



Women Of The Word

Welcome

That God would give us an instruction manual for life should blow our minds!! Many people don't think of the Bible as an instruction manual, but that's exactly what it is. Beyond teaching us about God, Himself, and how we should relate to Him, Scripture covers a huge gamut of topics—from interpersonal relationships to financial management.

From complex philosophic ideas to simple instruction for daily living. The Bible covers it all!! Our goal must be to cultivate a habit of running to Scripture when life's challenges rear their ugly heads—not the internet, not to our best friends, not even to our own machinations and best efforts, but to God!! He is waiting for us. He is our good, good Father. And He has given us permission to make every test in life open book.

Blessings,
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.

Trusting God and Seeking Freedom From Fear - Melanie Woltje

I have a shameful secret that not many people know. I can't sew. I know, I know-- gasp in horror-- it's okay! It may seem silly, but this fact really does bother me. I come from a family of seamstresses. My sister won several Grand Champion prizes at the county fair with her pieces when she was in 4-H. My nieces have done the same. My mother made her own wedding dress... and mine. Both of my grandmothers and all of my aunts sewed more than proficiently and most all of my female cousins learned the craft. But not me.

My mother tried to teach me. But I refused to learn. Not because I thought it too difficult or that I didn't want to know how, but because I thought if I learned to sew, I would have to model in the 4-H County Style Review each summer. The idea of standing up in front of all those people, walking down the long runway while everyone was staring at me-- was completely terrifying to me, so I refused to learn the skill that would force me to do it.

What I didn't know then was that I wouldn't have had to model. It was optional. But I didn't know that until I was well into my 20's. Then, I felt foolish.

Fear is a powerful tool the devil uses. For me, fear kept me from learning a skill that is both useful and enjoyable. I have wished many times as my children have grown up that I had learned to sew. I have seen cute dresses or fleece sweatshirts and thought 'I could make that... maybe.' And then never tried.

(continued...)

The thing I love about getting older is that with every year that passes, I have more perspective. I can look back on experiences and better judge how to handle what comes next. But I don't like looking back and being forced to admit how many times I have let fear keep me from doing something-- and there are many. I never participated in any sports growing up because I didn't think I would be any good and didn't want to be laughed at. When a high school teacher urged me to send in writing pieces for publication, I was convinced they would be rejected. I was afraid to speak in front of people, to move away from home, to pursue a college degree. I have spent a goodly portion of my life pulling back from people, situations, and activities. It makes me sad to think about it.

In the Bible, stories of fear are plentiful. The Israelites had to wander in the desert for 40 years because they were afraid of the people they would have to defeat to enter the Promised Land (Num. 14:28-29). Abraham had Sarah tell the Egyptians that she was his sister because he was afraid Pharaoh would find Sarah beautiful and kill him to take her as his own (Gen. 12). Moses asked God to send someone else to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt (Ex. 4:13). Gideon actually tested God twice to make sure he had gotten the instructions right before he was willing to lead an attack against Israel's enemies (Jud. 6:33-40).

But the Scriptures are also full of directives for us not to fear. To be bold. To be courageous. To know that the Lord is with us wherever we go (Deut. 31:6). I do not know how many times the Bible says, 'Do not fear', but I know it says it a lot (Is. 41:3, Phil 4:6, Ps.23:4). I also know that God's mercies are new every morning (Lam. 3:22-23). That His ways are not my ways, and His thoughts are not my thoughts (Is. 55:8-9). Well, hallelujah! I'm not in charge of this whole thing!!

According to Romans 8:28, God uses all things to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. That means even when circumstances aren't what I would like and things seem bleak, at best. He can still use it all for my good and His glory!! The first time I read that verse, I felt a weight lift off me.

A couple years ago, I was forced to admit just how much fear was keeping me a prisoner. In the time since, I have purposed to be free from fear. To face my fears as they rise. To press forward with the visions God has placed in my heart.

I hate fear. I hate worry. I hate anxiety. I've lived with them over my head for far too long. I am thankful that God gives me the grace and the strength to walk through these issues. And I am proud to say that with His help, I have conquered some of my fears and am working on defeating many more!

Don't live in fear. Don't be afraid to step out of the prison that Christ paid such a high price to free you from. Remember that all too often, our fears are not as they appear. They are deceitful-- I could have learned to sew as a young girl and never would have had to set foot on the 4-H Style Review runway. But instead of moving forward, I let my fear dictate my actions. Have faith. Believe. Trust. And know that everyone's journey looks different.

And by the way, I am finally learning to sew.

*** Originally written on 9/2014. Updated 3/2025. **

First Baptist Church Women's Ministry Team

Team Leader: Melanie Woltje

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

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Covenant of Works

When Adam and Eve were created, they stood in a moral relationship with God, their Creator. They possessed a duty of obedience to Him without any inherent claim to reward or blessing for such obedience. In His love, mercy, and grace, however, God voluntarily entered into a covenant with His creatures by which He added a promise of blessing to His law. This was not a covenant of equal partners, but one that rested on God's initiative and His divine authority.

The original covenant between God and humankind was a covenant of works. In this covenant, God required perfect and total obedience to His rule. He promised eternal life as the blessing of obedience but threatened mankind with death for disobeying God's law. All human beings from Adam to the present are inescapably members of this covenant. People may refuse to obey or even acknowledge the existence of such a covenant, but they can never escape it. All human beings are in a covenant relationship to God, either as covenant breakers or covenant keepers. The covenant of works is the basis of our need of redemption (because we have violated it) and our hope of redemption (because Christ has fulfilled its terms for us).

A single sin is enough to violate the covenant of works and make us debtors who cannot pay our own debt to God. That we, after even a single sin, have any hope of redemption is due to God's grace and God's grace alone.

The rewards we will receive from God in heaven are also acts of grace. They are God's crowning of His own gracious gifts. Had Adam been obedient to God's covenant of works, he would only have achieved the merit that comes by virtue of fulfilling the covenant agreement with God. Because Adam fell into sin, God, in His mercy, added a new covenant of grace by which salvation became possible and actual.

Only one human being has ever kept the covenant of works. That person was Jesus. His work as the second or new Adam fulfilled all the terms of our original covenant with God. His merit in achieving this is available to all who put their trust in Him.

Jesus is the first person to get into heaven by His good works. We also get into heaven by good works—the good works of Jesus. They become “our” good works when we receive Christ by faith. When we put our faith in Christ, God credits the good works of Christ to our account. The covenant of grace fulfills the covenant of works because God graciously applies the merit of Christ to our account. Thus by grace we meet the terms set forth in the covenant of works.

(ESV Reformation Study Bible; Theological Notes)

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Bible Studies

Wednesdays @ 9:30 am - Joan Little's Home
(26675 P Rd) - Topic Varies



Upcoming Events

The 2nd Tuesday of each month we meet at
Jhett's @ 11:30.

Friday April 4th - 6pm - Game night! Snacks and
drinks provided for an evening of fun and
fellowship! If you would like to bring a favorite
game feel free, but we will have plenty on hand!

Thursday May 22nd - 6:15pm - Girl's Night Out
at El Ranchito

Saturday June 7th - Summer Women's Event.
Love God, Love Others: Matthew 22:36-40
Watch the bulletin and church communication
for more details.

These dates are subject to change.

Spiritual Disciplines: Fasting

Fasting is not unique to Christianity. The practice of abstaining from food transcends world religions and cultures. People may use it as a means to lose weight or make a social or political point. However, Christian fasting has spiritual purposes that are rooted in the Word of God. There are many passages that reveal an expectation that God's people will/would fast. In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6, Jesus taught on various topics like giving, praying, and fasting. In each of these instances, He used the phrase, "when you" (Matt. 6:3, 6-7, 17). Jesus assumed His disciples would do these things. Yet, Christian fasting in particular is a spiritual discipline that is widely misunderstood and neglected amongst believers.

In the Bible, a normal fast is depicted as abstaining from food but not water. However, there are various forms of fasting seen throughout Scripture. Jesus never set forth rigid parameters for a fast like how long, how often, and from what. Thus, it is more beneficial to consider the spiritual purposes behind fasting. What gain comes from abstaining from things for a period of time—things which are not inherently bad in and of themselves? How does fasting deepen one's communion with God?

In a broad sense, when a believer fasts, he or she is saying "no" to good gifts given from God in order to say "yes" to God Himself. This can be difficult. When food is forgone, hunger pangs come. When social media is surrendered, the temptation to scroll is heightened. Feelings of anger, anxiety, fear, impatience or boredom may arise. Suddenly, we are made aware of the places we have found satisfaction, validation, and purpose. The preferences and affections of our hearts are brought to the surface.

This is why fasting is a way for believers to echo Paul's words from 1 Cor. 6:12. "Everything is permissible for me,' but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me,' but I will not be mastered by anything." It is a means of grace for believers because it invites us to see the things we have been mastered by, and in turn, run to the Lord in repentance. While we fast, we simultaneously pray that our affection for Christ would grow to be far superior to anything else. Instead of feasting on pleasures of this world, we allow our hearts to hunger for God more intensely, reminding ourselves that He alone can truly satisfy us. In this way, fasting is a means to help us lean into our anticipation for the return of Christ.

When Jesus came, He inaugurated His kingdom. However, we are still waiting on its consummation which will happen when He returns. In this time of waiting, it is appropriate for believers to fast. Jesus eluded to this is Matt. 9:15. Jesus was responding to the Pharisees when they asked why His disciples were not following the Jewish tradition of participating in weekly fasts. Jesus said, "Can the wedding guests be sad while the groom is with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." That time has come. We, the bride of Christ, are in a season of waiting for the return of our groom.

Fasting reminds us that this is not our home. The emptiness in our stomachs is a tangible way to feel the emptiness of this world. Christians are not called to ignore the emptiness of the world. The goal is not to fill the emptiness by our own means. Infertility, broken marriages, loneliness, anxiety, depression, addictions, or the death of loved ones, and more. Whatever it may be, Jesus is the answer, and fasting is a time to lean into that truth. It is a means to deepen our hunger for God.

Fasting can be done regularly or in times of crisis. It can be done corporately or privately. How ever we do it, may we do it in such a way to glorify God. May we not engage in this discipline to make ourselves look or feel more spiritual, but may it be a means of grace to cultivate a greater affection for God.

Additional reading... Matt. 6:16-18, Matt. 9:14-17

(Growing in Grace: Knowing and Loving God Through Spiritual Disciplines)

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