. What she's suggesting is a better model, one that helps the

children develop healthy attachments to the caregivers who are a constant in their lives.

Howard recently worked with the Christian Alliance for Orphans Research Initiative to develop a free curriculum for those interested in learning more about how to care well for orphans. The curriculum will be available online Sept. 1.

In the meantime, here are some guidelines Howard suggested for

Wondering how to care better for orphans and their caregivers?

Christian Alliance for Orphans will offer two free online courses starting Sept. 1 — one for hosts/coordinators and one for volunteers. You can access them here:

For Hosts

Hosting Wise Short-Term Missions
resources.cafo.org/courses/receiving-short-term-missions

For Volunteers

Short-Term Volunteering: The Good, The Bad, and the Better Way
resources.cafo.org/courses/wise-short-term-missions

"The caregivers are trying to have this balance of structure, and asking volunteers for gifts doesn't help the caregiver build that long-term relationship. If you have gifts to give, leave them with the caregiver so they can give them to the children instead."

Amanda Howard
developmental psychologist and assistant professor of psychology
Samford University

those with a heart to help orphan-ages care for children:

1. Support the caregiver instead of being the caregiver.

Rocking a baby may seem like the most direct way to love an orphan, but that dysregulated baby would have likely had a different outcome if the volunteer had instead taken care of the primary caregivers' other jobs so they would have time to invest in the baby.

"Attachment is something that happens in someone's arms," Howard said.

In a typical primary caregiver relationship, the caregiver is rocking the baby to sleep, changing its clothes and giving it baths — doing all the day-to-day tasks.

Supporting caregivers

Those tasks should stay with the caregiver, Howard said. It doesn't mean a volunteer can't interact with a child at all. For example, if a child were to fall and hurt himself, a volunteer could pick him up and brush him off, of course — but send him back to the primary caregiver to be the main comforter.

"One way to think about it is this — would you be comfortable with a new stranger coming into your house every week and feeding and rocking your babies and giving them baths? Our hope is that a consistent caregiver would do those things and volunteers could do other tasks to support them," Howard said.

She told the story of one young girl from Eastern Europe who was adopted at age 8. Though she's well-adjusted and older now, following her adoption she had trouble attaching to her new mom. At the same time, she treated everyone like a caregiver. She would go up to random people in the mall and hug them or hold their hand.

"Before she was adopted, she had 30 women every year come in and rock her to sleep, and many would say things like, 'We're going to get you taken care of,' or 'I'm going to come back and get you,'" Howard said. "It was hard for her to grasp that her new parents were her 'forever' people."

2. Let the caregiver distribute any gifts you have to give.

When teams go in and give out gifts to the children, they can sometimes inadvertently sabotage the caregiver, Howard said. She told the story of one orphanage where volunteers kept giving gifts to the kids, and they were developing bad habits



Unsplash.com

like asking volunteers for money or their rings.

"The caregivers are trying to have this balance of structure, and asking volunteers for gifts doesn't help the caregiver build a long-term relationship," she said. "If you have gifts to give, leave them with the caregiver so she can give them to the children instead."

3. Invest in the whole community.

In some parts of the world — especially Africa — the children who end up in orphan care sometimes aren't actually orphans. They have living parents who feel their child will have a better opportunity at getting an education and other resources if they send them to an orphanage, Howard said.

"People often don't realize that," she said. "But if you pour into the community rather than just into the orphanage, it helps break the cycle."

Family preservation

When volunteers go and work in these areas, they should think about focusing on family preservation by doing things like hosting parenting classes at a local church.

"Our goal is for these kids to go home," Howard said. "We want families to reunify."

4. Use your skills creatively.

While orphans might not need a changing stream of primary caregivers, they still need the investment of people who love them, Howard said. "If you have a team with a certain skill set, use that skill set."

That could mean hosting a sports camp or Vacation Bible School for the children, or it could mean hosting an education conference in the community.

"I went on a trip once with a team that had a hairdresser on it, and one day he just spent an hour doing the hair of the caregivers and loving on them," she said. "That was a treat for them."

Howard recommends asking the organization or orphanage what their needs are.

"Many times they are afraid to ask, but if you ask them, they are open to those conversations," she said.

Stephani Duff with Back2Back Ministries said her organization relies heavily on volunteer help but has seen similar ideas work well with their ministry.

"You can have short-term guests effectively serve when they come alongside workers who are doing work 365 days," she said. "We do

not ask visiting missions guests to do work that is best suited for a caregiver — they are helping us in what's already being done on the ground year-round."

'Goal in mind'

Before volunteers assist at Back2Back, which has eight orphan-care sites in six countries, the organization trains them in trauma-informed care, Duff said. They are also clear about the volunteers' schedules and what work will be done while they're there.

"We do a lot of building projects with our teams — pouring concrete, building bunk beds for the homes. We have them participate in play with a purpose," she said. "A lot of the work they do is to benefit what's already happening in the homes and with the children. We do give them time to connect with the kids, but it is always planned and with a goal in mind."

All of those things are intended to build up the children's faith and confidence while reinforcing their relationships with their primary caregivers, Duff said.

"Our goal is always to look to the people who are with the kids the most, who know them the best — those are the safe adults who are trustworthy," she said. "Anything we're doing is with the intent of helping what's already happening." ✝

"Our goal is for these kids to go home. We want families to reunify."

**Amanda Howard
developmental psychologist
and assistant professor
of psychology, Samford
University**

SECOND IN A SERIES

In their
OWN WORDS:

Alabama Baptists and the COVID-19 pandemic

Rosalie Hunt on being a senior adult – ‘I hope I’ve learned a new sense of gratitude’

By Rosalie Hunt
 Special to The Alabama Baptist

I’m Rosalie Hunt. I live in Guntersville, Alabama. My husband, Bob, and I have actually lived here 25 years, the longest I’ve ever lived in one place in my life. I married an Alabama boy because both of us felt led to go to China, to the Orient, as missionaries. I grew up as an MK (missionary kid) in China and did not have roots in America really. Alabama has become home for me now, and I love living here. We are members at First Baptist Church in Guntersville.

Troubles in China

I first learned about the illness in China in late February. I had a trip scheduled the last week of February to speak at the annual meeting of the Hawaii WMU (Woman’s Missionary Union), and I hesitated about going. They were just beginning to talk about masks and the fact that this thing might spread. But I went ahead and made the trip.

I recall sitting on the plane, and a woman on the other side, maybe one or two rows back, kept coughing, and I was very conscious of that fact. I got to Honolulu and was there three or four days, and the news began to swell at that time.

I went with a friend after the meeting to the Costco there, and huge lines of people were buying toilet paper and paper products and



Photo courtesy of Rosalie Hunt
 Rosalie Hunt (center, shown here at a pre-COVID-19 birthday celebration) says time missed with family has been a difficult aspect of the pandemic.

I thought, “What in the world is going on?” I soon came to find out.

I returned to the states, and the news was everywhere that there were a few cases in America, and it might get dangerous. It didn’t take long for it to really sound frightening.

Our daughter, who is the director of the American Academy of Religion headquartered in Atlanta, came here and has stayed with us during this time so that we would not have to go out and be exposed in shops.

It’s been more than five months now that we have basically been

here and not been to a store. My husband, Bob, has had a number of bouts with pneumonia; he’s in his upper 80s, and he’s very high risk, so we didn’t want to take any sort of chance. That’s the predicament in which we have found ourselves, just like so many other people.

Precious days

We had no idea how long-term this thing was going to be.

The most difficult thing has been an emotional strain; it’s emotionally rough.

Bob and I both have had the sense we don’t know how much time we have left, and these are our precious days, but we really have no choice right now except to try to practice as much caution as we can.

Most of us run the whole gamut of emotions. Sometimes I’m just plain angry and wonder how can such things be. I see way too much news on TV, and I see people not

taking caution, gathering in crowds, not wearing masks, and I think, “We all have a responsibility to our fellow man. This is all of us in this, and we all need to take precautions.”

Someone may say, “Oh I don’t care; I’m young; if I get it, I’ll get over it.” We are our brothers’ keepers, and I have been so aware of that during this time.

We count precious the time we have with family, and we want more time with family. During this period, we’ve had our very first great grandchild born, and we have not been able to see him. Strange, but that’s been a real emotional problem. He’s very high tech for a three-month-old now — and he Facetimes us every day, and so that’s become the highlight of our day.

We do miss a routine. We miss going to church so much, so much. I miss my Sunday School girls; I teach Sunday School and the first-through third-grade GAs (Girls in Action). In order to fill this vacuum, I have been videotaping our Bible study every week.

Once a week, I send all the girls packets, and we do our Bible study, and starting this next week we’re going to be doing our GAs together from our “GA World.”

Sunday School, Bible study, is so important for children, I don’t want them to miss out on this time. So even by video we have somewhat of a link. That’s been helpful.

I had to cancel speaking engagements for several months into the future. That has been a real, real challenge to me.

But there have been some unexpected blessings. For one thing, I’ve had time to write more. I was working on my sixth manuscript, and I sped it up by two or three months

I have worked really hard at something I don’t do well. I’m a Type A personality. I’ve had to think every day, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’

Rosalie Hunt
 Emeritus International Mission Board missionary, writer, speaker

because I had time without all the other things of life that I normally do. I sent the manuscript of this book to the publisher early and then started on another project. I'm managing to keep busy that way.

Spiritual blessings

Spiritual blessings, of course, are many. I have worked really hard at something I don't do well. I'm a Type A personality. I've had to think every day, "Be still and know that I am God." I want to listen to what He has to say. I know that none of this was a surprise to our heavenly Father.

The Chinese (have an expression) which means, "Lay down your heart." Every day I think of it. There's really no English expression quite like it. When conditions are beyond our control, we just need to lay down our hearts.

Something else has been very real to me in these days.

My new project is to begin forming China stories from my past — my parents were missionaries and my aunt was a missionary — and I've been going through hundreds, actually thousands, of letters and pictures.

So very real to me is one of my mother's favorite expressions. She was an amazing Bible scholar and

teacher, and she would often say to her class and to us, "Practice the presence of God."

In these COVID-19 days, I have thought about that so very much.

The unexpected becomes the expected. My parents in their 20 years of missions service were disrupted time and again by wars and rumors of war. I look at their letters and they say, "The Japanese are near our city." Sometimes they would say, "We can hear the fighting beyond the gates of the city." And then the Communists were coming.

I remember as a child that fear of the unexpected. We didn't know what was going to happen, but we knew to practice the presence of the Lord. I learned that from my parents.

I hope I'm not too old to learn some lessons. I'm looking so forward with new appreciation to seeing friends and family members I haven't been able to hug in a long time. I hope I've learned a new sense of gratitude.

EDITOR'S NOTE — As told to Margaret Colson. In Their Own Words is an oral history of Alabama Baptists during COVID-19. The interview has been edited for clarity and space.



Photo courtesy of Rosalie Hunt

Rosalie Hunt prepares for Judson College's 2018 graduation, where she received the Algeron Sydney Sullivan Award.



Photo courtesy of Rosalie Hunt

During a typical year, Rosalie Hunt (center) enjoys meeting readers of her many books on missions heroines at WMU conferences across the country.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Christology Through Figures

Vine

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
Special to The Alabama Baptist

The last of the seven "I am" sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John is this week's focus for Theology 101.

Christ said simply, "I am the True Vine" (15:1). A grape vine is not a decorative plant intended to adorn the premises. Its purpose is the bearing of grapes. Fruit-bearing is at the heart of this week's figure of Christ as a vine. Through His person and work He is the source of all true fruit-bearing.

By the addition of the definite article and an adjective, Christ specified that He is "the true Vine." A number of Old Testament passages refer to Israel as a vine. However, Israel failed to be the fruitful vine God intended.

'Seed of highest quality'

The prophet Jeremiah records this prophetic word from God, "I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine" (Jer. 2:21)? The reality of human failure became the setting for the coming of a Redeemer.

In place of the failed vine, God sent forth His Son to be the true Vine. The quality of this vine is not in question. The issue in Jesus' use of this figure to refer to Himself centers not on the vine but on its branches. The matters of interest and importance in this figure of a vine center on its individual branches. Jesus was quite direct in saying to His listeners, and to us, "I am the Vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5).

At the risk of being overly precise, we must acknowledge that branches do not produce fruit. The vine produces fruit. Branches bear what the vine produces. This observation reminds believers of our responsibility to abide in the Vine so He might produce spiritual fruit through us. Branches do not struggle or agonize to force fruit to emerge on them; they simply abide in the vine and the fruit of the vine shows up in due season.

Abide in Him

The application of Jesus' figure of Himself as the Vine and us as the branches simply instructs us to abide in Him.

However, He pressed His own analogy further in the reminder that God as the heavenly Vine-dresser attends to the pruning of the branches in order to increase their fruit-bearing. Sometimes that which seems like harsh or negative experiences through which we pass may be part of God's ongoing pruning process.

The pruning has the goal of branches bearing "more fruit" (John 15:2). The ultimate goal is important. Jesus expressed it, "By this My Father is glorified that you bear much fruit" (15:8).

Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.



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Bringing the Bible to life

Retiring Tallassee pastor Derek Gentle receives send-off complete with camel

When Beth Baldwin came on board at First Baptist Church, Tallassee, in February, she never would've guessed a dromedary would be her pastor's first request.

"He said, 'The first thing I want you to do is find an event to have a camel,'" said Baldwin, director of preschool and children's ministries.

Derek Gentle had been serving as the church's pastor for 24 years, and he had "never been able to get a camel here," Baldwin said.

So why did he want one? Gentle had his reasons — he felt like if children could get up close to the animals, food and other things that they read about in Bible

stories, it could help close the gap between real and imaginary.

In other words, seeing a camel would help bring the Bible to life for them.

"The Bible has a lot of figurative language, and understanding the ideas of sheep and shepherds in real life can help them understand those Bible concepts," Gentle said. "Kids are

hands-on learners, and I wanted them to have these kinds of experiences so they 'get' it."

In the past, he and other leaders of First, Tallassee, have found different ways to try to make that happen. A church member who had served as an agricultural

missionary in Africa once taught them about what it means to be a shepherd. And for Vacation Bible



Photo by Hannah Muñoz

A child feeds a sheep at Derek Gentle's unusual retirement celebration.



Photo by Grace Thornton

FBC Tallassee pastor Derek Gentle meets Travis the camel, one of the 'guests' at a retirement celebration held July 15 in Gentle's honor. Gentle retired Aug. 2 after 24 years as pastor.

School a few years back, church members built a working olive press.

But the church had never quite been able to get a camel there, and the clock was ticking — Gentle was planning to retire at the end of the summer.

Baldwin and Julie Reynolds, the church's secretary, were determined to make it happen. They got online and tracked down Travis the camel in Auburn, and they got him on the calendar.

And on July 15, Travis and a few of his friends —

a donkey and three sheep — showed up at First, Tallassee, for one of Gentle's send-off events.

"This is the preschool and children's version of a going away party for him," Baldwin said. "He wanted an event with a camel, and he got one. We added in all the food and kept letting it grow a little bit."

Outdoor event

What it grew into was a come-and-go outdoor event for families where they could pet and feed the animals and try a sam-

pler platter of foods from Bible times — fish, lamb, pistachios and other nuts, olives, figs, dates, homemade bread (both leavened and unleavened) and pomegranates.

Brandon Fomby, student minister at First, Tallassee, said after the local newspaper picked it up, the celebration became an outreach event too.

"We got so many outside people asking about it, contacting us," he said.

And even though Gentle would've loved to have life as "normal" and COVID-19-restriction free in the weeks leading up to his last Sunday — Aug. 2 — he says hosting a camel, seeing the kids' faces and building relationships with the community isn't a bad way for him and his wife, Sheila, to close a long chapter at First, Tallassee. (Grace Thornton)



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3 stories you should know



Photo courtesy of Gospel for Asia

Gospel for Asia issued a call for 'compassionate prayer' after more than 160 people were killed by a mudslide at a jade mine in northern Myanmar on July 2. Triggered by heavy rains, the mudslide swept into the mining site 'like a tsunami,' according to one state official, burying workers and people scavenging for precious stones. Several Christians living in a nearby village work at the jade mine, but no one from the local church was reported missing. (GFA)

2020 Youth Speakers winners announced

This year's Alabama Youth Speakers Tournament and Bible Drill competitions were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Youth Speakers Tournament was adapted to a virtual competition held in May.

The winners of the 2020 Youth Speakers Tournament competition are:

- ▶ First place: Hope Bone, Oakley Baptist Church, New Market (Madison Baptist Association)
- ▶ Second place: Anna Hagel, Thelma Baptist Church, Wetumpka (Elmore Baptist Association).

Due to social distancing requirements, the Alabama state Bible Drill was canceled this year.

For more information about Youth Speakers Tournament and Bible Drill, visit alsbom.org/ministries/bible-drill/. (TAB)

Alabama order requires masks through Aug. 31

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has extended the state's current health order through Aug. 31.

The amended Safer At Home health order remains mostly the same but adds a requirement for students and employees of schools and colleges from 2nd grade through college to wear masks "where possible."

Ivey said the face covering requirement "could be an added burden," but she said the requirement is important to provide a safe and healthy environment for students and to take care of the state's teachers as well.

"Wearing a mask can't hurt, but it sure can help," Ivey said, noting the importance of keeping the state's schools and businesses open.

To view Alabama's current Safer At Home public health order, go to tabonline.org/health-order. (TAB)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Pro-life advocates to FDA: Remove abortion pill from U.S. market



More than 20 pro-life leaders have called for the federal government to withdraw an abortion drug from the market because of its threat to women as well as unborn children.

In a July 28 letter, advocates urged the Food and Drug Administration to categorize mifepristone, sold under the brand name Mifeprex, as an "imminent hazard to the public health."

The pill "poses a four-times higher risk of complication" than first-trimester surgical abortion, the pro-lifers said, citing information from the American Association of Pro-life Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

The letter was sent barely two weeks after a federal judge halted the FDA's requirement that the pill only be dispensed in a medical setting, such as a hospital or clinic.

At the end of 2018, the FDA reported 24 deaths, more than 1,000 hospitalizations and nearly 4,200 "adverse event" cases among women who have taken mifepristone for an abortion since 2000. (BP)

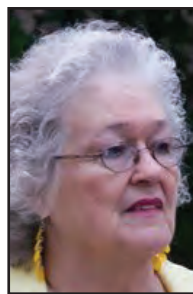
Linda Brown, wife of Jacksonville pastor Garry Brown, dies at age 76



Linda Brown — wife of Garry Brown, pastor of Nances Creek Baptist Church, Jacksonville — died July 22. She was 76.

A Piedmont native, Brown retired from a career as a licensed practical nurse.

She is preceded in death by her son, Michael, who died in April. Survivors include her husband of 60 years; daughters, Cynthia and Melinda; and five grandchildren. (TAB)



BROWN

Mary Majors, wife of FBC Sandusky pastor Buddy Majors, dies at age 78



Mary Ruth Fretwell Majors — wife of Buddy Majors, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sandusky, for 57 years — died July 19. She was 78.

A Perry County native, Majors worked for 38 years as the cash manager of Liberty National,

as well as serving in ministry alongside her husband.

She is survived by her husband; sons, Lee and Greg; and four grandchildren. (TAB)

Mary Smith, wife of Anniston pastor Gene Smith, dies at age 76

Mary Smith — a longtime nurse and wife of Gene Smith, pastor of Fairview Heights Northside Baptist Church, Anniston — died July 21. She was 76.

Smith served as an RN for several decades and taught the "Faithful Sunshine Ladies" Sunday School at her church.

She was preceded in death by her granddaughter, Kaeleigh. She is survived by her husband of 21 years; sons, Michael and William; one grandson; and two great-grandchildren. (TAB)



MAJORS



SMITH

— ALABAMA NEWS —

Warrior Creek Baptist Church members improving following COVID-19 outbreak

James Carson has watched the church he loves go through a lot in the past two years. When it went up in flames in August 2018, he saw the smoke from his house across the cow pasture. It was a long process, but they rebuilt.

And now he's watching from home again as his beloved church family at Warrior Creek Baptist Church in Strawberry goes through something together again — a COVID-19 outbreak.

More than 40 members got COVID-19 after the church's revival in mid-July, including Pastor Darryl Ross.

"It was held inside with social distancing," said Carson, a World War II

vet featured on page 1 of the May 21 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*. He's in his 90s and — along with his wife, Dot, who is also considered high risk — hasn't attended church since April at his doctor's recommendation.

"Right now they say this area is a hotspot," Carson said. "That was sort of a shocker to us."

The church, which runs between 80 and 100, met for a while with drive-in services using a broadcast system that let church members tune in with their car radio.



Photo by Grace Thornton

In June, Warrior Creek Baptist was back to some normal gatherings, and in July, they started their weeklong revival like they usually do. Except this year they only made it to Thursday — that was when Ross heard one of the men attending had tested positive even though he had no symptoms.

The church shut revival down, and "by Friday night, I've got church members sick everywhere," Ross told *Al.com*.

That night should've been the night the church gathered in its newly constructed fellowship hall for the first time. A year ago, their July revival was the first time the congregation met

in the sanctuary they'd rebuilt after the fire.

Ross told *TAB Media* that even though the group has been pretty ill, they are "getting better."

Masks weren't required for the revival, and many members skipped the event, he said. Those who came distanced at the level they were comfortable with.

No one with COVID-19 has been hospitalized so far, but two of the cases were serious, according to Ross. (Grace Thornton)

Prattville pastor resigns after controversial post

Alabama Baptist bivocational pastor Will Dismukes stepped down from Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Prattville, on July 29 following backlash resulting from a Facebook post.



DISMUKES

Dismukes, a Republican state representative whose district includes Prattville and Millbrook, posted about "having a great time speaking and giving the invocation" at an annual birthday celebration for Nathan Bedford Forrest, a leader in the Confederate Army with ties to the KKK.

Alabama lawmakers from both parties have denounced Dismukes for participating in the event.

In Baptist life, "immediate effort was made to connect with Will on behalf of our leadership with commitment toward a biblically based process to mitigate controversy surrounding this issue," Mel Johnson, lead mission strategist for Autauga Baptist Association, of which Pleasant Hill is a member, explained. "Will was open and receptive to our call and subsequent meeting."

Rick Lance, executive director of the State Board of Missions, said, "We were saddened and grieved to learn of the (July 26) Facebook post. ... In the wake of tremendous controversy, we reaffirm our opposition to any kind of racism."

Lance's June 4 blog post "A Personal Credo Concerning Racism" was reposted and affirmed by the officers of the Alabama Baptist Convention and officers of the State Board on July 27. (TAB)

News near you

DEKALB ASSOCIATION

► **Liberty Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Collinsville**, celebrated its 150th anniversary on July 12. Deacon David Clayton shared about the history of the church. Wendell Dutton, director of missions for Cherokee Baptist Association, was guest speaker and presented a plaque on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. The service was streamed on Facebook. Due to COVID-19, the celebration was small, with about 25 in attendance and no singing, but the church hopes to have a bigger celebration at homecoming in May 2021. David Hairston is interim pastor of Liberty Hill.

ELMORE ASSOCIATION

► **Ben Nobles** is the new pastor of **Santuck Baptist Church, Wetumpka**. He has been in

full-time ministry for 22 years, about half of that time spent in senior pastorates. He earned a bachelor's degree in theology from Florida Baptist Theological Seminary and a master's degree in discipleship ministries from Liberty University. He and his wife, Amy, have three children.



NOBLES

MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

► **Chet Roden** is the new pastor of **Bel Air Missionary Baptist Church, Boaz**. He earned his Ph.D. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. Roden has served as pastor of several churches and also serves as a professor with Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Randall Stoner is director of missions.



RODEN

MORGAN ASSOCIATION

► **Lebanon Baptist Church, Falkville**, will hold revival on Aug. 9, at 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Michael Mason will preach. Living Faith Quartet

will sing Sunday evening. Randy Ashley is pastor.

MUD CREEK ASSOCIATION

► **Grant Street Baptist Church, Bessemer** — formerly a part of Bessemer Baptist Association — was recently accepted into the membership of **Mud Creek Baptist Association**. Jeremy Beck is interim pastor. David Hobson is director of missions.

PINE BARREN ASSOCIATION

► **Jeff Hammack** is the new interim pastor of **Beatrice Baptist Church**.



HAMMACK

STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

► A back-to-school prayer time will be held Aug. 12 at 10 a.m. via Zoom. Prayers will be offered for students and their parents, as well as for teachers, professors and administrators. The prayer time will last approximately 25 minutes. For more information, go to alsbom.org/event/back-to-school-prayer-time/. 🇺🇸

Community

Young adults need relational element of church

(continued from page 1)
up in the air now,” he said. “It’s already difficult, and then you add COVID-19 on top of that and it makes it even more difficult.

“There is already this building pressure, and it almost feels like failure for them to have to move home,” Tate added.

One of the positives from the pandemic has been recognizing a need for community. And Tate said it can’t be found on Zoom calls, livestreaming and “online communities,” which are really just “a shadow of the real thing.” And without community, it is far easier for students to become isolated and fall into depression.

But even though many churches have reopened their doors in recent weeks, church members — including many young families — continue to stay home and watch services offered online.

Cautious plans

According to a LifeWay Research survey released July 24, most congregations remain cautious in restarting some programs and classes. The survey noted 21% of Protestant pastors say their churches still have not held in-person meetings during the past three months.

“While more and more churches have resumed in-person worship services, it has not always been a straight path back,” said Scott McConnell, executive director LifeWay Research. “Resuming in-person wor-

ship services has not been reverting to worship as usual.”

“Churches are making efforts to make the environment safe,” he said in the report, “but these efforts are

often second-guessed by those who want more precautions or less restrictions.”

Andy Wilbanks, minister to families at Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover, said the church is

struggling with planning ahead as COVID-19 issues continue to linger and uncertainty about the months ahead grows.

But the “foundational piece” for their church, he noted, is equipping families

to disciple their children at home.

Before the pandemic, around 2,600 attended on Sundays. But now that number is around 500, with most young families staying home and watching online.

For now, Hunter Street is providing LifeWay’s Gospel Project curriculum, which a lot of the children’s small groups at the church use, for families to teach at home, Wilbanks said.

Shift in thinking

“We’re writing a mid-week guide based on that content, and we’re producing activities and stuff for preschoolers and kids and students,” he said. “We’re sending that to our families to have kind of an at-home study guide that they can use on their own.”

“So I think one of the shifts we’re kind of thinking through is how do we

21% of Protestant pastors say their churches still have not held in-person meetings during the past three months.

LifeWay Research survey



123rf.com

equip our parents to turn the home into that hub and not just depend on the church,” he noted. “Obviously, that gets to the heart of discipleship and the heart of the important role we have as parents.”

At this point, he noted, the outlook for the rest of 2020

will remain uncertain for a while.

“We’re just not sure,” said Tate, noting his team is talking about next steps as college students are expected to return to campus in just a few days. “Things are so fluid and change from week to week.”

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MINISTRIES

TAB PODCASTS
The TAB Media podcast channel now offers four podcasts: TAB Talks, a radio show featuring a special guest or guests that comes out on Mondays; TAB News, an audio digest of the weekly newspaper that comes out on Wednesdays; TAB Briefs, which will offer three current faith-based news and culture stories and comes out on Fridays after debuting first on Facebook Live at The Alabama Baptist newspaper on Facebook; and TAB Stories, a seasonal, long-form, in-depth feature into the life of a specific person church or ministry. Listen to the TAB Media podcasts at www.tabonline.org/podcasts.

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*“Fear not, for I am with you;
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ISAIAH 41:10



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Someone You Should Know

MELISSA CARLISLE GOLDEN

By Leigh Pritchett
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Melissa Carlisle Golden, 30, of Prattville is a licensed professional counselor and president of her private practice Transformation Counseling, Inc. She also sings in her church's choir, is involved in neighborhood outreach and serves on the board of directors for TAB Media. She earned her bachelor's degree from Samford University and her master's and doctorate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. She and her husband, Adam, are newlyweds.

Q: Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts.

A: My ministry and vocational calling have centered around integrative Christian counseling. I believe the Christian counselor should be a humble vessel in the Lord's pursuit of the hearts, minds and souls of His precious created beings. Counseling can be used as a tool for discipleship for

the Christian, as well as an evangelistic outreach for the non-Christian. As a licensed professional, I enjoy living out this calling in both the church and the community.

Q: Who is one of the most influential people in your faith life? Why?

A: My mother, Laurie, instantly comes to mind as the most influential person in my spiritual life. As a young child, my mother read Scripture and prayed with me every day. She sacrificed her own conveniences to provide Christian education through high school, Samford University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. She encouraged church activities to further build on the foundation God was already graciously building at home. Day by day, she modeled active evangelism, compassion for others, seeking the Lord above all else, delighting in the joy of the Lord and remaining confident in His great faithfulness to our family.

When trials or difficul-

ties threaten my focus, I can always count on my mom to help me place my full confidence and gaze back on Christ where it belongs.

Q: If there were one thing you could tell your younger self about faith, what would it be?

A: One morning in class at seminary, a classmate asked for prayer that she succeed on a very important exam.

Dr. Steele compassionately replied, "I will not pray that you pass, but I will ask God for peace as you prepare and faith and wisdom if you fail." We all giggled and told our classmate we would pray for a passing grade, but we were thoughtfully reminded that our wants and desires are not always what God has planned for our good and His glory.

Q: Does your church have any special traditions that mean a lot to you? What are they?

A: During two wonderful seasons of my life, I have been a member of Shades

MINISTRY: Licensed professional counselor

CHURCH NAME: First Baptist Church, Prattville, in Autauga Baptist Association

LIFE VERSE: "And we know that all things work together for good, for those who love Him and have been called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28)



Mountain Baptist Church (in Birmingham). Every year, Shades hosts the "Global Impact Celebration," where we bring in our missionary partners from around the globe to care for them, encourage them, fill their bellies with some good Southern cooking and make connections for our missions trips with them throughout the year.

This exciting annual event helps these missionaries we support become like family. They aren't just a picture on a post card or a quick, unknown visitor to a Sunday service. They are friends and family we can't wait to go visit and serve alongside.

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?

A: The Message states Jeremiah 29:13 in a simple, yet profound way: "Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you won't be disappointed." My husband and I have committed to reading Scripture together every day. We are following Shades Mountain (Baptist Church's) Chronological Reading Plan. I find that I crave it each day. Communing daily with God, especially together as a family, is a refreshing practice that is nurturing our marriage and changing our hearts to be more like Christ. 🌈

Alabamians among recent Baptist seminary graduates

Several Alabama Baptists graduated in spring 2020 with degrees at the master's level or higher from Southern Baptist theological seminaries and Beeson Divinity School at Samford University.

The Alabama Baptist provided the following lists of graduates by the schools.

► **Beeson Divinity School:**

Master of Divinity — David Austin, Birmingham; Lawayne Custard, Greensboro; Thomas George, Birmingham;

David Meinberg, Hoover; Samantha Parsons, Hayden; Kyle Sullivan, Leeds; Corey White, Birmingham

Master of Arts in Theological Studies — Katherine Ladd, Pleasant Grove; Kimberly King Smith, Birmingham; Kathy Stepanski, Hoover

► **Gateway Seminary:**

None

► **Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Arts in Counseling — Travis Dewitt

► **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Doctor of Ministry — Brian Burdette, Gardendale;

Bruce Mewbourne, Birmingham

Master of Arts in Christian Apologetics — Matthew Rich, Birmingham

Master of Arts in Christian Education — Joshua Helton, Northport; B.J. Shelton, Cullman

Master of Arts in Discipleship — Anna Hockman, Mt. Olive; Elizabeth "Abbie" Johnson, Birmingham

Master of Divinity — Jonathan McLain, Mobile

Master of Theology — Glenn "Dale" Garvin, Semmes

► **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Doctor of Ministry — Madison J. Terry, Gardendale

Master of Divinity with Christian Ministry — James William Calhoun III, Huntsville; Matthew Thomas Clayton, Decatur

► **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Doctor of Ministry — Marshall S. Henderson, Fort Payne; Josh Wootton, Montgomery

Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling — Tyler Tarvin, Boaz

Master of Divinity — Cameron Bell, Montgomery; Meg Brown, Homewood;

Dylan Sanders, Valley; Billy Shepard, Birmingham

Master of Theology — Aaron S. Brown, Huntsville

► **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Divinity — Hunter Todd Hindsman, Southside

Master of Theological Studies — Jared Manley Hood, Clanton; Michael Wayne Hester, Tusculumbia; Timothy L. McFather, Alexandria; Monica Napoli Warren, Mobile; Daniel M. Wilson, Clanton

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

Back-to-School Prayer Time

As schools begin to reopen – some in person, some virtually – it’s of vital importance that we lift our students and their parents along with teachers/professors and administrators up in prayer. Please join us for a this brief but important online prayer gathering.

Visit alsbom.org for a link to join at the appointed time.

Wednesday,
August 12, 10 a.m.
via Zoom



PinnacleAlabama.org

Your one-stop source
for virtual training in
Alabama Baptist life

SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TRAINING ALL THIS MONTH!

This weekend: Adult and Senior Adult Leadership

- WEEK OF AUGUST 10: Youth Leadership
- WEEK OF AUGUST 17: Children’s Leadership
- WEEK OF AUGUST 24: Preschool Leadership

Plus these special events coming up:

- TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF A GENUINE REVIVAL,
Monday, August 10, 7 p.m.
- FORECASTING THE NEAR FUTURE,
Tuesday, August 11, 10 a.m.

AND MUCH MORE!

Visit PinnacleAlabama.org for complete schedules, details and registration info.



FORTIFY

For more info and to register, visit
ALSBOM.ORG/FORTIFY

August 29 • 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Journey Church, 435 Sheila Blvd., Prattville

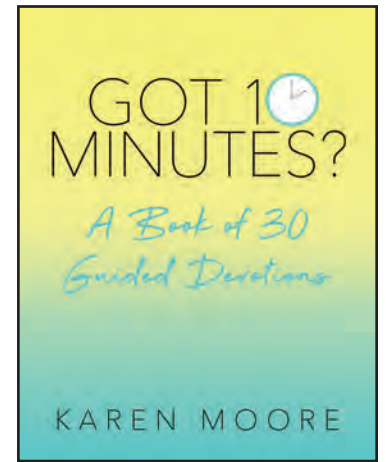
In a godless culture, we need to meet some critical needs for our young men. In this in-person one-day event, we will build up teen guys and show them how to find Christ-centered character. Our goal is to rise above society’s confusing messages about “masculinity” and equip young men with a biblical approach to their identity.



Due to health and safety guidelines,

seating is limited.

GOT 10 MINUTES?



By Karen Moore

Special to The Alabama Baptist | ©2020 Karen Moore | got10minutesforgod.com

God Made this Day

“This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

P S A L M 1 1 8 : 2 4 (N K J V)

Devotional Moment

It’s easy to lose track of the days, especially if you’re out of your routine and staying close to home. Even if you forget today’s date, remember to praise God for making this day available.

This is the day the Lord has made, and the psalmist says your job is to rejoice, be happy and find all the good in it that you can.



MOORE

God always acts on your behalf. He does something, and then He waits for you to respond to what He has done. He sent Jesus into your life to save you, and then He waited for you to accept His invitation.

He invites you to pray and waits for you to call His name. He’s there, always available to you.

God is the Creator and initiator of good and all you have to do is show up and

let Him know you receive His love and mercy.

Today, let your response be one of praise, thanks and knee-slapping happiness because God has prepared great things for you.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for making this day. Let me take this day to praise You and to get things done that will serve You. You made this day to restore my soul and renew my spirit. I thank You and praise You for all You have done. Amen.

Action Step

Note in your journal three things that you will get done today. Check in the evening to see what you accomplished and thank God for making it all possible. This

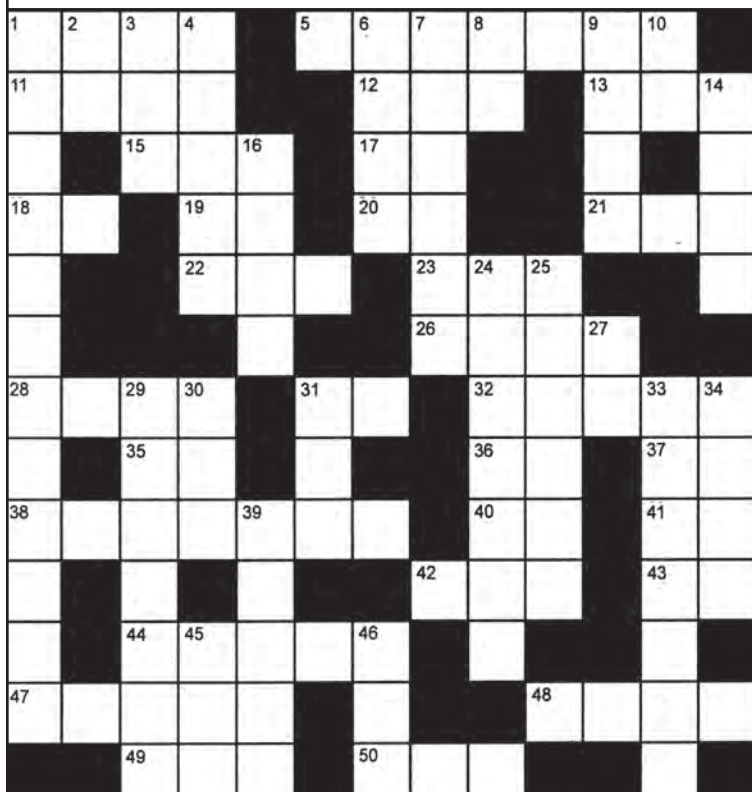
day has been a privilege.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Karen Moore is the author of over 100 inspirational and devotional books. She loves to spend time with God every morning.✝

“God always acts on your behalf. He does something, and then He waits for you to respond to what He has done. He sent Jesus into your life to save you, and then He waited for you to accept His invitation.”

Christian Crossword

By Susan F. Weimer Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- I would thou wert ___ or hot. (Rev. 3:15)
- ___ my voice. (Ex. 19:5)
- ___ thou at my right hand. (Ps. 110:1)
- Behold, ___ is the accepted time. (2 Cor. 6:2)
- To make a hole.
- Audiovisual. (abbr.)
- District Attorney. (abbr.)
- There is none righteous, ___ not one. (Rom. 3:10)
- Not A, E or O.
- A sharp, shrill bark or yelp.
- In the beginning ___. (Gen. 1:1)
- He hath put a ___ song in my mouth. (Ps. 40:3)
- Rejoice, and be exceeding ___. (Matt. 5:12)
- The mountain of

- ___ . (Deut. 34:1)
- The ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.
- Whom Sarah bore to him, ___. (Gen. 21:3)
- Prefix meaning “in.”
- Purple Heart. (abbr.)
- Bachelor of Arts. (abbr.)
- Unto one he gave five ___. (Matt. 25:15)
- ___ that hath an ear. (Rev. 2:7)
- Alabama. (abbr.)
- Not happy.
- Football defensive lineman. (abbr.)
- They were not afraid of the king’s ___. (Heb. 11:23)
- Belly button.
- The ___ of all evil. (1 Tim. 6:10)
- Emergency Medical

- Service. (abbr.)
- The ___ of joy for mourning. (Isa. 61:3)

Down

- There is therefore now no ___. (Rom. 8:1)
- Obstetrician. (abbr.)
- For as many as are ___ by the Spirit. (Rom. 8:14)
- As ___, and behold we live. (2 Cor. 6:9)
- ___ said to Jacob, “Feed me.” (Gen. 25:30)
- Lead them unto ___ fountains of waters. (Rev. 7:17)
- And ___ repented the Lord that He had made man. (Gen. 6:6)
- ___ thou not the oppressor. (Prov. 3:31)
- Roseanna’s nickname.
- Jesus ___. (John 11:35)
- None is ___, save one. (Luke 18:19)
- Adah bore to Esau ___. (Gen. 36:4)
- Have ___ their robes. (Rev. 7:14)
- Doctor of Arts. (abbr.)
- Unto all and upon all them that ___. (Rom. 3:22)
- That they all may be ___. (John 17:21)
- Delivered it from the ___ of corruption. (Isa. 38:17)
- Whose name in the Hebrew tongue is ___. (Rev. 9:11)
- I will ___ on the name of the Lord. (1 Kings 18:24)
- In His hands the print of the ___. (John 20:25)
- Democrat. (abbr.)
- How thee ___ tables of stone. (Deut. 10:1)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 9

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



ACCEPTING DISCIPLINE Proverbs 29:1-3, 12-20

The Goal (1-3)

The stubborn ox would lock its neck so that its head would not turn in the direction the farmer wanted it to go. The bits in the ox's mouth would cause pain, but the ox would not obey. "Stiff-necked" is an apt description of the person who refuses to respond to divine instruction. God lovingly reprimands His children in order to correct their sinful practices.

Solomon warns that continuous rejection of God's rebukes would lead to shattering consequences. The phrase "beyond recovery" can also be translated as beyond healing. This phrase may refer to temporal consequences that cannot be reversed even if the person repents and seeks forgiveness. If the fool continues to despise all of God's rebukes, his destruction will be sudden and without remedy.

The "righteous" are people right with God while the "wicked" are people whose attitudes and actions are in opposition to God's character. When the "righteous flourish" or increase and thrive in a community, people celebrate. But when the "wicked rule" by coercion and authoritarianism, people grieve.

Solomon writes that the man who consistently seeks wisdom brings great joy to his father. This is an ultimate goal of parenting. Wisdom is the right application of true knowledge that comes from God (Prov. 2:6). So for a person to be righteous and wise implies that he is in relationship with the Lord. This is the desire of every godly parent.

In the Book of Proverbs nothing could be more foolish or destructive than wasting one's resources on momentary, immoral self-gratification. Lust destroys a heritage. The wise person will flee from selfish lust.

The Availability (12-14)

The influence of the ruler's personal character on his people involves a fearful responsibility. A wicked prince makes a wicked people. Rulers are to ensure that truth is the foundation upon which

every decision is based. Otherwise, corruption will always be present.

Every human being is created in the image of God and should be treated with dignity and respect. However, due to human depravity, this truth is often ignored. In verse 13 the "poor" refers to people who have been impoverished by the unjust actions of the rich and powerful, the oppressors. Consequently, they are helpless and in need of legal protection.

While these two categories of people are different, they are on the same level before God. All people are equal before God. It is God who gives life to everyone. We all belong to God and will give an account to God. God will judge even human kings without favoritism.

A king's administration will fall apart if he gives heed to corrupt counselors. According to verse 14, however, his administration will thrive if he is just to even the weakest people in his kingdom. The king should be the protector of his people, not their oppressor.

The Responsibility (15-17)

Discipline is the order of God's government, and parents are the administrators of it. Solomon is dealing with a disobedient "youth." This term applies to a child of any age from infancy to young adulthood.

The purpose for disciplining the child is to correct his unacceptable behavior. Wisdom implies knowing what acceptable behavior is and acting accordingly. If children are not taught godliness, they often grow into self-centered adults who live in rebellion against God.

The Source (18-20)

Without the revelation of God's guidance and commands, the social and spiritual order would soon collapse. People who hear and obey God's word will be happy.

Little to no hope exists for people who refuse to receive instruction and continually interrupt while the teacher is talking. The word of God is essential to build and preserve a godly society. 🌿

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D., S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong
Professor of Religion, Samford University



WE SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16

My calling is to use my God-given spiritual gifts for the unity of the church. (1-7)

The first half of Paul's letter to the Ephesians (starting from 1:3) emphasizes all the blessings God has given us by His grace.

The second half of the letter (starting in 4:1) emphasizes how we are to live in light of God's amazing grace, that is, the remarkable love and mercy we have received in Christ.

The metaphor of "walking" refers to how we live our life before God. We are to "walk in a manner worthy" of our calling in Christ.

Such a worthy response is reflected in humility, gentleness and patience, as we "bear with one another in love" and seek to maintain the unity and the bond of peace.

This is directly related to the exposition of God's way of treating us in the first half of the letter.

God bore with us in love and is creating unity and peace with and among us (2:14-18), so it is no surprise that we are now called to maintain unity and the bond of peace by the same Spirit.

In verses 4-6, Paul mentions a series of unique realities which all Christians share together, repeatedly emphasizing that there is only "one" of each (body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God).

Paul goes from repeating the word "one" to repeating "all" in verse 6 (God is the "Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all") and then shifting to refer to "each one" in verse 7.

The overall point is all Christians share the same spiritual realities, experiences and relationships essential to Christian identity.

When we focus on ways in which we are different from each other (or hold to some different interpretations), we tend to become divided.

But when we focus on all we have in common with other believers, we are more likely to find

common cause and embrace and grow together with our brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Some people are gifted to equip the church for ministry. (11-13)

Paul quoted Psalm 68:18 in verse 8 and applied it to Christ's post resurrection ascent to the Father and the distribution of gifts to Christ's church in verses 9-11.

Christ's gifts to the church are the result of the victory won on the cross and demonstrated by His resurrection and ascension.

Among those gifts, Paul includes various kinds of leaders whose roles entail the equipping of the church to carry out the work of ministry and the strengthening of Christ's body so that it may be unified and mature in Christ (vv. 13-16).

God provides (or "gifts") leaders to the church (such as apostles, prophets, shepherds or pastors and teachers) to help us all do and be what the church is called to do and be.

They are like player-coaches who both do important ministry and help the rest of us work together to carry out the work as well.

All spiritual gifts are used to help believers grow in Christ, in unity and in love. (14-16)

The references to human growth as a metaphor for spiritual growth in verses 12-13 are continued in verses 14-16.

Moving beyond childhood and the awkwardness of the early adolescent body are all also metaphors for the spiritual growth of the Christian.

The follower of Christ must not be easily deceived, like children, but become more and more like Christ by speaking the truth in love as He did.

Building this spiritual body happens by exercising the love Christ modeled for us and empowers within us. 🌿



Media reviews

MUSICAL/MOVIES

Disney Plus' 'Hamilton' remains a fan favorite, but it's not kid-friendly

By **Michael Foust**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

His name is Alexander Hamilton, and he's one of the smartest people in Colonial America you'll ever meet.

He's also confident (even cocky), determined (perhaps a workaholic) and ahead of his time (he opposed slavery).

The rest of the world knows him best as the man on the \$10 bill, but in the musical "Hamilton" — now on Disney Plus — viewers get to know the man who served as George Washington's aide in the Revolutionary War, supported passage of the Constitution by coauthoring the Federalist Papers and transformed the nation's economy as our first secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The musical, which won 11 Tony Awards, is a combination of R&B, pop and traditional Broadway tunes.

It's also one of the most creative, entertaining and educational Broadway productions you'll ever experience. (That is, if you can overlook the PG-13 content — more on that in a moment.)

Creative production

You get to watch Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson — political enemies — engage in a "rap battle" over U.S. involvement in European affairs.

You get to see Hamilton and Aaron Burr sing a duet

about their desire to be better fathers.

You also get to watch our Founding Fathers dance across the stage as they take part in low-down political shenanigans that make you realize American politics has long been dirty.

Diverse cast

Lin-Manuel Miranda, who wrote "Hamilton" and stars in the lead role, calls it a "story about America then told by America now." This means you have a diverse cast, including black actors playing white characters, such as Jefferson.

"We want to eliminate any distance between a contemporary audience and this story," Miranda told *The Atlantic* in 2015.

It's a strategy that works, partially because the plot follows real historical events. Author Ron Chernow's biography of Hamilton served as Miranda's inspiration.

"Hamilton" is an uplifting tale that includes life lessons about hard work (Hamilton was born out of wedlock, and his father later abandoned him), the benefits of compromise (Hamilton learns not to be so stubborn) and family (Hamilton wanted to raise his children in a better environment than he had).

It also includes warnings about anger and ego (he died in a duel with Burr) and lust (an affair ruined his political career).



'Hamilton'

Photo courtesy of Disney

Alas, Hamilton isn't kid-friendly. It includes more than 40 coarse words (all sung or rapped) and a couple of sexually suggestive scenes. (Clothes stay on, but the onstage antics and the lyrics tell us what happened.)

It's rated PG-13 for language and some suggestive material.

Also streaming this month:

Adults/teens

▶ **"Schindler's List"** (Netflix) — A German businessman learns of Hitler's horrors and works to save as many Jews as possible. It won seven Oscars. Rated R for language, some sexuality and realistic violence.

▶ **"Pride & Prejudice"** (Netflix) — It's the 2005 version of Jane Austen's fa-

mous novel, which follows the story of five sisters who are trying to save their estate after their father dies. Rated PG for some mild thematic elements.

▶ **"March of the Penguins"** (Hulu) — This 2005 award-winning documentary about emperor penguins is kid-friendly — but is so good that mom and dad should watch too. Morgan Freeman narrates. Rated G.



Children

▶ **"Charlotte's Web"** (Netflix) — This 2006 live-action film follows the unlikely friendship between a spider named Charlotte and a young pig she's trying to save. It's a classic tale about friendship and sacrifice. Rated G.

▶ **"Pirates Who Don't**

Do Anything: A VeggieTales Movie" (Netflix) — Three lazy pirates — Elliot, Sedge-wick and George — get transported back to the 1600s and learn about hard work. Rated G.

▶ **"Megamind"** (Prime) — An evil villain (Megamind) learns that being bad isn't as fulfilling as he envisioned. It's an animated film with parallels to "Despicable Me." Rated PG for action and some language.

Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four young children.

'FAITH SETS THE TONE'

Samford's power forward Dupree wants others to see faith by his actions

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It wasn't on the court but in the stands where Jalen Dupree had his most memorable basketball moments.

After executing plays, grabbing rebounds and scoring points at Cordova High School in Memphis, Dupree would see the smile on his mother's face when he did well.

Niesha Dupree smiled a lot.

As a senior in 2016, her son was All-State, All-District, All-Shelby Metro and Cordova's Defensive Player of the Year. He averaged 10 points, eight rebounds and 3.5 blocked shots per game. He was also all district as a junior.

Now a redshirt senior at Samford University, Dupree, a power forward who stands 6'9" and 240 pounds, has brought the same intensity to the Bulldogs. He is one of the team's top scorers, averaging 11.6 points, and 7.1 rebounds.

Skill package

"He expanded his skill package, shoots threes now, which he wasn't doing the last three years. He does all the little things. It's fun when you've got guys like Jalen. He is very teachable, very coachable," said Samford director of athletics Martin Newton, whose grandfather, C.M. Newton, was head basketball coach at Alabama and Vanderbilt and later athletic director at Kentucky.

Dupree, 22, came to Samford with a chip on his shoulder. He transferred after two seasons at Murray State in Kentucky.

"He wanted to prove not only to himself but to everybody that he could really succeed," Newton said. "He wanted to step up his life. That



Photo courtesy of Samford Athletics

is the reason he chose Samford. I see a major difference in his life being at a faith-based school. He has taken it to another level personally. He has done a good job rolling with it as a partnership. When he has to invest, he is not just investing in himself but investing in the process."

The transfer became a turning point.

"It was a more mature decision I made to better myself. I went through a lot of trials at Murray that helped shape me into the man I am today. I wouldn't change going there at all. I am happy for every experience I had there. When things didn't go my way, being headstrong, I used to shut down, become isolated," said Dupree. "Both universities as a whole opened me up and encour-

aged me to stay persistent and strong and start doing the right thing."

'Stepped up to the challenge'

Newton told Dupree that it wasn't going to be easy coming in.

"He has stepped up to the challenge and taken it on. We're proud of Jalen," Newton said.

Dupree also has learned more about his faith at Samford.

"Playing at a Christian school, when people see the school name across the chest, it puts the message out there as faith itself. People see that it is a very reli-

gious, prestigious school," said Dupree, who has something else across his chest, a tattoo of a cross.

On his arm he has Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

"It means a lot how you carry yourself, how you walk, how you put faith in God."

Jalen Dupree

"They signify Christ," he said.

Faith is "very important" at Samford, Newton said. He wants the Bulldogs to play for God as well as learn life lessons. "Faith sets the tone. Samford is really good about developing the whole person, not just the player or the student."

Dupree's mother and father, Jonathan Dupree, made faith part of family life. His parents led him to Christ and set an example Dupree strives to follow.

"It means a lot how you carry yourself, how you walk, how you put faith in God, doing the right thing basically," said Dupree. "When I think of Jesus I think of sacrifice because He gave His life to make up for our sins and shortcomings."


As he prays and reads his Bible and tries to live by it, Dupree wants others to see his faith by his actions.

"I always look at positive things. I am always praying for others. My faith is challenged every day because as a Christian I am supposed to do things to the best of my ability. There are days I don't feel like practicing or getting up to go to class, but I still do it," said Dupree. "Every day people look at me like I should set a standard. My inner voice tells me that."

Career goals

A sports administration major, his career goals are to play professionally and work with Nike in marketing.

But he also wants to continue growing as a person and in his faith.

"I like the person I have become, but I know that I am not a finished product," he said. "There is always room for improvement." 

To read Jalen Dupree's story in its entirety, visit tabonline.org/JalenDupree.