

GET TO KNOW

Ron Hutchcraft



Actually, you probably *already* know this veteran broadcaster since Ron has been passionate about Christian radio for decades. A regular presence at broadcaster gatherings like NRB and an eager participant in events such as station sharathons, Ron is counted as *friend* by all who know him—including the thousands of daily listeners to “A Word With You.” Still, you never know what you’ll learn by asking questions . . . so enjoy Ron’s responses and get to know more fully the newest member of the Ambassador family!

How did you come to Christ?

I never heard about Jesus in that little apartment where we lived on the South Side of Chicago. But something happened that changed all that. My 6-month old baby brother died suddenly when I was 4. My inconsolable dad decided he should take his remaining son to church. He would wait in the car and read his Sunday paper while I went to Sunday School. One day I came out and reported that “today I asked Jesus into my heart.” I don’t think he understood — until months later when he accepted an invitation to go to a men’s class. Soon both my parents began a relationship with Jesus — and I got a new mommy and daddy!

What ignited your passion for evangelism?

First, we had been the lost — and I saw the difference when Christ came in. Second, seeing the lostness of my friends in high school. And third, the powerful example of people like Billy Graham. I was very moved watching all those people streaming forward to give their lives to my Jesus.

Is there someone you would name as a spiritual mentor in your early years?

Jay Kesler, who would become president of Youth for Christ, provided insightful counsel at several crossroads moments. And, though I had never met Billy Graham during my early years, he provided an amazing example of leadership integrity for me.

You’ve authored many books but your most recent one is a very personal one—*Hope When Your Heart is Breaking*—in which you share the loss of your wife, Karen, in 2016. As your life partner of 52 years, we know there are many reasons to miss her. What made you fall in love with her as a collegiate at Moody?

I loved her radiant joy, her infectious laugh, her evident love for Jesus, her godly wisdom and the mischievous streak we shared.

We understand you were a bit dubious about the impact radio could have for the Gospel. What changed your thinking?

I had always done face-to-face ministry. From a distance, radio seemed cold and impersonal. Until I began to hear back from listeners who clearly felt like we were friends. Today, I stand in awe of how deeply personal the connection is between me and our listeners. I am humbled and moved by their trust.

Why the special interest in the needs of the Native American?

After many years of crosscultural youth ministry, a reservation speaking invitation brought me into the middle of the most broken young people in this country. The only young people I’d ever met who had no dreams. Because the hopelessness of their personal world convinced them they would have no future.

God broke my heart that week — and I realized His tapestry for my life had prepared me for this unexpected mission. With 400 years of mission work among the First People of our land, only an estimated 4% know Christ. God led us to a breakthrough strategy of empowering Native young people to be the messengers to their people. I’m on the bus, praying for them — and seen them literally lead thousands of their people to Christ.

How do you recharge your batteries especially now without Karen as your companion?

Lots of praise and worship videos! Often start my day with those. I love to read, and I love to be with my grandchildren. But my ultimate recharging comes from

my early morning times with Jesus where he refocuses, refreshes and restores my perspective. “His mercies are new every morning!”

You’ve had a long ministry but remain keenly interested in reaching young people. So—how do you stay young yourself?

Simply being with young people — including my teenage grandchildren. Plus keeping up with the ever-changing youth culture trends, asking good questions. I love young people and try to show it in ways that are affirming, genuine and honoring. I’m honored that they are open and welcoming to this high-mileage guy. The laughs really help.

You spent a lot of your life in very urban centers—tell us what you love best about Harrison AR.

My life is a holy whirlwind, and the demands are many. So after many wonderful years serving Jesus in metropolitan areas, it’s refreshing to be able to do my personal life in a comparatively low-stress, manageable community. I’m navigating a very big world in my ministry — I’m rejuvenated by the small world I go home to.

For those of us who are too slow to share our faith, what one thing would you want us to know to encourage us in that discipline.

You’re the glove, not the hand. God picks up your personality, your story, your relationships, your interests and uses them to open doors to people’s hearts and lives. Your greatest impact will come through your personal Hope Story — and how His story has changed your story and could change their story forever.

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BONUS QUESTIONS

The Hutchcraft family is thoroughly engaged in ministry. But what do you enjoy most about spending time with your nine grandchildren?

With some, it's simply some amazing heart talks. With others, it's spontaneous fun things we do together – we have a lot of laughs and share a love of mischief! They love it when I tell stories.

Do you have a favorite Scripture or life verse?

So, so many. Romans 8:37 is my life verse — “more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” My dear Karen’s Homegoing has made me treasure Hebrews 6:19’s light for even the darkest hour — “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” Praise God, the anchor holds — in spite of the storm!

