

# Women of the Word

## Welcome

Jeremiah 9:24 says, “but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.” To understand and know God - this is a lifelong quest for a Christian. I am convinced that I could devote every hour of every day to knowing God and barely even scratch the surface of His depths. The primary source for knowing God is the inspired Holy Bible. It was written over the span of 1,500 years by 40 authors. It contains 63,779 cross-references. This is a marvelous testament to its divine inspiration!! It is a cohesive narrative of the all-knowing, all-powerful God and His plan for the redemption of his people. We praise God for His Word to us!

In Christ,

Melanie Woltje

Women's Ministry Team Leader

## Mission Statement

FBC Women's Ministry exists to empower our ladies to use their God-given gifts in accordance with God's will.



## Bible Studies

Fall Bible Study - Fruits of the Spirit

Wednesdays at 5:30pm starting September 10th

FREE - but please watch for signups to ensure you have a book!

The Wednesday morning Bible Study at the Little's house will not meet in August, but will be back in September!

(26675 P Road) - Topic Varies



## Upcoming Events

2nd Tuesday of each month - Jhett's at 11:30

I AM THE LORD,  
WHO EXERCISES  
KINDNESS, JUSTICE, &  
RIGHTEOUSNESS ON EARTH.  
FOR IN THESE  
I DELIGHT.

JEREMIAH 9 : 24

## *Covenant*

The basic structure of the relationship God has established with His people is the covenant. A covenant is usually thought of as a contract. While there surely are some similarities between covenants and contracts, there are also important differences. Both are binding agreements. Contracts are made from somewhat equal bargaining positions, and both parties are free not to sign the contract. A covenant is likewise an agreement. However, covenants in the Bible are not usually between equals. Rather, they follow a pattern common to the ancient Near East suzerain-vassal treaties. Suzerain-vassal treaties (as seen among the Hittite kings) were made between a conquering king and the conquered. There was no negotiation between the parties.

The first element of these covenants is the preamble, which lists the respective parties. Exodus 20:2 begins with "I am the LORD your God." God is the suzerain; the people of Israel are the vassals. The second element is the historical prologue. This section lists what the suzerain (or Lord) has done to deserve loyalty, such as bringing the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt. In theological terms, this is the section of grace. In the next section, the Lord lists what He will require of those He rules. In Exodus 20, these are the Ten Commandments. Each of the commandments were considered morally binding on the entire covenant community.

The final part of this type of covenant lists blessings and cursings. The Lord lists the benefits that He will bestow upon His vassals if they follow the stipulations of the covenant. An example of this is found in the fifth commandment. God promises the Israelites that their days will be long in the Promised Land if they honor their parents. The covenant also presents curses should the people fail in their responsibilities. God warns Israel that He will not hold them guiltless if they fail to honor His name. This basic pattern is evident in God's covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the covenant between Jesus and His church.

In biblical times, covenants were ratified in blood. It was customary for both parties to the covenant to pass between dismembered animals, signifying their agreement to the terms of the covenant (see Jeremiah 34:18). We have an example of this kind of covenant in Genesis 15:7-21. Here, God made certain promises to Abraham, which were ratified by the sacrificing of animals. However, in this case, God alone passes through the animals, indicating that He is binding Himself by a solemn oath to fulfill the covenant.

The new covenant, the covenant of grace, was ratified by the shed blood of Christ upon the cross. At the heart of this covenant is God's promise of redemption. God has not only promised to redeem all who put their trust in Christ but has sealed and confirmed that promise with a most holy vow. We serve and worship a God who has pledged Himself to our full redemption.

(ESV Reformation Study Bible; Theological Notes)

### *First Baptist Church Women's Ministry Team*

Team Leader: Melanie Woltje

Brooke Black, Christi Boyden, Donna Jewell, Erin Lassey,

Caitlin Murrow, Vanessa Wisdom

Contact Us: [womensministry@fbcholton.com](mailto:womensministry@fbcholton.com)

# *Spiritual Disciplines: Stewardship*

All of the spiritual disciplines are things believers actively do. They are ways in which we pursue holiness and train ourselves up in godliness (1 Tim. 4:7). The more we understand how the gospel changes everything, the more we understand that every aspect of our lives can be devoted to this pursuit of holiness. All of our lives can be training grounds for growing in godliness. This is why the way we spend our time, resources, and talents is important. We believe these things were entrusted to us and stewarding them well is a spiritual discipline.

Understanding stewardship from a biblical worldview begins with the gospel because the gospel reminds us that everything we have has been given to us by God (1 Cor. 4:7). The gospel offers us right standing before God, transforming our relationship with Him. Salvation is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8). The gospel also transforms how we relate to everything else in our lives. This is what happens when people seek first the Kingdom of God—everything else is impacted. Following Jesus has radical implications for our lives.

We know that God specifically apportioned gifts to His people. Nothing we have (talents, abilities, resources, etc.) is by accident or even of our own doing. They are varied measures of His grace, and we are meant to be good stewards of what He has given us, using our gifts to serve others (1 Pet. 4:10). Our individual gifts are given to us by God for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7). They are not measures of favor nor the means to bolster personal image or worth. Through our union with Christ, we are children of God, wholly loved and accepted by the Father. Our identities are in Christ, and it is from this place of security that we live our lives.

Biblical stewardship is using everything we have for the purposes of Christ. This includes using our spiritual gifts in the church for the edification of the body and using our talents and abilities in the home and in the workplace for the glory of God. This also prompts us to ask ourselves, "How can the way we give and spend our money further the purposes of Christ?" There is no universal formula to this. Biblical stewardship goes beyond the abandonment of material goods and worldly comforts. Instead, it is anchored in Jesus' call to count the cost of following Him and upon counting the cost, to understand what He means when He says,

"every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). This is a call to total surrender. It is refusing to hold on tightly to any earthly possession, secret indulgence, or personal sins. Instead, it is striving to obey the Lord and His Word, no matter the cost.

A total commitment to Christ beckons us to pay close attention to how we are living. Paul admonishes believers to "pay careful attention" to how we live our lives, "making the most of the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16). Time is a priceless commodity that each of us should strive to steward well. Every moment matters for eternity. So, we want to discipline ourselves.

We can ask these questions: What thoughts are we spending time mulling over? What are we watching and listening to? How much time are we devoting to entertainment? What are we investing ourselves in most? Are laziness and mindless distractions a normal part of our days?

The goal of stewardship is not for believers to look absolutely identical. The gospel unites us in our cause—to glorify

God—and it does this in the midst of our diverse gifts, financial situations, life circumstances, and more. The discipline of stewardship is exercised knowing that the days are evil. There are so many different things vying for our attention and our hearts' affections. It does not take much effort to waste time. Stewardship of our time and everything else is very much a discipline that we need to intentionally and consistently exercise.

Biblical stewardship is not easy. We need the Spirit's help. The answer is not to flex our own willpower. The answer is Jesus. We need His strength. We need Him to transform our hearts and minds and desires. May our affections for God surpass everything else this world has to offer. May we not forget that each of us will have to give an account to God (Rom. 14:12, 1 Cor. 3:13-15, Matt. 12:36, Matt. 25:14-30). May we handle all of the things entrusted to us in such a way that it is abundantly clear on that day that we were totally committed and surrendered to the person of Christ, His glory, and His purposes.

Additional reading... Matt. 25:14-30  
(Growing in Grace: Knowing and Loving God Through Spiritual Disciplines)



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