



Soils Day! Being a good steward of the land is something that can be taught at any age, but the younger the better. That is why for the last three years Coke County Soil and Water Conservation District Technician, Erin Oleksiuk, has visited Robert Lee (above right photo) and Bronte schools.

Playing in the dirt and painting are two things children love to do, and so the Kinder Soils Day was started. Soil is collected from around the county; clay from the Water Valley divide, red clay from near Robert Lee, and sand from Silver. The students learned about different animals, insects, and even a microorganism, called a Water Bear, which live in soil and make their home in burrows. They first looked at each soil dry and thought about what color they would make when the water was added. Soil was added to clear cups so the students could watch them react as water was poured into them. Some soils “smoked”, others bubbled, and one foamed like hot chocolate. When it was time to paint, each artist created wonderful masterpieces of dark brown, tan, and red. The students had a great time learning and creating. If we all take time to teach the children in our lives about being good stewards of the land, it will remain beautiful for future generations to enjoy. Robert Lee teacher Mrs. Frankie Gartman and Bronte teacher Mrs. Alisa Webb are greatly appreciated for saying ‘yes’ to mud and kindergardeners!



Seasons of Life

By James M. Decker
 “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.”—Ecclesiastes 3:1

Do you ever feel like you’re in a place in life that’s different from people around you? Others seem to be coasting, but you’re spinning your wheels. Your friends seem to have a blossoming relationship with God and you seemingly do the same things, but you feel like you’re missing out.

Lately, I’ve been studying the concept of spiritual seasons, the source of many of these differentiations in life. We’re often in a different season than others around us and we pass through different seasons in our own lives. What comes easy in one season may not be so easy in the future, or what was once a challenge suddenly opens up and becomes much easier.

There’s no foolproof list of spiritual seasons, but in my studies, I’ve found a pretty good list of six:

1. Dry season: God is quiet and feels distant; you don’t hear His voice or sense His presence like you have during other times.
2. Waiting season: you’re waiting for a circumstance to change.
3. Busy season: there are too many demands on your time, too many people needing your attention, and not enough time to properly handle all your commitments.
4. Tests and trials season: you’re going through hard times and might not understand why

you’re facing these hardships.

5. Spiritual warfare season: you’re being spiritually attacked.

6. Happy season: things are going well, pieces are falling into place, and your relationship with the Lord is strong.

I could write an essay (or more) on each of these seasons. This is not intended to be an exhaustive instruction for handling each season. First and foremost, I think it is important for us to be aware that the seasons exist. Sometimes, when our neighbor is faring better than us, we can get concerned that we’re doing something wrong. When we’re having an easier time than they are, we can get prideful. Neither of these instances means that one of us is a “better” Christian than the other. Sometimes it simply means that we are going through different seasons. A person in a spiritual dry season may struggle with things that come easy in a happy season. But our difficult season may be preparing us, shaping us, and molding us for a

future season. Sometimes one must cross the desert to reach the oasis.

King David speaks of these seasons in Psalm 1:3. He writes of a faithful servant of the Lord and describes that person as “like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose life does not wither—whatever they do prospers.”

I don’t know what season you’re facing when you read

this. You might be struggling through a dry season. You might be waiting for something to change and improve in life. You might be overwhelmed by a busy schedule. You might be dealing with hard times or spiritual attacks. You might be coasting downhill, living the dream.

No matter what season you’re in, remember to use it, learn from it, and let it mold you and make you better. The difficult times can shape us to better utilize and

appreciate the easy times. The easy times can teach us to better withstand the difficult times. No matter the season, like the faithful servant of King David’s Psalm, we can still bear fruit and prosper in the Lord.

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and mayor in Stamford, and the creator of the forthcoming “West of 98” podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at facebook.com/james.decker.

Scholarship available for ag education majors

College students pursuing a degree in agricultural education can apply for scholarships from Texas Farm Bureau (TFB).

The state’s largest farm and ranch organization created the Student Teaching Award last year. It provides scholarships valued at \$2,500 to four senior agricultural education students during the spring semester of off-campus student teaching. “Student teaching is an

invaluable experience,” John Ross Copeland, Coke County Farm Bureau president, said. “During that semester, those students are able to be in the classroom full time, learning from experienced agricultural science teachers.”

During the student teaching experience, the college senior is not able to have a job and is not always placed at a school district near their home or their university.

“There’s not always time for these students to have another job, because they are in the classroom all day,” John Ross said. “This Student Teaching Award scholarship aims to help lift some of the financial burden on students who are preparing for careers in agricultural education.”

There are currently about 2,000 full-time agricultural science teachers in Texas and about 1,100 active FFA chapters. (Continued on next page)

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