

# John Glover: God's call is for a lifetime

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*EDITOR'S NOTE: This interview has been edited for length.*

John Glover has been the associate pastor of [Field Street Baptist Church](#) in Cleburne for 15 years. 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?**

- Boyd Baptist Church in Bonham, 1959-60
- First Baptist Church in Van Alstyne, 1960-62
- East Baptist Church in Denison, 1962-64
- North Park Baptist Church in Sherman, 1964-66
- Monterey Baptist Church in Lubbock, 1966-71
- First Baptist Church in Pampa, 1971-2001
- Gober Baptist Church in Gober, 2001-04
- Field Street Baptist Church in Cleburne, 2004 to present

### **Where did you grow up?**

I was born and raised in Gober. This is a small farming community just a few miles southeast of Bonham or northwest of Greenville.

## **How did you come to faith in Christ?**

The Lord gave me two godly parents who modeled for me a love for and commitment to Christ and his church. I actually made the decision to trust Christ in my home but made it public during a summer revival when I was 11.

## **Where were you educated, and what degrees did you receive?**

- Bachelor of Arts degree from Austin College in Sherman, where I played basketball for the Austin College Kangaroos.
- Two graduate degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, one in music and the other in education.

## **About ministry life**

### **Why do you feel called into ministry?**

The Lord began to speak to me about “special service” when I was just a teenager. He brought me face-to-face with this call when I was at youth camp at Lake Lavon Baptist Encampment, where I surrendered my life to the Lord.

I didn’t know what exactly he wanted me to do, but whatever it was, I told him I was willing. This is my “stake in the ground” when I think about God’s call in my life.

I always thought my dad would want me to take over his business in Gober, but he never mentioned it to me. Of course, when I surrendered my life to full-time Christian ministry, I was afraid to tell my dad for fear of disappointing him. So, when I returned from camp, I took the safest course of disclosure.

I first told my mother, knowing she would tell my dad. Anticipating the worst, several days passed before my dad came into my room one evening. He sat down on the bed and began the conversation with these words, “So, you think you know what you need to do.”

I told him I was sure this was what the Lord wanted me to do. Then, my dad shared this story with me. He told me when I was just a small child, he was stricken with an illness he thought was going to take his life. He asked the Lord to give him the health and strength to see me through the seminary. If a video camera had been present, you would have seen my jaw drop to the floor.

These words came as a great relief to my anxiety and a great confirmation of God’s call. And, the Lord did give him the health and strength to see me through and beyond the seminary.

### **What is your favorite aspect of ministry? Why?**

People. I love people. I love building relationships with people. I think that’s what ministry is all about.

Someone once told me early in my ministry: If you love people and work hard, you can make it in any church in Texas.

Shepherding the sheep is not always a delight because sheep can be messy, but I love being part of the Shepherd’s work in the local church.

### **What one aspect of ministry gives you the greatest joy?**

Perhaps the greatest joy is for the Lord to allow you to see “fruit” from your ministry: to see people grow in their love for and service to the Lord Jesus and to know the Holy Spirit has been able to use you to make a difference in people’s lives.

## **What one aspect of ministry would you like to change?**

I wish ministry could be spent on the “mountain top” rather than in the “valley.” I don’t like to see my friends suffer and experience loss. I know this is part of life and ministry, but it is tough when people are not just church members, but close friends.

## **How has your ministry or your perspective on ministry changed?**

I have learned through experience our response to the call needs to be with a Person in mind rather than a particular ministry task. Tasks change, but the Person never does. The greatest satisfaction in ministry comes from doing what the Lord wants you do.

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

Ministers are just “people.” They have the same challenges everyone else faces with work, home and family. Somehow, I think church members think we are immune from the things that tend to threaten them. The truth is, we’re just like them in so many ways.

I’m not perfect in any way. I know it might be shocking to them, but I’m going to mess up and make mistakes. And, when I do, I’m going to need their benefit of the doubt.

Being called by God is different than just having a vocation or occupation. As far as I can tell from God’s word, there is no backing up or retirement. You have surrendered your life, and as long as you have life, you will be surrendered to him.

# About Baptists

## Why are you Baptist?

I guess the old saying applies to me: I am Baptist-born, and Baptist-wed, and, when I'm gone I'll be Baptist-dead.

I became a Baptist because my mom and dad belonged to the Baptist church, and there was never a discussion about where we would attend. I stayed a Baptist because I believe they are a people who love the word of God and who believe in preaching, teaching and living out his word.

Baptists also have what I believe to be the greatest missions ministry in the world today through the Cooperative Program. There's no doubt in my mind we have proven throughout the years we can do more together than we ever could do alone. I am proud to be a Southern Baptist.

## **What are the key issues facing Baptists—denominationally and/or congregationally?**

As to the denomination, it seems we have been weakened by division. I think we have seen this affect our work in the state, nation and world. It seems we don't have to fear the enemies from without as much as the enemies from within. In several of Paul's letters to the early churches, the false teachers within caused most of the trouble. As a result, we've seen a decline in participation in our association, state and convention.

As to the church, I think there might be some problems in keeping the congregation fully informed and involved. It seems to me some churches are seeing worship become more of a performance than a service built for and around congregational involvement.

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

I was brought up in a local church with a local associational office, a supportive state convention and loyalty to the Southern Baptist Convention. Churches have become self-sufficient and no longer feel a need to be involved in the association.

The association suffers revenue loss from these churches and no longer can provide help and resources for ministry. The state convention suffers from the same loss as the association and no longer can offer training and development opportunities. As a result, our congregations, associations and state and national convention suffer. More than that, the cause of Christ and his mission is weakened.

Since the daylight is fading, it's time to eliminate the negative—put aside our differences—and accentuate the positive—accent what we have in common—and get back to work on the commission given to us by our Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **About John**

### **Who were/are your mentors, and how did/do they influence you?**

In addition to many seminary professors and laypeople are:

- Harry Ball, pastor and associational missionary, who invited me to lead the music in my first revival.
- Bob Rowe, pastor at Boyd Baptist Church in Bonham, who asked me to direct the music in my first church to serve outside my home church.
- Norris Cash, my first minister of music at North Park Baptist Church in Sherman and my good friend and mentor for so many years until he went to

be with the Lord.

- A.W. Blaine, the pastor at North Park. I learned so much about ministry from him.
- Claude Cone, my pastor and friend for most of my ministry. He continues to be a great friend, mentor and example of what it means to belong to Christ. He taught through example what it means to be consistent in your walk and service as a minister.
- Darrel Rains, my pastor and friend. Darrel went to be with the Lord a few years ago. I was able to share 10 years of ministry with him and cherish our time together.
- John Hall, my pastor at Field Street Baptist Church in Cleburne. I appreciate so much the years I've been able to spend with him and the ministry we have shared together.

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

Effectiveness in ministry will not be measured by who we are or what we do but in whose we are and why we're doing it.

### **Other than the Bible, name some of your favorite books or authors, and explain why.**

Watchman Nee, Andrew Murry, R.A. Torrey, A.W. Tozer and Jack Taylor helped me understand the Holy Spirit's work in and through my life.

David Jeremiah, Robert Jeffress, Chuck Swindoll, Warren Wiersbe, J.B. Phillips, C.S. Lewis, Rick Warren, O.S. Hawkins, Bruce Wilkinson, James Montgomery Boyce and R.C. Sproul have helped me navigate my way through the Scripture.

### **What is your favorite Bible verse or passage? Why?**

Romans 12:1-2 is my life verse. I adopted it a long time ago, and the Holy

Spirit still is teaching me how it is to be fulfilled in and through my life.

## **Who is your favorite person in the Bible, other than Jesus? Why?**

In the Old Testament, it is Joseph. He had more reason to doubt and complain than almost any person in the Bible, but he didn't. He remained true to God in all the circumstances of his life.

In the New Testament, it is Stephen. There are only a few verses describing his life, but it was so effective that he's the only one who received a "standing ovation" from the Lord Jesus because of his faithfulness unto death.

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

I still like to get a bit of grease on my hands from time to time, and I also enjoy working with wood.

## **What is the true measure of success in ministry?**

Success in ministry is not what most people think. It's not in the size of the church you serve or the number of people you have in your ministry. It's not how much you know or how well you are educated or prepared. It's not in having a great personality and great people skills.

Bottom line: It is having the blessing of God on your life. Without his blessing, all is for naught.