



*A picture from our 3rd 'Last Ever' Trip to Israel*

## OUR 4TH 'LAST EVER' TRIP TO ISRAEL!

As you read this, Ed and I will be on our way home from our 4th 'last ever' trip to the land of Israel! But due to the time constraints associated with publishing a newsletter (and the fact that we will be totally exhausted when we land), we thought we should detail some of the fun facts about our trip *before* we actually head out.

More than 100 people will accompany us as we travel across this land from the Dead Sea - to the Golan Heights; from the dry Judean Desert where Abraham and Moses walked - to the lush hillsides on the Sea of Galilee where Jesus taught; from a shepherds' cave outside of Bethlehem - to a Garden Tomb on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

We will:

- ride camels through the Wilderness of Zin;
- climb the craggy cliffs of Ein Gedi (where David once hid from Saul);
- sail on the Sea of Galilee;
- hike down the Mount of Olives onto the cobblestone streets of Old Jerusalem;
- and wade through Hezekiah's tunnel.

As we look over the list of individuals who will be traveling with us, we cannot help but feel grateful for the years of ministry God has given us and the number of people He has allowed us to serve. Most of them are from our hometown of Lakeland, Florida; others are coming from N. Carolina, Georgia, Oklahoma, Texas and Oregon; some are even joining us from France! Although we will be meeting some of them for the first time, all of them are connected in some way through the ministry God has given us over the past forty-two years. Let me explain:

One of the couples accompanying us became dear friends when we attended seminary. They are life-time missionaries to France and also serve in many of the poverty-stricken, French-speaking countries in Africa.

We met many of the couples through a "Young Couples" Class we started in the Fall of 1982. We have had babies, raised our children, and helped each other through the teenage years together. Now most of us have grandchildren! Many of them trusted Christ with us, and we have been privileged to watch as they have passed on their faith to the next generation.

Among the passengers will be six young pastors whom Ed is training to lead trips of their own to Israel:

- One of them babysat our boys before he and his wife had any children of their own. We used to worry that our four rowdy sons would be a detriment to their desire to ever have children, yet they had four of their own! One of their sons (a PhD candidate at Yale) will also be on this trip.
- Many years ago we had the privilege of doing premarital counseling for another one of these pastors. He and his wife also have four children, and they are bringing their youngest along.
- Another young pastor sang a solo as a 6-year-old at a church in Winter Haven where Ed was the guest preacher. He is now our son MattE's brother-in-law! (Btw - He, too, has four children! Does there seem to be a pattern here?)

We first met two of the couples through Pine Cove Conference Center in Tyler, Texas, where Ed often taught at Family Camp. He had the honor of baptizing one of the couples several years ago.

The husband of another couple from Texas (now a doctor) was an offensive tackle on the high school football team that Ed helped coach while attending seminary.

Three of the couples who are helping us manage the trip are former colleagues with Search Ministries. Their knowledge of Israel and the Scriptures will be a tremendous benefit. We value their friendship and are blessed by their continued partnership with us.

Several of the women have attended Bible studies or conferences that Gwen has taught over the years. Another lady currently participates in a yoga class with Ed. (Yes, Ed does yoga - try to envision that!!) This trip is made even more precious by the fact that our daughter-in-law Heather, her parents, and two of our grandchildren (Jeremiah and Kaelyn) will be traveling with us. (Zach will be staying home with Adrienne and Emmett.) It has always been our dream to take as many of our grandchildren as possible to Israel! We are so grateful that God is making it possible!

We can't wait to update you on this life-changing trip. And we hope that even more of you can join us when (or if) God allows us to embark on a 5th 'last ever' trip to Israel.



## THINGS I HAVE LEARNED *and* WANT TO PASS ON

by Ed Diaz (with a little help from Gwen)

### #6 – “**NEVER EVER bore anyone with the Word of God!**”

– Dr. Howard G. Hendricks

I will never forget the first time I heard Dr. Howard Hendricks speak. It was during student orientation my first semester at Dallas Theological Seminary. This short, bald, energetic man commanded the huge stage and brought the house down! Days later, I was delighted to find that this whirling dervish was my professor for Bible Study Methods 601.

Over the remainder of my time in seminary, I made it my goal to take at least one of his courses each semester. This beloved man, whom everyone simply referred to as “Prof,” was a master at keeping us motivated to diligently study God’s Word as we pursued our role in God’s ministry. In fact, I believe that Dr. Hendricks was the finest motivational speaker I have ever heard! My last year at DTS, I actually *transferred out* of the Christian Education Department (which was run by Prof) so that I could take more of his courses as electives. (That’s another story for another time!)

Along the way, I learned that Prof had been raised in Philadelphia, and had actually attended 10th Presbyterian Church, the same church Gwen and I attended while we were in college. This endeared him to us even more.

During our first semester, Dr. Hendricks taught us the importance of “observation” as we learned to study the Bible inductively. For our first assignment, we had to make 25 observations from Acts 1:8. (There are only 37 words in this verse in the NASB version!) We struggled and were happy when we had completed the assignment. He began the next lecture with exactly the same homework assignment. Then he did it a third time! Every observation had to be new. That’s right – 75 different observations from one verse of Scripture. We dug in deeply and learned so much! And it never got old.

Prof was famous for his original quotes. One that he repeated often and emphatically was, “*NEVER bore anyone with the Word of God!* You can bore them with anything from basketball to basket weaving, but never ever bore them with the Word of God.” This mandate to be creative with Bible teaching has shaped the ministry God has given me. I learned early that the gathering of information is only half the job of teaching or preaching. The other 50% involves discovering ways to excite people to learn. Since then, I have made it my mission to find ways to make God’s Word relevant, interesting, and even humorous.

The grand finale of our Bible Study Methods course came when each group of students had to produce a creative project that would teach and apply the story of the man with withered legs who was healed by Peter and John in Acts 3. The creative juices flowed freely that week with each group trying to outdo the last. We all wanted to please Dr. Hendricks – but we also wanted to please the Lord.

The hunger he instilled in us to understand the Scriptures has never left. In fact it has grown. I derive more joy from learning the Bible now than ever before. I am forever thankful for that course – and for Prof.

Gwen and I were very blessed to get to know Howard and Jean Hendricks personally. In fact, they asked us to house sit for them while they were on a prolonged speaking trip.

The summer after our second year at DTS, Gwen and I directed the Pine Cove Ranch Camp. We had an incredible summer of ministry. On the very first day of class that Fall semester, as I took my seat in one of Prof’s classes, he approached me. “Man oh man,” he exclaimed, “I heard about your summer at Pine Cove! Praise God! You simply must come by my office and share all about it with me!”

From that day forward, I was able to see Dr. Hendricks without an appointment. Very few students were privileged to have that kind of access. At times I even got to travel with him. He later served on the board of Search ministries, and he always found time to spend with me along the way. He even visited us right after we moved to Lakeland, and we spent a weekend doing ministry together.

Thanks to Dr. Hendricks, Gwen and I will never be satisfied to simply share the content of the Scripture with others. Rather, we seek to be motivators. I feel highly complimented when someone hears me speak and says something like, “You remind me of Howard Hendricks!”

Prof never, *ever* bored anyone with the Word of God!