



**Howard M. Wilson**  
Staff Sergeant, U.S. Air National Guard (Active Duty)  
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I grew up near Nocona, Texas, in Prairie Mound Baptist Church, where we could see Oklahoma from our back door. After graduating from Prairie Valley rural school, I enrolled at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas. While a student there, I served in the Air National Guard. A group of students decided to join together, and we went to meetings in Grand Prairie every Thursday night. During that time, I advanced in rank to sergeant. Since biology was my college minor and they needed men to help give physicals to the pilots and new inductees, they put me right into a medical group. I worked with them on a regular basis. In exchange for my help with the physicals, they gave me credit for basic training.

In 1950, Truman mobilized my unit one semester before I was due to graduate. We were sent to Langley Field, Virginia, which today is headquarters for the CIA. While there, I qualified for Operation Bootstrap — a program that allowed soldiers to return to college if they could finish within a semester. I applied for it and was approved. After I returned to the University of North Texas, they sent my unit to Korea without me.

When I graduated, I returned to the base at Langley Field and served the balance of my active duty commitment. I worked as a laboratory technician until I was promoted to Personnel Sergeant Major of the medical unit not long before I went on inactive duty. I met a Virginia girl while I was there. We got married, and I brought her back to Texas. Though we later divorced, and I have remarried, she is the mother of my three boys.

Back in Texas, I served my inactive duty time in Dallas one weekend a month at Love Field Airport. Meanwhile I worked for Temco Aircraft for eight years and became a certified quality engineer. They built B-52 bombers for Boeing. Later I went to work for Texas Instruments and stayed there 11 years. In 1970, I left Texas Instruments for a job at the Carrier Corporation in Tyler. I retired from Carrier in 1990.

I met Dottie on October 1, 1975, and we were married on December 27<sup>th</sup>. I think God led me to Tyler so I could meet her. She was a member of Green Acres Baptist Church, so I moved my membership there while we were dating. They had just started the Singles Department with about 15 or 20 members. Now there are probably 300 members. Dottie and I taught third and fourth-grade Sunday school at Green Acres for 20 years. Now we lead one of John Childs' Sunday school groups.

As a boy, the church I attended served both Methodist and Baptist. The Methodist and Baptist preachers alternated Sundays preaching. My family was Baptist, so I was saved at the age of 12. Every summer, we attended a two-week revival. During the first week of one of those revivals, I was holding on to the pew every night because I couldn't get up the nerve to step out, but I was under conviction. Then one day I was chopping cotton and thinking about being miserable again that night at the revival. So I prayed, "Lord, help me do what I need to do." That night I had no problem stepping out, and I knew from that point on that I had taken care of things. I was saved in a cotton patch the minute I prayed that prayer. That was my salvation. Stepping out just made it public. In college, my fraternity was the Baptist Student Union. Probably I was a stronger Christian then than I am now. I have mellowed.