

A Rancher's Rumbblings, June 5, 2009

OUR BAPTIST FAMILY: SHARING OUR LIVES WITH EACH OTHER

by David R. Currie

Executive Director, Texas Baptists Committed

We've had an interesting time at the ranch the past couple of weeks. Last week, a brown-and-white nanny was near the fence by the house one morning. We keep the binoculars close by to watch the two bucks who come to eat corn morning and night and to see how their new horns are growing. So I grabbed the binoculars to look at that goat, who was all alone next to the fence.

That evening, she was still there, so we walked over to her. I told Loretta that I figured, for that goat to stay here all day, she must have a baby somewhere nearby. Sure enough, we saw twins sleeping under a bush about 20 yards from her, one on top of the other. An hour later, she started moving up the fence line, with them following behind. They were tiny babies. They looked like they were probably very premature, like little puppies just learning to walk.

For a week, we fed the goats nightly, and the mother would be there to eat corn. But there was no sign of the babies. Then Monday night, when she came up, they were with her – a tiny brown nanny kid and a tiny black-and-white billy kid, both of them healthy and whole. Both of us practically cried with joy. I have never seen such tiny kids survive, but it looks like they're going to make it.

Then I was headed down, with Bear my dog on the Polaris, to load the deer feeder with four sacks of corn. I noticed a huge rattlesnake moving through the tall weeds, but I didn't stop, because I didn't want Bear to see him. I found Dad's old 12-gauge and had Loretta drive around that area in the pick-up while I sat on the hood. But we couldn't find him and haven't seen him since then. I think he lives under the tin that I have piled behind the barn. Now I walk to my garden with my 12-gauge in hand every day and pull weeds with my right hand while holding the gun with my left. That snake was HUGE.

On Saturday morning, while working calves at the Paint Rock ranch, I climbed the fence on the chute to push the calves forward with a stick. My foot slipped, and I fell 2 feet, landing – on my ribs – on the top rail of 3-inch pipe. Oh my, the pain! And I figured it would probably get worse. But Sunday morning surprised me, as I felt only a little sore. So I went to church. But, after a sleepless Sunday night, I went to the doctor on Monday and was told that my ribs weren't broken – just bruised, along with probably some cartilage separated that would hurt me for 4 to 6 weeks – geez, such fun!

So, is there a point to this article so far? To be honest, not really. But you are my extended Baptist family, and I like sharing my life – both joys and sorrows (and pains) – with you.

However, there is something else in my family right now that I really need to share with you. One of my sons is trying to make a major decision and seeking the will of God for his life.

He has a job offer from someone he loves and respects, but it is in a location in which he really doesn't want to live. Yet it's the only job offer he has at this time.

He keeps asking God what to do. Should he take a job just because it's available – even though he feels no sense of God's leading in that direction? Or should he wait for something where he wants to live – even though there's no guarantee that such an offer will come his way?

Let me share with you the advice I've given to him. I welcome your feedback.

First, knowing the will of God is not simply about what you feel in your gut. Yes, I believe strongly in the priesthood of the believer, but emotions alone aren't a reliable guide to God's will. The followers of David Koresh and Jim Jones would have all told you that they "felt" they were in the center of God's will.

Second, as a Christian, we are part of the family of God. Any Christian, in making a major decision, should seek the counsel of trusted fellow believers. What do they think about this decision? What advice can they give to help the person reflect on the options available?

Third, does an open door – an opportunity – necessarily mean that it is God's will? Well, we can't ignore an open door. That the door is open – that the opportunity is available – doesn't automatically mean it is the door we should walk through. However, if no other door opens within a reasonable amount of time, then – gut feeling or not – that may be what God wants for you, even if you cannot see it at the moment.

If you then – even reluctantly – walk through that door and ask God, "Okay, now that I'm here, *why* am I here? How can you use me?" – at that point, you have decided it is the will of God and you respond with excitement and expectation – not because of the situation itself or your emotions, but because you have chosen to be faithful and follow where God leads.

I would love for the 2,000-plus people who receive this to pray for my son as he seeks the will of God. By the same token, I'm always honored when you email me about the needs of your own family and ask me to pray for them.

That's what it means to be the family of God. We have the blessing of caring for each other and being cared for by each other, and we have the privilege of taking each other's concerns to a God who cares for us and loves us more than we can begin to understand. Being a Christian really is a special thing – it brings us together.