

# GAME WARDEN CHAPLAIN'S CHAT



## "WORDS OF LIFE"

Ever since I was a kid growing up in Austin, I've loved speed and power. We lived on the flight-path where B-52 Bombers and F-4 Phantom fighters would fly over on their way to what was then Bergstrom Air Force Base. We would stop whatever game we were playing and watch as they screamed by us, black exhaust billowing out behind them. Because of that beginning, I was always going faster than I should on my bike, skateboard, '69 Ford Fairlane 500 and 2012 Camaro SS. On the side, I was involved in Drag Racing, both legitimate and, um ... not. Speed is king!

This past weekend I served as one of the Chaplains at the Southern Assoc. of Drag Boats races in Marble Falls. I "love the smell of nitro-methane in the morning!" Our job was to pray with each racer before they went into the water, and believe me, strapped into their seats, they would reach out to us before we could reach out our hand to them. Wouldn't you if you were about to go up to 280mph in a quarter mile ... ON WATER?! We had absolutely NO crashes, which is unusual, until the very end of the last day, and boy was it horrific! A man was making a great run in his Top Fuel Hydro when something happened to the block and it exploded, pushing a piece into his safety-pod and reaching his head. It took them a while to find him (they have automatic oxygen systems) on the bottom of the river, but they did. They airlifted him to Breckenridge in Austin where he is in stable, but serious condition.

ελπις

That brings me to this word, "*elpis*," meaning "*hope*." As G.K. Chesterson says, "*Hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is no virtue at all. As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is mere flattery or platitude; it is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength.*" G.K. Chesterton, Signs of the Times, April 1993, Page 6.

When we prayed for the driver, our hope was that God would watch for his protection. "Perhaps it failed.," you might say. Well, perhaps it took another form when the family's "hope" took hold after that. I don't have all the answers. All I can say is that, knowing what I know of "hope" all these years, hope can never be out-thought, out-reasoned or out-analyzed. It's what I had, and have, for our friend, Lorilee, as well. Hope is what I cling to when reason and circumstances say not to have hope.

# “Watching Ourselves”

I had the honor of meeting with one of the Majors this past week. It was a good meeting and one of the things we talked about was making sure family comes first. Then he said something I had to write down immediately: “It’s easy to escape your problems when you’re a Game Warden.” By that, he meant that when things get tough at home, a Game Warden can always say, “Hey, I have to go to work!” Sometimes we do things we believe will help us, but it ends up hurting others. Dealing with difficulties in our marriages, families and other relationships is hard. Hurt doesn't make us feel good. But its like physical issues. If you don't address them as quickly as possible, they don't get better, they get worse.



I remember feeling, on many occasions, that I was acting or feeling like the worst version of myself. I was taking out my anger on others when it was really me at whom I was angry. Sometimes, because we’re having a bad day, we cause others to have a bad day by transferring our feelings to them, our spouses, our children, anglers, peers, or anyone that comes into our path. However, grace can take a bad day, our worst version of ourselves, and make it pay off for others and us.

My job as a human is to be the cheerleader of other humans. Certainly that doesn't mean I have to support illegal actions, harsh words from others or lies. But it does mean I have the responsibility to give grace and hope!

# “Family Foundations”

*Have you ever noticed the things we can learn from dogs? Yes, they teach us how to get angry when they poop in the house; yes, they make us vomit when we give them worm medicine and they leave a pile of what looks like spaghetti; yes, they leave enough hair on the couch to make a pillow manufacturing plant. But have you noticed what positive things they can teach us about relationships? A few years ago, someone penned a book about things like that. But after watching all of my dogs, I thought I would add some things I thought about:*

1. *Family relationships are about unconditional love!*
2. *As spouses, we desire to please—when (especially husbands) we are taught how to do so.*
3. *Dogs forget the past and live in the present (cats tend to remember and will get you back!).*
4. *Dogs have a need to be close to their family; under foot or under the bed.*
5. *Like dogs, we have a need to feel safe (especially during the storm) of life.*
6. *Families, like dogs, are always there for us. They seem to sense our times of struggle.*
7. *Like dogs, husbands have only three needs: to be fed, to be allowed to play, to have somewhere to poop.*
8. *Like dogs, families need to trust without fear.*
9. *“I may not look like much, but just wait and see what’s inside. You’ll be impressed.”*

*We have seasons, or stages, of life in families. I was single, then I was married, then we had children, now our children have made us grandparents, and at some point, if revenge is sweet, I can act like a child and have our children take care of me!*

*Over the months, I’ve been working on different materials that my help you and your family at the stages of life in which each of you find yourselves. Below is a list of materials I can provide for you at no charge. Some of these are completed and some are not but will be soon. The completed ones will have an asterisk after them. Just email me and let me know.*

1. *A Law Enforcement Marriage \**
2. *The Law Enforcer’s Family \**
3. *Being Single and/or Staying Single \**
4. *7 Things a Son Needs From His Father \**
5. *What About Children?*
6. *Preparing for a Baby*
7. *Parenting with Intention*
8. *What School Option is Best for My Child?*
9. *How Can We Prepare for Adolescence?*
10. *Single Parenting*
11. *Getting Young Adults Ready to Leave*
12. *Being Empty-nesters*
13. *Being the Best Grandparents*

*I’m always here for you, whenever you need me!*

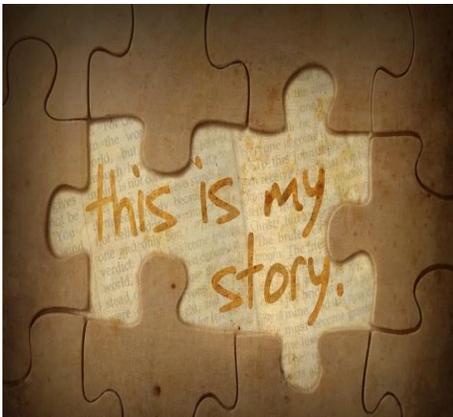
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## Behind the Person: Information about Chaplain McIntosh

We'll return to this special section at another time. I thought it best for me to use this opportunity to share with you what people like me, non-law enforcement people, think of what people like you, Law Enforcement people, do. I hope you see this as a confirmation of your life calling.

This past weekend, I was going through my military duffle bag trying to find some items that would be helpful in my position of Lead Chaplain for TPWD Law Enforcement. To be honest, I didn't think I had much that I could offer or bring to the position from that bag, but I found some interesting items that reminded me of the tasks of both Law Enforcement and Military. Some think they are not the same, but I think there are similarities.

One of the things I found were my old t-shirts that said on the front MSOG—Military Special Operations Group. For me, that meant nothing more than the people I was responsible for were people who were trained to work in Swift-water rescue, Maritime evacuation and helping TPWD Game Wardens with lake and river issues. For others, it meant helping others who cannot help themselves in times of distress and horror. Of course, many of you are involved in that kind of work.



Another thing I found was my old "Chaplain" badge of identification. This is something we wore on our dress uniform to designate us as Chaplains. It was not meant to tell people we had all of the answers, but something we wore to tell people that we were there to engage them in conversation, at their request, about something greater than ourselves. It is something I hope the Command of the TPWD will allow me to wear in the future because it means more than just being able to be present at a given situation. It means that if you want to speak spiritually, someone is there to do that.

Please remember that I am not there to preach to any of you, or to preach to any of the victims of terrible, horrible incidents that may happen to them. I am there to triage what these people are going through. If it comes to speaking spiritually, there is someone there who can do that who will honor whatever spiritual beliefs someone may choose to adhere to. I am never there to preach, but to lead and direct in whatever direction they may find themselves, at their request. I am a Christian, and I do not apologize. Yet, I am able and willing to lead in whatever faith another may have. I am not here to judge another's faith, but to help them find condolence and strength through their faith. Some may see this as a compromise, but I hope not. We are a country of many beliefs and faiths and that leads people to many forms of faith or to no faith whatsoever. If they are people of no religious faith, they are still just as honored and I will do my very best to pass them to people who would honor their commitments, as well.

I am a servant. I am your servant. I am who I am, but I am someone who is willing to help anyone work through anything. My concern is their/your well-being, not my own. I am always here for you, whenever you need me.

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If you would prefer not to receive these Newsletters, I understand. Please let me know and I will remove you ASAP. No harm, no foul. No one will know!!

