# SEEDS NEWSLETTER

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## MEET THE FAMILY

### Trampus and Lee Offutt



From Stamping Ground, KY, where they still live, the couple met at a birthday party in 1993. They were married in 1996 and have two adult sons, Brady and Jonathan.

Trampus works at Ryder Integrated Logistics in Georgetown, where he is a Certified Driver Trainer based at Toyota. His job includes new hire orientation, safety audits, and Management support. Lee is Director of the Scott County Activity Center (formerly the Senior Citizens Center) and handles the day to day operation, sets up trips, and plans outings. She also does meals and meal delivery to shut-ins in our community.

They came to our church during the Covid pandemic while looking for a place to worship in person. Lee's sister, Jenna Vance, encouraged them to attend here.

## Josh and Gretchen Doolittle



Joshua was born in Brazil, where his parents were missionaries. Gretchen hails from Easton, PA. He was saved in 2011; Gretchen in 2014. They met while working zip-lines at a Christian camp and were married in May of 2023, then moved to Georgetown three days later.

Joshua works for a landscaping company in Lexington. Gretchen is a content editor and proofreader for AiG. They visited our church while looking for an apartment in Georgetown and immediately felt at home here.

## Levi Johnson



His early life was spent in Milan, TN, where he attended Chapel Hill Baptist Church with his family. A period of turmoil and loneliness followed the death of his father when Levi was 4 years old, leading him to invite Jesus into his heart three years later while alone in his room. He was soon baptized.

After moving to Georgetown when he was 12, Levi later met Micah Shelton while playing basketball at the Pavilion and the two became good fiends following Micah's invitation to attend our church.

The next few years were marked by a struggle to establish a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, until he became "awed and captivated" by what God is doing in his life! He recently served at The Wilds Christian Camp and will soon graduate from Asbury University with a BS in Digital Content Creation and a minor in Biblical Theology.

# PERSPECTIVE

## GOD'S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS CHILDREN (Part Two)

*By Pastor Zach Kirchner*

Last month's look at God's relationship to His children explored His unconditional love for us, His desire to enjoy a good relationship with us, and His plea for our continual dependence on Him. Two further aspects of that wonderful relationship are presented here.

Truth #4: God's love and God's joy are two different things.

My love for my girls will never waver, but they sometimes do things that greatly displease, hurt, or disappoint me. Similarly, if you're a believer, God's love for you will never waver. However, that does not preclude you from displeasing, hurting, or disappointing him.

This is a truth which the unbelieving world and many professing Christians do not understand as they tout God's love while doing anything that they please. We actually highlight our ignorance of God's love when we do whatever we please (see Proverbs 16:25). But i*t is the very unconditional love God has for his children that should motivate us to live lives that please him*! Paul challenged the Thessalonians to seek to please God "more and more" (1 Thessalonians 4:1), and we, too, must seek to please our Father.

For the true child of God, you can be assured that God will never love you more, and he will never love you less. But just as you can please and encourage him, you can also disappoint and hurt him. If you're his child, you have his love! Now live to please him!

Truth #5: God knows more than his children, and he is in control.

Know-it-alls can be annoying, especially when you know they have no idea what they're talking about. I often imagine God looking down on us from his throne in heaven and chuckling to himself because, well, you and I have a tendency sometimes to act like little children who think we know it all.

We argue about theology, we map out our next ten years, we claim to know others' motivations, and somewhere along the way, it hits us — "I guess I actually don't know as much as I thought I knew!"

Parents know that their children don't know very much, yet they somehow claim to have all kinds of knowledge and wisdom! (Does this become intensified when our children become teenagers?) Similarly, God knows more than we do, and sometimes, *we need to rest in his care and realize that he knows what he's doing*. His strategies are vastly superior to ours, and his plan is much more intricate, complex, and all-encompassing than we can even fathom. Ecclesiastes 5:2b tells us: *God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."* In other words, let's let God be God, and we'll be content just taking the next right little step!

Being a child of God is an unbelievable privilege, and we would do well to think through how we ought to rightly relate to him. How does God's relationship to you, his child, encourage or challenge you? If God has given you children, how can you better mirror to your children God's relationship to you?

## WHAT'S HAPPENING!



In late September, the Horizons LifeStage visited the Kentucky Horse Park to experience an evening of music and horses with the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra.

Also in In late September our ladies met at Panera Bread for a fun time of fellowship.



**Fall Fun, Farm-Style!**

Twenty-two kids joined the annual Bluegrass Kid's Fall Fun on the Farm for an afternoon packed with autumn adventures. A hayride to the creek led to some masterful pumpkin carving, while games kept the fun going. As always, splashing and playing in the creek was a favorite—even on a cool Saturday afternoon hosted by Wes and Jessika Wade.





### Teens Do Hayride Too

Teens led by Joe and Abbie Rincon were next up at the Wade's farm. They chose not to go into the cold creek but enjoyed games and a bonfire instead.



## ENCOUNTERS:

### LIVING AS A CHRISTIAN IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

*Here we share anecdotes from church members about their experiences and thoughts, as Christians living in a world that is indifferent to the Gospel and Christian values in general. This month's contribution from **Alec Neff** addresses the challenge young Christians face when considering where and how to invest their time and treasure in response to the many opportunities the world has to offer.*

I recently attended a wedding that provoked a temptation within me. The wedding was for an old high school friend that I had not seen in six years. It was a beautiful ceremony, and I was glad to meet him along with many other old friends.

But, to be honest, that encounter also troubled me a little as I heard with twinges of envy about the success my old buddies were enjoying in their secular careers.

As with any temptation, however, it is not the thoughts that define us, but how we respond to those thoughts! I was prompted to consider why I have chosen to work in Christian ministry instead of following secular opportunities to make more money, pursue positions of power, or accrue acclaim to myself. Why did I choose instead to invest much of my time working for a small-town Baptist Church?

The answer lies in how I define success as a Christian. Success for a me will not be found in the temporal pleasures and treasures this world has to offer, but in the heavenly treasures Christ has to offer. That is not to say that the things of this world are inherently evil, but they are nothing to be compared with the riches that come from serving Christ!

> *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"* (Mark 8:36).

The satisfaction and fulfillment our souls may seek in worldly pursuits can only be found by living a life in submission and service to Jesus Christ. It is true that you don't have to work in a church to serve Christ, but for me, there is no better place to start!

## BIBLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

*In this section we answer questions about Bible doctrines or texts or Church life or Christian life in general. If you have a question that you think may prompt an answer helpful to yourself and to the church family, please let us know. This month* ***Pastor Fannin*** *answers a question about a hard heart:* ***It's our fault!***

**The Lesson of Pharaoh**

Few figures in Scripture are as well known as Pharaoh of the Exodus, and yet we don't even know his name. He stands at the center of one of the greatest dramas in the Bible, matched against Moses and, ultimately, against God Himself. He began by resisting God's commands and ended with the reward resistance always earns: death.

How did a man become so set against God that he came to mirror the very spirit of Satan? The answer is simple and sobering: he hardened his own heart. And when a man does that, God will let the hardening run its course until it matures into a full and final rejection of everything God has for him.

**God Allowed What Pharaoh Wanted**

Exodus 7:3 tells us that God would harden Pharaoh's heart. But read carefully, and you'll see what happens first. Again and again, the text says it was Pharaoh who hardened his own heart: *"he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them"* (8:15); *"Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also"* (8:32). Only after Pharaoh had repeatedly chosen defiance did God confirm him in it (9:12). That principle has been repeated in the lives of countless others whose hearts grew harder in a clear progression, just as Pharaoh's did.

**He Denied God's Person (Exodus 5:2)**

Pharaoh cared nothing for the God of Israel, because he believed he was a god of Egypt. He knew nothing of *Elohim*, the God of Creation; *Jehovah*, the God of Covenant; or *Adonai*, the God of Command. In his mind, he was the son of wisdom and learning. He knew who he was, and he didn't need Moses' God. We hear the same spirit expressed today. Modern atheists and humanists boast of their enlightened, purposefully pagan lives, flaunting supposed superior knowledge of all things human. They are kin to a long line of ancestors: Voltaire, Darwin, Huxley, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Ingersoll, among others. They are derisive and daring before the Almighty, and they boast of their willful ignorance of God. Hardness of heart always begins with a rejection of, and defiance toward, God Himself**.**

Pharaoh's religion doomed him. John Phillips observes that if Babylon was the home of idolatry, *"Egypt was where it had its heyday."* The Egyptians bowed before cows, cats, and crocodiles, and Pharaoh believed himself to be the incarnation of Ra, the sun god. In the end, he worshiped himself. That is the religion of the unregenerate world today: *my wants, my wishes, my desires, my demands, and I want them now.*

By the time of the locust plague in Exodus 10, the progression had reached its peak. Pharaoh's own officials begged him to yield: *"knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?"* (10:7). But pride had become entrenched. Pharaoh had crossed a forbidden frontier. God, having shown grace again and again, was now turning to judgment.

**He Disliked God's People (Exodus 5)**

When men refuse to recognize God's Person, God's people should not be shocked when they are disliked. Beginning in Exodus 5, Pharaoh set out to exasperate the Hebrews, and then to exterminate them.

Why? Because Israel would not bow to Egypt's gods. They would not teach Egypt's philosophies to their children. They lived apart in the land of Goshen, refusing to be absorbed into Egypt's culture, creeds, codes, and conduct. Their very presence was a rebuke to the system Pharaoh upheld.

It is no different now. God's people, enlightened by God's Word and living quietly and peaceably in separation from the world, will always be misunderstood, maligned, and mistreated by wicked men. Our otherworldly lifestyle, our standards, our way of thinking, even the "indoctrination" of our children all irritate the ungodly. So the world will write laws to discriminate against us and launch efforts to eradicate us. Pharaoh is not the last of his kind.

**He Disregarded God's Power (Exodus 7–10)**

Pharaoh never reckoned with the power of Almighty God. He didn't fear God's judgment, because he didn't believe the God of creation could touch him. He was wrong.

Moses was not nearly as defenseless as he looked. The slaves groaning under the taskmaster's lash in Goshen were not nearly as defenseless as Pharaoh thought. They had a Redeemer, and their Redeemer was mighty. He had a thousand weapons in His arsenal, and He used only ten. Blood and boils. Frogs and flies. Lice and locusts. Hail, and a darkness that could be felt. One by one, Egypt lost its crops, its cattle, and finally its firstborn. And still the stubborn king dug in his heels.

Joseph Addison Alexander put it memorably:

*There is a line by us unseen, That crosses every path; The hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath.*

Through every plague, God showed patience, forbearance, and mercy. And through every plague, Pharaoh hardened his heart a little more, until the man who once *denied* God came to *hate* Him. He finally led his army into the Red Sea, where the Lord *"overthrew Pharaoh and his host"* (Psalm 136:15).

**Don't Harden Your Heart**

Pharaoh is a warning written in water and blood. God did not make him a rebel. Pharaoh chose rebellion, again and again, until God gave him exactly what he wanted.

The same Spirit who recorded Pharaoh's story pleads with you today: *"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts"* (Hebrews 3:15). Every time you hear the gospel and turn away, your heart grows a little harder. There is a line you cannot see, and no one knows how close they are to it.

A hard heart is your fault. But a new heart is God's gift. Christ, our true Passover Lamb, shed His blood so that judgment might pass over you. Don't wait until your heart is too hard to hear. Come to Him today!