

Chris Johnson: Called, gifted and prepared to be a pastor

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Chris Johnson has been the pastor of [First Baptist Church](#) in San Antonio since 2017. From deep in the heart of one Texan, he shares his background and thoughts on church and ministry. To suggest a Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated minister to be featured in this column, or to apply to be featured yourself, [click here](#).

Background

Where else have you served in ministry, and what were your positions there?

- First Baptist Church in Covington as youth minister
- Chalk Bluff Baptist Church in Waco as pastor

Where did you grow up?

Carrizo Springs, Texas

How did you come to faith in Christ?

I was born into a devout family of believers. From day one, I was in the church, leading to the blessing of knowing God and growing in the faith from childhood by accepting Christ in the children's ministry, then deepening my faith as a youth at First Baptist Church of Carrizo Springs.

Where were you educated, and what degrees did you

receive?

- Baylor University, Bachelor of Arts in religion
- Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Master of Divinity in theology
- Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Doctor of Ministry in spiritual formation

About ministry life

Why do you feel called into ministry?

When I was a junior in high school, I began to understand God was calling me into ministry. God gifted and prepared me to become a pastor even as a youth. Every step of the way since that time, God has continued to affirm through schooling, mentors and the church that this is exactly where I am supposed to be.

What is your favorite aspect of ministry? Why?

My favorite aspect of ministry is that I am supposed to pray, and I have the privilege of praying often, even during office hours.

What one aspect of ministry gives you the greatest joy?

The greatest joy comes when someone gets it, when a light comes on and they begin to understand the peace of a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ. There is no greater feeling in ministry than when a friend finally comes to know the Lord or a church member has a spiritual breakthrough.

How do you expect ministry to change in the next 10

to 20 years?

In the coming decades, we must get back to the basics of the faith. The resurgence of the church will not be in entertaining programs but the foundational pillars of repentance, witnessing and discipleship. As the church gets back to the heart of what she was called to do, we will thrive.

What do you wish more laypeople knew about ministry or, specifically, your ministry?

Pastors have more work to complete than days in the week. Wearing so many hats, we have learned to be pastors who can produce in great quantity, but the greater quantity naturally inhibits our quality.

About Baptists

What would you change about the Baptist denomination—state, nation or local?

There are three things Baptists can learn from other denominations that would enrich our hearts and worship.

- 1. Confession.** We do not need to confess to a minister; however, we need to learn the value and joy of confession before our Lord.
- 2. Art.** Baptists have never been known for their art, but there is room in the church for a deeper appreciation of our creative efforts.
- 3. Church calendar.** Baptists have little concept of the church calendar outside of Christmas and Easter. It would do us well to celebrate scriptural moments as much as—if not more so—than cultural holidays.

About Chris

What did you learn on the job you wish you learned in seminary?

I found a great educational divide on sex. One of the most shocking revelations as a pastor was how pervasive adultery was and is in our congregations and how quickly pornography is becoming an epidemic. I quickly had to learn how to talk about healthy sexual relationships and have had to use those skills often in every step of ministry.

What is your favorite Bible verse or passage? Why?

Exodus 14:14—“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still” (NIV).

During my most recent pastoral transition, my wife and I prayed for a year about the coming season, and as often as I worried, God put this passage in front of me to calm my fears.

Who is your favorite Bible character, other than Jesus? Why?

There are two who fit a similar mold: Zacchaeus (Luke 19) and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). Both men long for Jesus, and when they find him, their lives are completely changed. Zacchaeus could not wait to repent for past wrongs, and the Ethiopian could not wait to be baptized. May we meet many like Zacchaeus and the Ethiopian eunuch in our witnessing.

Name something about you that would surprise people who know you.

Bananas are my enemy. I cannot stand the smell of a banana. For April Fools' Day, my 4-year-old daughter thought it would be funny to put a banana under my pillow so I could smell that disgusting fruit all night long.