

ALUMNI

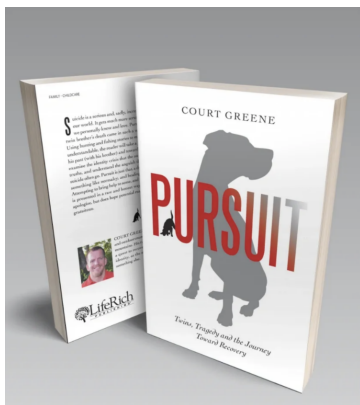
Alumnus' Book Started with Writing Assignment After His Twin's Suicide

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Pastor Court Greene, a three-time graduate of Gardner-Webb, Uses Hunting Analogies to Put Words to His Feelings

Court Greene, of Canton, N.C., and his fraternal twin, Zachary, shared the same birthday and a special bond, but they were different in every other way. Court is a pastor and alumnus of Gardner-Webb University; while Zach faced many unforeseen hardships, taking his life down a much darker path. When Zach took his own life in 2019 at the age of 38, Court was thrown into turmoil and began a journey to find his way through the hurt and anguish.



To help him make sense of his grief and all that he was thinking—in particular, his unusual desire to go bear hunting after Zach's death—Court's counselor suggested he write about it. "What began as a way to bang out an explanation as quickly as possible, became a therapeutic and illuminating project," Court wrote on his blog. "I learned to use nature to put words to feelings. I learned to see the world

differently due to a need to explain my world to someone who did not frequent the arenas I often did. I learned to recapture who I was, and in doing so, saw who I was becoming.”

With encouragement from his wife, Kristi, also a GWU alumna, Court took the stories he wrote and published a book, “Pursuit: Twins, Tragedy and the Journey Toward Recovery. (<https://courtgreene.com/>).” Attempting to bring help to some, and understanding to others, “Pursuit” is presented in a raw and honest way. Court uses hunting stories to explain feelings that don’t make sense, but even non-hunters and anti-hunters have told him they understand his analogies. “People tell me that it is interesting and that it is a good read,” Court shared. “I think that it takes the reader on a journey that is important to travel, and it does so in a way that is engaging. It does have a few bad words in it, so it’s not for kids.”



▲ Court Greene, his wife Kristi (also a GWU alumna) and their children

Court and his brother were on separate paths by the time they reached high school. At that time, Court knew he was called into the ministry. He chose to attend Gardner-Webb, because he had heard about the first-rate professors in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy and the School of Divinity. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Religion in 2003, a Master of Divinity in 2010 and his Doctor of Ministry in 2019.

The faculty at Gardner-Webb lived up to their reputations. “The professors in the School of Divinity try to instill this thirst for knowledge and humility,” he assessed. “They challenge you to think beyond just black and white. They have a mindset of challenging embedded beliefs to not allow students to give the Sunday school answer kind of stuff. You couldn’t just say, ‘I love Jesus and that’s enough.’ You have to say why—what’s he done for me lately.”

His book is timely, because the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that during the COVID-19 pandemic, suicide rates increased for males in three age groups (10-14 years, 15-24 years, and 25-34 years). Although he’s dealing with the impacts of losing someone to suicide, the stories can

help others who are grieving. Court hopes that people can relate to his experience and will share the book with others who are grieving. Court reflected, “At some point, everyone endures grief when we lose loved ones who are close to us—whether they are twins or not, or whether it’s suicide or not.”

Learn more about the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy. →

Learn more about the Christopher M. White School of Divinity. →

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