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Office of University
Communications

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Jason East Seeks to be a 'Better Student of God's Word and Minister of the Gospel'

Of all the things vying for his attention—school, work, church and family—Jason East recognizes his role as a father of four is his greatest ministry. His daughter and triplet sons look up to him and need his time and love. Before enrolling in the School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University, he wondered how he would be there for his children and manage all of his other responsibilities.

photo of Jason East

“My wife and pastor encouraged me to follow the desire God was placing on me,” reflected East, a bi-vocational youth minister in Winston-Salem, N.C. “I reached out to Gardner-Webb and met the gracious and kind Kheresa Harmon (School of Divinity Director of Admissions). She helped me overcome my fears and anxiety, and I began the program as a full-time student.”

East has served his church since 2008 and works as a sales representative for a printing company. He wanted to pursue his Master of Divinity to be ready for the future. “I realize ministry is not something I do, but it is who I am at my core,” he elaborated. “With the ever-changing society and culture, I want to know that I did all I could to prepare myself for the task and path that lies ahead. I plan to be in ministry for the rest of my life. I want to become a better student of God’s word, a better minister of the Gospel and a pastor who has the tools to offer the care that people seek. I may not know where the journey will end, but I know GWU will prepare me to deal with whatever I face when I get there.”

Jason East in church

Because of the way the classes are scheduled, he can balance all his commitments. “I am able to spend an entire day on campus for nine credit hours,” he observed. “I have enough time during my stay on campus between classes to catch up on emails for work. When I am at home, I am able to read and study each night and stay on pace to be ready for class the next week. I commute two and a half hours, but it’s worth it to have an in-class experience.”

He is already incorporating ideas from his classes into his ministry. Some of his most memorable discussions have been studying the Old Testament with Dr. Cal Robertson, solving issues in ministry with Dr. Doug Dickens, and realizing the importance of caring

for your family and yourself with Dr. Danny West. “The professors and staff truly want me to succeed in my education and my ministry,” asserted East, who will graduate in 2020. “I am able to put the reading and lectures to work immediately. My Bible studies have already become deeper and engaging. My classes have made a positive impact on the way I deal with conflict and engage people. My love for God, His word, and His people has grown in my time on campus.”