

## THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

### "COMPASSION FOR CHANGE"

#### PROVERBS 21:13

### This Week's Core Competency

**Compassion** – I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need. Psalm 82:3-4

*3 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;  
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.*

*4 Rescue the weak and needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.*

Christians can and do touch others in their own churches and communities in a myriad of personal ways that do not involve money, but showing compassion in the context of the larger Christian community generally involves taking an offering. The "priceless" ways may be best, but they may also be unfeasible. So when Gentile Christians outside of Jerusalem needed and wanted to show compassion to their Jewish brothers and sisters in the mother church, they took up a collection. In fact, much of what Paul writes about giving he writes with regard to that special offering he was collecting for poor saints in Jerusalem.

Interestingly, what he writes echoes a saying of Jesus that Paul, alone, has preserved for us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Ac 20:35). Why these Jewish believers were perpetually poor isn't exactly known, but several factors may have been at play. One author writes: "(1) After their conversion to Christianity many Jews in Jerusalem would have been ostracized socially and

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***Give and it will be given to you . . .  
with the measure you use, it will be  
measured to you.***

– Jesus

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economically. (2) The 'experiment in community sharing' described in Acts 2:44, 45 and 4:32, 34, 35 undoubtedly would have aggravated, though it did not cause, their poverty. (3) Persistent food shortages in Palestine because of overpopulation culminated in the famine of A. D. 46 in the time of Emperor Claudius (Acts 11:27-30). (4) As the mother-church of Christendom, the Jerusalem church was obligated to support a proportionately large number of teachers and probably to provide hospitality for frequent Christian visitors to the holy city. (5) Jews in Palestine were subject to a crippling twofold taxation-Jewish and Roman" (Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:311).

Not only can we learn about giving from the instructions Paul gave the church in Corinth, but we can also learn about it from the example set by the churches in Macedonia, presumably, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. The apostle appealed to their generosity in order to encourage the church in Corinth to finish what it had started. In 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, the apostle describes how they gave. He writes:

"And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will."

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number of things are worth noting. First, giving itself is a gift of God. Paul calls it "the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches." One author rightly observes, "'Grace' is a key word that appears ten times throughout these two chapters with differing nuances. Here it refers to human generosity, which Paul understands to be something given by God. Grace is God's unconditional benevolence toward us. When people are spontaneously generous toward others, Paul takes it as clear evidence that God's grace is working in and through them" (David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC, 365).

Second, if Macedonian believers could afford to give, all believers can afford to give. They were poor, perhaps as poor as their Jewish brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. Their poverty might have given rise to apathy, but instead it gave rise to empathy. They opened their compassionate hearts and their purse strings to others.

Third, they gave as much as they were able; they didn't hold back. In fact, they gave "even beyond their ability." The NLT puts it this way: "They gave not only what they could afford, but far more." They didn't give a specific percentage; they didn't even give proportionately. Each one decided how much to give and gave it. One might say, "If I only had \$1000, I would give it," and then give nothing at all. Better he gives the \$100 or \$10 or \$1 that he has than not give the \$1000 that he doesn't. "The gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have" (v. 12).

Fourth, they gave freely. In fact, Paul says, "they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing." Perhaps, he wasn't expecting them to give (cf., v. 5) or even discouraged some from giving—unlikely—but they insisted. They gave themselves to the Lord and then to Paul and his project.

Theirs is an example we would all do well to follow.

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Proverbs 21:13

*13 If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.*

#### Cf., other translations

*13 Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered. (NIV(c)2011)*

*13 The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and will not be answered. (NET)*

*13 The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will himself also call out and not be answered. (HCSB)*

*13 Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need. (NLT)*

#### Cf., a corollary passage

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

*6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written:*

*"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."*

*10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

In Proverbs 21:13

- \* Circle "a man" in line 1.
- \* Bracket "shuts his ears" in line 1.
- \* Underline "cry" in line 1.
- \* Circle "he" in line 2.
- \* Underline "cry out" in line 2.
- \* Bracket "not be answered" in line 2.

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

- \* Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 7.
- \* Circle "all grace" in v. 8.
- \* Box "so that" indicating *result* in v. 8.
- \* Underline "all" (3x after "so that") in v. 8.
- \* Bracket "all that you need" in v. 8.
- \* Bracket "abound in every good work" in v. 8.
- \* Bracket "the harvest of your righteousness" in v. 10.
- \* Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in v. 11.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

### Proverbs 21:13

1. Identify the *figurative* expressions in this proverb and their *literal* meanings.
2. The proverb contains an example of *lex talionis* [eye for an eye] justice. How so?
3. When those who are hardhearted cry out, they will not be answered. By whom?

### 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

4. Taken in its context, identify what is *sown* and what is *reaped*.
  5. How should you give according to verse 7 and why?
  6. What is God able to do to enable you to give?
  7. In light of the proverb (v. 6), explain what the terms "store of seed" and "harvest of righteousness" in verse 10 each mean.
  8. If you give generously, God will make you rich. Is that Paul's point in verse 11? Explain.
  9. **Discussion:** Talk about reasons why Christians should give generously according to this passage.
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## day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

Commentators have little to say about Proverbs 21:13, which implies that its sense is more or less self-evident. A comparison of various English translations, which differ very little, confirms as much. Perhaps the NLT expresses the proverb's meaning best—i.e., in a most natural-sounding, gender-neutral way: "Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need." The implicit point of the proverb can be simply, albeit less poetically, put, "meet the needs of the needy;" so can its explicit warning, "otherwise your needs will not be met." It's the Good Samaritan proverb with a twist. A more academic interpretation goes like this: "Verse 13a specifies the wicked person's lack of righteousness, justice, and mercy by describing him as the one who *stops his ear to the cry of the poor*, implying his cruelty and/or insensibility to justice . . . Verset B of the synthetic chiasmic parallels answers this 'active inactivity' with the *lex talionis* [eye for an eye] consequence: the wicked person's own cry for deliverance at his time of need will not be answered" (Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, NICOT, 178). That cry will be ignored by others and by God.

*Correlation* is the final step in Bible study after observation, interpretation, and application. Correlation asks the question: "Where does it fit?" In other words, where does this passage fit what other passages say about the same thing? 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 is a corollary passage that speaks of giving generously to meet the needs of others. Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus (spring A.D. 56). At the end of this letter, he replied to a question his readers had asked about "the collection for God's people" (16:1). Apparently, Gentile churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia had agreed to take up a collection for Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Why believers there needed help, Paul does not say, but it likely had to do with the famine mentioned in Acts 11:27-30. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, one author writes: "This is the first of three, perhaps four, instances in Paul's letters where he mentions the collection for the 'poor' among the 'saints' in Jerusalem. According to Gal. 2:9-10, part of the agreement reached with the 'pillars' in Jerusalem regarding their mutual spheres of ministry included his willingness to 'continue to remember the poor.' Apparently this collection was a

major part of his concern during his third missionary tour, which functioned for him not only to bring relief to the poor, but also as his own attempt to bring unity between Gentile and Jewish Christianity" (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 810, 811). As far as the apostle was concerned, taking an offering was clearly the right thing to do. In his letter to the Romans written from Corinth (A.D. 57) before heading to Jerusalem, he explains, "For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings" (15:27).

Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians from the same place, later in the same year (fall A.D. 56). In it he returns to the matter of the "service to the saints" (8:1-9:15), about which he had written before. Apparently, although the Corinthians were among the first to contribute to the cause (8:10), they had not finished what they started. In the meantime, the Macedonian churches had raised the bar significantly. Appealing to them as an example, Paul writes, "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints" (8:2-4). In a nutshell, the Macedonians gave generously, freely, and cheerfully, which is exactly what the apostle would encourage the Corinthians to do (cf., 9:6-8).

With respect to the collection, it appears Paul boasted to the Macedonians about the Corinthians (9:2) and then boasted to the Corinthians about the Macedonians (8:2-4) in order to motive them both. As time passed, however, Paul became more concerned that his boasting about the Corinthians might prove hollow, so he decided to send Titus (8:17) and a couple of unnamed brothers (vv. 18, 22) to Corinth to ensure that a generous donation would be waiting for him when he arrived. He evidently feared that any collection taken at the last minute would be not only shamefully small but also grudgingly given (9:5).

And so before dropping the matter, he reminded his readers one last time to give generously (6-15). "Remember this," he says, "whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously

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will also reap generously" (v. 6). It seems giving generously is in the giver's best interest. This isn't a biblical proverb, but it sounds like one: "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty" (Pr 11:24). One author explains, "The sphere of giving, then, presents no exception to the inexorable rule, valid in the moral no less than in the agricultural realm, that a man reaps according to the manner of his sowing, which Paul enunciates in Gal. 6:7ff" (Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 329).

The apostle goes on to say that each one should make up his mind as to how generous he wants to be and then give freely. He should give because he is delighted to give and not because he must. Moreover, each one can give with the assurance that no one can out-give God, the archetype of a cheerful giver. Verse 8 says as much: "And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause" (GNT). The quotation from Psalm 112

that follows substantiates his point by confirming that "whoever sows generously" is blessed.

To those worried that their generosity might lead to scarcity, Paul says, God "will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times" (GNT). They have nothing to worry about. After all, God is the one who gives gives the resources to give. "He supplies the seed to the sower" (v. 10); he is the one who enriches us so that we can generously give to others.

The gist of what follows in verses 12-14 can be expressed in a few simple statements. These statements express what results from "the service" (i.e., generous giving). According to verse 12, generous giving supplies the needs of God's people, and overflows "in many expressions of thanks to God." According to verse 13, its recipients "praise God" for it and for the commitment to the gospel behind it. According to verse 14, the hearts of its recipients go out in prayer to those who give because of the grace God has given them. Paul's closing exclamation provides a fitting end to the matter. Thanks be to God for the matchless gift of his Son!

## *The Message of the Passage*

*Sow generously and cheerfully to bless others, so they might bless you and God might enrich you further.*

## day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

### • Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

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# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 13 **a man . . . he**  
NJB; NRSV.

Some modern translations give a gender-neutral rendering: NIV(c)2011; GNT; NLT;

v. 13 **shuts his ears**

"The imagery means 'pay no attention to' the cry for help or 'refuse to help,' so it is a metonymy of cause for the effect" (the NET Bible, 37<sup>sn</sup> on Pr 21:13). *Metonymy* is a figure of speech that puts one thing for another, e.g., "the White House" for "the President." Here the cause, "shuts his ears" is put for the effect, "pays no attention." What a striking figure for "the malice of one who is pitiless" (Roland E. Murphy, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 22, *Proverbs*, 160). "The wicked misuse both their ears (v. 13) and their bosoms (v. 14); they callously close their ears to the cry of the poor and weakly open their bosoms to the bribe" (Bruce K. Waltke, 178).

v. 13 **cry of the poor**

Here is another example of *metonymy*, this time of the effect, "the cry of the poor," for the cause, their great needs (see the NET Bible, 38<sup>sn</sup> on Pr 21:13). "The Hebrew word here for poor is *dal*, 'feeble, weak, helpless,' translated 'poor' or 'helpless' in 19:4, 17; 21:13; 22:16; 28:3, 8, 11, 15; 29:7, 14. Proverbs also uses several other words for 'poor' and 'poverty'" (Sid S. Buzzell, "Proverbs," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 927).

v. 13 **cry out**

The shoe is on the other foot in line 2; the heartless one now has needs of his own.

v. 13 **not be answered**

"The verbs 'cry' and 'answer' are susceptible of further meaning; not simply neglect from a neighbor who will not listen, but from God as well" (Murphy, 160).

2Co 9:6 **sows . . .**

Cf., Gal. 6:7. "The saying has the appearance of a proverb, but there does not appear to be any precise parallel . . . The image of sowing and reaping is so self-evident that it must have been used at all times and places; and the thought that the quantity of the harvest is (other things being equal) proportionate to the quantity of seed sown is scarcely abstruse" (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC, 235, 36).

v. 6 **generously**

Or "bountifully" (NKJV, ESV); cf. "Remember that the person who plants few seeds will have a small crop; the one who plants many seeds will have a large crop" (GNT).

v. 7 **should give**

Lit., "each one just as he has decided in his heart." "Paul omits the imperative and thereby softens the force of what he wants them to do. Throughout these two chapters, Paul goes out of his way to avoid giving the impression that he is trying to force this project upon them" (David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC, 406). "Paul's advice is consistent with and in continuity with his instruction given in the First Letter: ' . . . each of you is to put something aside . . . as he may prosper' (1 Cor 16:3, RSV). Careful prior deliberation by the giver is implied by these instructions" (Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 437).

v. 8 **all grace**

I.e., God's undeserved blessings in general. "The phrase 'all grace' is quite broad in scope, covering the material blessings and the spiritual motivation to share them" (Garland, 406). Cf., "And God will generously provide all you need" (NLT); "And God is able to give you more than you need" (GNT).

v. 8 **all . . .**

"This verse is replete with comprehensive expressions (and with remarkable paronomasia—the repetition of words having the same stem—in the Greek: *pasan . . . panti pantote pasan . . . pan*) which speak of God's ability to bless his people so that they abound in good works" (Colin G. Kruse, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, TNTC, 165).

v. 8 **all that you need**

Gk. *autarkeia*. In the writings of the Cynics and Stoics it denoted "an intrinsic self-sufficiency that made a man independent of external circumstances" (Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:376). "Paul used the word differently. For him *autarkeia* denoted not self-sufficiency but the sufficiency provided by God's grace, and as such it made possible not independence of others but the ability to abound in good works towards them" (Kruse, 165, 66). Cf., "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work" (ESV).

v. 8 **every good work**

"Every good work" refers to "every act of charity." Cf., "more than enough for every good cause" (GNT); "everything you need and plenty left over to share with others" (NLT).

v. 9 **He, his**

One writer explains, "From 'the wealth and riches . . . in his house' (112:3a), the God-fearing man freely distributes his gifts to the poor (112:9a). As a result, his benevolent acts of piety ('his righteousness') will never be forgotten but rather will have permanent beneficial effects in this life, as well as gaining him an eternal reward in the life to come (1129b)" (Harris, 376, 77).

v. 11 **made rich**

Cf., "You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way" (ESV); "Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous" (NLT); "He will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times" (GNT). Verse 10 echoes verse 8, then verse 11a practically restates it. "Verse 11a restates v. 8, though this is not to say, as some do, that vv. 9, 10 are parenthetical. God continues to enrich the benevolent person so that he can go on enriching others by his generosity (cf. 1:4). The greater the giving, the greater the enrichment. The greater the enrichment, the greater the resources to give" (377).

## Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Several versions of the following story have been told but the point it makes is important and should cause us to pause and think, "What would I do?" Students at a religious school enrolled in a class on the life of Jesus arrive at their classroom to take the final exam and find a notice informing them that the test will be given in another building on the other side of the campus. As the students rush across campus to the new room, each is approached by a dirty beggar in shabby clothes who asks for their help. None of the students stops for him, however - they all rush by, anxious to arrive on time for the exam. The instructor is waiting for the students when they finally reach the classroom. He explains to them that the beggar was an actor, planted by him to test their reactions. Because the students did not demonstrate that they had acquired any compassion while studying the life of Jesus, they all failed the exam. The issue was that the students were so distracted by what their needs were, getting to class on time, that they ignored the needs of one who obviously had bigger problems. Compassion calls us to get over ourselves and look to the needs of others. Take a family check-up and examine your "Compassion Temperature." It might be time to stop and help!

### What Does The Bible Say

**Weekly Verse:** Read Proverbs 21:13 and 2Co 9:6-11

1. According to the Proverbs verse, what happens if a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor?
2. According to the 2 Corinthians passage, what happens to those who sow generously?

### What Do You Think

What is your attitude towards giving away your money, things or time? What does God say our attitude should be when we give? Do you need to change your attitude?

### What R U Going To Do

The holidays are long over and your toy box is likely spilling over in toys - some of them you may never play with! Take inventory of your things this week and then choose some toys of clothes to give away. Mission Arlington or the Pregnancy Center would love to find your toys new home with a kid who needs them!

## MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Compassion -I believe God wants me to help others in need.

Memory Verse

Proverbs 21:13 - *If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.*

## KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

#### *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

#### *6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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