



# EXPRESSIONS

*And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*

I Corinthians 1:30-31



## DISCIPLESHIP: THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM

Josh Kines, FPC Director of Discipleship

The Sojourners class has been working through the Proverbs this semester. It has been such an important reminder to me regarding the importance of wisdom in God's plan for our spiritual growth and discipleship. When I look at the great wise men of old and consider their writing, there is something in them that we would do well to observe and apply to our lives. These wise men stood in a category distinct from the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament, though each of these offices carried with it the necessary virtue of wisdom. Phil Ryken described the wise men in this way:

*"...wise men excelled in the ability to observe human character and life. The wise men were gifted observers of the human scene. They did not come to their listeners and readers with the oracular authority of the prophets, who prefaced their messages with 'thus says the LORD.' Instead, they authenticated their message with an appeal to shared human experience."*

Wise men took their keen understanding of truth and found its import into the fabric of our shared experience - our life together. They were experts in the application of truth in the context of our everyday lives. As such, they become a vital part of our understanding of the intersection of Biblical truth and Biblical ethic. There are three aspects of wisdom literature that help shape both our understanding of truth and its application for our lives. I will frame these three aspects through the lens of **knowing, being, and doing.**

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## SUNDAYS

**Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.**

**Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.  
in McIntosh Hall**

## KNOWING

Wisdom is described in the Proverbs through a host of synonyms, employed by Solomon, to help us explore the multifaceted beauty of wisdom's work in and through our lives. He begins by describing wisdom in terms of knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 1:2,7 tells us, *"To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction"*. Knowledge, instruction, and insight are the foundations of Biblical wisdom. "To know" in the Old Testament is an intimate task of knowing and being known by God. John Calvin is well-known for penning these words in the opening lines of his seminal work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, "Nearly all wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." J.I. Packer in his book, *Knowing God*, repeats and expands on this idea when he writes:

*"Knowing God is more than knowing about him; it is a matter of dealing with him as he opens up to you, and being dealt with by him as he takes knowledge of you. Knowing about him is a necessary precondition of trusting in him, but the width of our knowledge about him is no gauge of the depth of our knowledge of him."*

Wisdom is built on the foundation of knowing and being known by God. We can only fully understand and know ourselves and God as He reveals it to us by His Holy Spirit. This is no academic exercise, yet one that fosters a deep and abiding relationship with Him that offers us a better understanding of ourselves.

## BEING

This knowledge, understanding, and insight gives light to the prudence and discretion that marks who we become in and through our relationship with God. Here is where the wise men of old offer their greatest insight into our growth in grace. How does knowledge of God and ourselves play out in our everyday lives? We would do well to look to the wise men for aid. Going back to Ryken's words, we are reminded that, *"...wise men excelled in the ability to observe human character and life. The wise men were gifted observers of the human scene."*

I have come to appreciate the need to cultivate a discipline of keen observation. As a would-be regenerative farmer, observation is a central tenet in the process of caring for the land and livestock God has placed in our stewardship. In fact, stewardship is precisely the responsibility we are given in this task we call discipleship. We are stewards of our relationship to God, His creation, and one another. Stewards must observe the master's way and serve as an extension of His care in the world. This takes deep, meditative understanding of all that He has placed in our care. We are called to listen, to

watch, and to discern His ways in the world and to adjust our lives to those ways. This is the hardest part of discipleship's work in our lives, because it takes a keen eye and a deep humility to let go of our prescribed and often biased approaches to life. In our instant-gratification culture, observation and meditation are the first corners we cut. We love to know God and we attempt to do the things we believe God tells us to do, but we struggle to slow down, observe, and curb our ambitions toward stewardship of His will and ways.

## DOING

It is only when we "become" stewards of God's will and ways in the world that we can really begin doing what it is God has called us to be and to do. There is much that we can do in this world and much freedom we are given in doing it. However, everything we "do" in this life must flow from who we are in Christ as stewards of His creative acts in the world. To "do" anything in this life must flow from a keen awareness and investment in who God is and what he has done and is doing. How do you love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her? By knowing Christ and observing His love for His church (Ephesians 5). How do we steward the world in which we live? By knowing Christ and observing all the things that were made by Him (John 1). How do we offer our lives as a living sacrifice to Him? By knowing Christ and observing the way He made Himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant (Romans 12, Philippians 2). We cannot know God without walking in relationship with Him. We cannot be who God has called us to be without observing all that He is and what he did and does for us. We cannot do anything He calls us to do in this life apart from the wisdom He has prescribed for us.

We do well to heed both the method and words of the wise men of old. We must be keen observers of the God who has opened Himself to us. It is here that we understand ourselves and the world in which we live. It is here that we begin to truly live and grow as He has prescribed. So let me close with a few questions I have been asking myself over the past couple of years in pursuit of this wisdom from above.

1. What knowledge and insight can we glean from God's creative works from the beginning that might change the way we steward the world around us?
2. What knowledge and insight can we observe in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ that might affect the way we love of our spouses, our children, our church, our leaders, and the world over which He has made us stewards?
3. What prudence and discretion might He be calling us to engage as we seek to know Him and make Him known in the world?

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

In the Great Commission in Matthew 28, Jesus issues a command to His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you...."

**Operation Christmas Child (OCC)** is a tangible opportunity that we have to flesh out this command. The items that are brought are placed in shoeboxes along with a gospel booklet in the children's languages and shipped to nations all over the world. These gift shoeboxes may be the first and only time these children have received presents. *What joy comes across those smiling faces!*

At FPC we want everyone to have a part in fulfilling the commandment of Christ by participating in OCC. We follow a few guidelines or phases—

1. **PRAY** that the little children come to Jesus as they hear the gospel and feel the love from the stranger who cared to send them a box of gifts.
2. **PREPARE** by buying items to fill the shoeboxes (clothes, flip flops, toothbrushes, washcloths, balls, dolls, hot wheel cars, yo-yos, harmonicas, brushes and combs, etc.) There is also an [Amazon Wish List](#) link set up, if so desired.
3. **PACK** the boxes party will be November 13-16.  
Thursday 10:00-5:00  
Friday 10:00-5:00  
Saturday 10:00-5:00  
Sunday 2:00-4:00  
(Children will pack shortly thereafter.)
4. **PAY** for the handling, shipping, and a gospel booklet by donating \$10 per box. We plan on packing 1,200 boxes this year.

Please bring your items to the church. There is a display near the back door in the gym. Containers are provided there.

The Matthew commandment applies to all Christians (men, women, and children). We desire to see even entire families coming together to pack the boxes. What a fun and memorable time!

You may want to consider becoming a monthly contributor to OCC. We buy gifts year round to set aside to do even more boxes for the next year. We need more people to commit to come alongside. For example, you might buy 10 hot wheel cars in January, 10 T- shirts in February, 10 balls in March, etc. Give as God has gifted you and your budget allows. It is not the amount, but the HEART to give. Remember the widow's mite. Please remember to pray before you enter any store or go online to search. This year God blessed us with a buggy load of flip flops (5 cents each). We have found that God blesses the prayers of his people. Be amazed what God can do!

Looking forward to seeing all of you at the Packing Party. It will be in Currie Hall 206. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Love in Christ,

Debera Shaw  
(662-871-6020)

Lacretta Shurden  
(601-577-0901)





## OCTOBER SPECIAL EVENTS

**Student Ministry Retreat  
at Timber Creek Camp**  
Friday-Sunday, October 17-19  
*Contact Josh Kines for more details!*



**FPC Fall Festival**  
McIntosh Hall  
Sunday, October 26, 5-7 p.m.  
*Join us for this churchwide fall fellowship,  
with live music, food and drink, games  
and activities for all ages!*  
Volunteers are needed...look for more details  
in the **Grace Notes** e-newsletter.

## ATTENTION SINGERS!

The annual **Service of Lessons and Carols** is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 14 at 6:00 PM. Rehearsals for those interested in being part of the Lessons and Carols choir are scheduled for every other Sunday from 4:00-5:30 p.m.

October 12 and 26  
November 9 and 23  
December 7 and 13

No prior singing experience is required.

Just come and we will make a place for you! Please contact me if you need more information.

Jesse Noote, Director of Music Ministries



## HARVEST PROJECT UPDATE

Thanks to the generous financial support of church families for the **FPC Harvest Fund**, renovations are moving ahead in the Sanctuary, Taylor Hall, and the office building!

Since construction began in early August, demolition has been virtually completed, with wallpaper, paint, and flooring work in progress. Installation of new audiovisual and lighting equipment will commence soon in the Sanctuary, along with refurbishment of the Narthex, Parlor, kitchen, and restrooms.

