



PCC Scroll

Spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and equipping the People of God through the written word.

Word of the Quarter—My Sheep Know My Voice: Your Road to Emmaus

Editing Team

In the last issue of the *PCC Scroll*, we finished the overarching theme “Asking, Seeking, and Knocking.” In this edition, we begin a new overarching theme: “Discerning Truth: Learning to Recognize the Character and Word of God in a Sea of Information.” In this issue, we come from the topic of “My Sheep Know My Voice: Your Road to Emmaus.”

The first people who learned Jesus was risen were Mary Magdalene and other women who went to anoint Him in the tomb. The next people were Cleopas and an unknown believer, who met—who they thought was—a stranger on the road. It is telling that the first witnesses of the Resurrection were not individuals we would have expected. It was not Peter, the one who recognized Jesus as the Christ. It was not John, the disciple who Jesus loved and entrusted His mother to. Nor was it either of the Sons of Zebedee—the Sons of Thunder—James or John. It was not Pontius Pilate, the high priest, or anyone in government or leadership.

Throughout the Bible, we see the call to ministry to those marginalized in society. And we see this call lived out throughout Jesus’s ministry. He often interacted with those who society did not deem appropriate,

worthy, or important. He had dinner with a tax collector, who was despised and hated because of his profession. He showed compassion and mercy toward a woman caught in adultery, telling those who were without sin to throw the first stone. He spoke to social outcasts like the woman at the well. He was touched by the woman with the issue of blood, who society viewed as unclean. He touched a leper, who was considered unclean. And the list goes on and on. Jesus interacted with people many of us would go out of our way to avoid.

When the editing team met, we talked about times when we saw the light of Jesus in unexpected people. One was a person who was fully tatted and looked intimidating. However, a conversation was struck up. He worked as a bartender, and he had done jail time and struggled with drug addiction in the past. During the conversation, he shared so much wisdom and displayed a genuine heart for God and people. Another was a man nicknamed Spike, who liked to wear spikes and leather. Spike had a heart for God, and he had a gentle and kind soul. He was able to reach so many people because he was anointed at spreading the love of God.

We cannot—as the old adage goes—judge a book by its cover or people by how they look on the outside. This is a lesson Samuel learned when he went anoint David as king. In reference to one of David’s older brothers, God told Samuel, “*Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*” 1 Samuel 16:7. What is in a person’s heart goes way beyond what they look like. Some may have seen the bartender or Spike and turned away because of how they looked on the outside, making the judgement that the men were not vessels who could/should spread the Gospel. However, both were able to reach people because of their heart for God and people.

The men walking on the Road to Emmaus were not expecting to encounter Jesus on the road, but they did. As believers, we must strive not to miss God because He shows up in way we don’t expect to look or sound. God can use anyone, so we must be open to seeing God in unexpected people and in unexpected places.

Editor's Corner—Your Road to Emmaus

Sister LaTonja Brown

Inside this issue:

Editor's Corner	2
Relationship Corner	3
Women of the Bible	4
Men of the Bible	5
Your Money Matters	6
Fit for the Kingdom	7
Creative Expression	8
Happenings and Events	8

I understand the hindsight recognition from my own walk with God, and I am sure that I am not the only one.

During a trip to Scotland, I took a day trip to the Highlands through a local tour company. On the excursion, I met a family (father, mother, and daughter) who were also from the U.S. Since I was traveling alone, they folded me into their group. They were wonderful people, and the father had this distinct voice, which was very comforting. After the tour, we parted ways...I thought never to see each other again.

A few days later, I was at the train station transitioning to my next destination. I sat down, and—through the hustle and bustle of the busy train station—I heard a voice that I recognized behind me. It was the voice of the father from the family. I had sat near them without seeing them, and we had a nice reunion.

While I am not fully there yet, God wants me to recognize His voice—through the noise and the chaos of the journey of my life—just as clearly as I knew the voice of a person I had interacted with for less than a day. God also wants me to seek Him out when I hear Him speak, just as diligently as I searched out a voice that I recognized in the midst of a busy train station.

This is the intimacy that God wants with you and me. God wants us to clearly know His voice despite all the noise going on around us. God wants us to follow His voice despite all the other voices telling us what we should do. God wants us to follow His voice despite what our natural eyes may see. God wants us to believe in His promises to us despite what we see. During the next four issues, we will be coming from the overarching theme of “Discerning Truth: Learning to Recognize the Character and Word of God in a Sea of Information.” We are starting from the theme “My Sheep Know My Voice: Your Road to Emmaus.”

The “Men of the Bible” section of this issue is about Cleopas, who was one of the men on the Road to Emmaus. I find Jesus’ interaction with His



followers on the road very reassuring. The encounter with Jesus took place after Mary Magdalene and the other women had told the disciples about their encounter with the angels in the tomb. The women had told the disciples that Jesus was risen. But, in their grief and disappointment, they had doubt and disbelief. Their hope was so destroyed that every promise seemed impossible.

It was in a moment of intimacy that Cleopas and his companion recognized Jesus, and they realized that—in hindsight—they had recognized Him all along. They recognized that their hearts had burned during the conversation. They recognized that the Scriptures had been opened. They recognized it was a familiar feeling, one they had had with Jesus.

I understand the hindsight recognition from my own walk with God, and I am sure that I am not the only one. We have all faced disappointments and setbacks where the promises of God felt impossible. Even still, God has always showed up or gave a sign to let us know that His presence was with us.

Regardless of any disappointments you may currently be facing, know that God will show up, and He will do what He said considering you. He is waiting to draw near to you on your road to Emmaus. There He will remind you of His promises. Then, like Cleopas and his travel companion, you will have your hope restored and share your testimony.

Relationship Corner—Relationship Discernment

Minister Jo Ann Hairston

Discernment is the ability to decipher what is true or false, good or bad, or helpful or not helpful. Read Hebrews 4:12 and 5:14. These scriptures show a direct link between discernment and the Word of God, so we need the power of the Holy Spirit to help us align and apply God's Word to our relationship decisions. This is a skill that is not easy to develop, so we must continually go back to the Bible, so God can sharpen our discernment.

Let's discuss some signs that will let us know if we lack relationship discernment.

1. You justify someone's poor behavior by assuming they have a good motive.

Most Christians know that it is wrong to judge the motives of others (1 Corinthians 4:4-5, Matthew 7:1). It is sinful for us to assume something bad is going on in the heart of another; it is also unbiblical to positively judge someone's inner motives. Sometimes, we want to justify the sins of others by assuming that their motives are pure. This is unbiblical for at least two reasons. First, a sinful behavior is a sinful behavior regardless of the motive. Second, we are often incorrect in our judgement about peoples' hearts, even when we are judging them positively.

The Bible says that people are unable to judge the hearts of others (1 Samuel 16:7). If you think you can look into someone's heart and see good, you are wrong. As Christians, we are required to pay attention to a person's actions because that's all we can assess. If we want relationship discernment, we'll need to know what the Word of God says, then judge a person's

willingness to live their lives according to God's will. Yes, I said judge their outer lives. That is a biblical use of judgement (1 Corinthians 5:12).

Someone may be good with budgeting and saving money, but they are immature with earning money and working. Is this person ready for marriage? Discernment will help you gauge people in their journey on their road to sanctification.

If you're looking for perfection, you will be single forever. If you don't have standards, you will date low-caliber people. With discernment, you'll be able to gauge someone's Christian maturity more accurately.

2. You ignore someone's constant self-contradictions.

You may lack relationship discernment if you are unwilling to call people out on their constant self-contradictions. At times, all of us contradict ourselves. But if someone is a walking contradiction—but you keep overlooking this red flag because you want the relationship to work—that is not good.

If you ignore contradictions in someone's life, it means you lack relationship discernment.

- They say one thing and do another
- They say one thing today and another thing tomorrow
- They say one thing around this group and another thing around another group

These are red flags you should not ignore. Read Ephesians 4:13-14.

3. You are constantly misreading where you stand with people.

Signs you lack relationship discernment:

- You think someone likes you when they don't
- You think they don't like you when they do
- You are clueless someone is sending you signals
- You are clueless someone isn't receiving your signals

When we are not mature, we get excited about relationships because we read into things. When you are rooted in Christ, you will be more levelheaded. When your brain isn't crowded with emotions, you'll be able to assess a relationship better.

4. You think you can try the same thing with the same person (or type of person) and get different results.

Wisdom is when you can apply knowledge. People know they should stop trying to work it out with someone that they have the same issues with, but they are unable to apply this knowledge. With discernment, you know what can be worked through and what is a problem that isn't going away.

Signs you need to improve your relationship discernment:

- You keep going back to your ex
- You are stuck in a toxic relationship because the person keeps promising to change
- You keep dating the same type of person, resulting in getting hurt again and again and again

As Christians, we are required to pay attention to people's actions because that's all we can assess.

Women of the Bible—Eve

Sister La'Shandra Perkins

Name: Eve

Meaning: Living one, source of life

Her Character: She was curious and had an active mind.

Her Sorrow: She listened to the serpent.

Her Triumph: She is the mother of mankind.

Key Scriptures: Genesis 2:23, 3:1-24

Eve is the mother of life. She was created after Adam so that he would not be alone. Eve was formed after Adam had named all the wild animals, livestock, and birds of the air. I'm sure she was amazed. I can picture them strolling through the garden, with Eve curious and in a state of wonder. Adam would tell her all the wonderful things about God—their creator. How he had named the animals. How God didn't want him to be alone, so God created her for him—to be his mate, helper, friend, and companion.

I wonder about that fateful day. Why was Eve not startled when the serpent spoke to her? She had been around the other animals, and they didn't speak. So why wasn't she cautious? I believe it was because Eve had a personality that was rational, brave, and intelligent. God knew that the woman He created for Adam would need a backbone to withstand the challenges in life as a wife, mother, and friend. She would need to be able to adapt to any situation and circumstance because she was created to be a helper. God knew what was going to happen because He is the author of time.

Genesis 3:1 (NIV) says, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did

God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The serpent brought doubt into Eve's mind with one question. Despite the time she had spent with God and Adam, a talking serpent caused her to question God's word. Satan (serpent) wanted to be God, and he wanted to show God that he was able to sway things his way. The serpent wasn't dumb. He could have gone after Adam, but Adam had been with God a lot longer, so he went for the weaker vessel.

I'm not one to get caught up in saying it's Eve's fault for our fall from grace. In Genesis 3:6, it says that, after she took a bite, she gave some to her husband. Adam was

Eve's story teaches us that, at times, we are challenged with listening and hearing God when He speaks to us.

that close—in the NIV, it says he was with her—but did not stop it. Adam had named the beast and had authority to rebuke this. He could have gotten her far away from Satan, but he did not. He stayed there, and he took a bite. Perhaps he too was curious and allowed himself to be "swayed" into doing something he had wanted to do all along.

How many of us have gone left

when God said go right because of flesh and worldly desires? We all have. We're human, and God created us with a will. No matter our sin, God loves us. We're His children, and He wants nothing but the best for us. Eve was misinformed and misguided in a manner of minutes. When realization hit, knowledge was released, and Eve and Adam became clothing designers (Genesis 3:7).

Eve's story teaches us that, at times, we are challenged with listening and hearing God when He speaks to us. When we don't hear God—or we hear Him and don't listen—we sin. John 10:27 (NIV) says, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." One thing we must remember is that we serve a forgiving and loving God. As long as we acknowledge our faults and sin, repent, and ask God for forgiveness, we're forgiven. We're not to hide from God like Adam and Eve did (Genesis 3:9). He already knows what we have done, and He wants to forgive us. Eve listened to the snake, and God dealt out His punishment. God didn't turn His back on them. He still made sure that they were taken care of, and that's God love for us.

Prayer Requests:

- ♥ Pastor and Minister Jo Ann
- ♥ National and local leaders
- ♥ Military and their families and veterans
- ♥ Youth, families, singles and marriages



Men of the Bible—Cleopas

Sister Cassandra Broomfield

Name: Cleopas

Meaning: *Glory to the father*

His Character: *He was a disciple of Jesus.*

His Sorrow: *Not recognizing Jesus on the road to Emmaus.*

His Triumph: *When his eyes were finally opened, he and his traveling companion returned to Jerusalem to declare to the other 11 disciples that Jesus lives.*

Key scriptures: *Luke 24:13-35*

Can you imagine being in a relationship with someone yet not recognizing them when you see them in the streets?

This is exactly what happened to Cleopas as he and another man were walking along a dirt road heading from Jerusalem toward Emmaus (Luke 24:13). They were engrossed in a deep conversation regarding the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was a prophet, a teacher, and a healer. He was the Christ (Christos). He was the Messiah.

As Cleopas and his friend journeyed, they reminisced on the miracles that they and many others had witnessed. As the two men walked and indulged in a recollection of their time with the Lord, they were joined by a stranger who wanted to know what they were discussing (Luke 24:17).

This is true of believers today as well. Jesus has left us instructions on how to carry on until He returns, yet when we don't see the evidence of His presence, we become discouraged and distraught and counsel amongst ourselves.

They were amazed at his lack of knowledge of the current events (Luke 24:18).

Cleopas began to tell the stranger about the wisdom of Jesus and how Jesus had astonished the people. Cleopas told how the Chief Priest handed Jesus over to be crucified—not because Jesus was a criminal—because Jesus wouldn't stop performing miracles or declaring that He was the Son of the one true God. They also lamented regarding the hope that Jesus would redeem Israel.

The stranger began to admonish them for not remembering all that Christ had told them. As they walked, the stranger began to remind them of the prophets. Everything they witnessed had been predicted and came true. The stranger recalled to their memory all that the prophets had said about the coming of the Messiah and how He would be treated (Luke 24:25).

The men continued to walk with the stranger until they arrived at their destination. They saw that the stranger was going farther, and they invited the stranger to stay and to have dinner with them because it was getting dark (Luke 24:29).

This is the man whom they declared they loved, yet they still

did not know who He was because they had concluded that He was dead. This is true of believers today as well. Jesus has left us instructions on how to carry on until He returns, yet when we don't see the evidence of His presence, we become discouraged and distraught and counsel amongst ourselves. Have we ever considered that Jesus is walking with us and listening to what we say about Him as we count Him out?

The moment of realization came while they were eating (Luke 24:30-35). Somewhere between the breaking and passing of the bread their eyes were opened, and they were able to finally see Him (Luke 24:30-31).

This passage gives insight into the hearts and minds of men. We come into the presence of God and become intimately aware of Him. As trials come, we begin to wonder if that was really God that we had previously felt. When He sends His Spirit to comfort us, we continue to discuss Him as a past experience. It is not until our breaking (hurt, shame, anger, pride, etc.) that we recognize that He was there all along. They did not recognize His face, and they were also unable to recognize His voice. It wasn't until the breaking that they realized that it was Him. It is in our pain and confusion that we stand still and listen for His voice.

Your Money Matters—What time is it?

Sister Mei-Li Thomas

Ecclesiastes is a Hebrew word that means “preacher” and the title of the book of the Old Testament that is most quoted when mentioning times and seasons. Issachar is the name of the father whose sons aided King David in battle and are best known for their discernment of the times and seasons. Could it have been their aid to the king that motivated the writings of the third chapter of Ecclesiastes? Maybe. In doing research for this issue’s section subject “Discerning Your Financial Season,” I soon realized that—in order to discern one’s financial season—it is essential to first be in tune with your life’s season. Much like verses 1-8 in chapter 3, financial seasons follow a certain pattern: sow (invest), tend (budget), harvest (spend), and preserve (save), but knowing which is needed depends on your life’s season.

Before taking the time to figure out your financial season, take stock of your current life season. Universally the beginning of autumn signals harvest and preservation. From preparing for back to school to weatherizing the home in preparation for winter, this time of year we tend to be in a simultaneous mindset of spend and save.

In the Spring issue of the *PCC Scroll*, I penned the article “Begin with the End in Mind,” encouraging us to consider the quality of life we want to determine our financial goals; this is no different. In fact, these two articles go hand in hand. Knowing the quality of life you want requires you to take stock and

determine where you are right now in your current life’s season and what needs to be updated in your financial practice accordingly.

I’ll use myself as an example. At present, I am coming off parental leave. Both my children will be in some form of school or childcare; both carrying a financial responsibility that requires a closer look at my budget. Before my son was born, I was in a sowing and tending season preparing for the financial obligations of having a second life that requires care. I was saving money to ease the financial burden that comes with paying an additional childcare bill while also buying the essentials of caring for an infant.

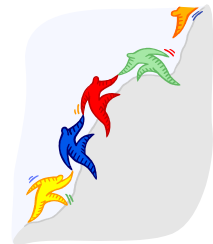
Meanwhile, my friends who had children much earlier in life are preparing to send high schoolers off to college, and scholarships and loans deposit more dollars back into their disposable income. They are moving out of the harvest season and into the sow and tend seasons. Maybe you are preparing for retirement and the sow and tend seasons looks more like preparing for life without an employer-generated check and reaping the harvest of years of investing in retirement.

Either way, take stock in where you are right now, and where you want to be in the coming season of life you find yourself in. Read Ecclesiastes 3 and reflect on the question “What time is it?” While I wish I had a set of wise advisors like the Sons of Issachar to aid me in discerning this season of my life,

I understand that none of it comes without the need to revisit my budget and what I anticipate is coming in the next few years as I navigate early childhood care and education. As we ease into the third quarter of the year, I encourage you to do the same.

Universally the beginning of autumn signals harvest and preservation.

Empowered by God to Empower Others



Recommended Reading:

- Genesis 2, 3
- Ecclesiastes 3
- Luke 24

Fit for the Kingdom—Meditating on the Word of God

Sister LaTonja Brown

Meditation is popular, but what exactly is it? To meditate means to “*think deeply or carefully about (something).*” It is the practice of training your mind to focus by redirecting (wayward) thoughts.

What we focus on is important. With all the information constantly being thrown at us, the ability to refocus our thoughts is a crucial skillset.

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) says, “*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*”

Our thought life impacts our physical, mental, and spiritual health, so meditation offers health benefits. It is a great way to reduce stress through relaxation. In addition, it is free and requires no special equipment. It can be done wherever you are, whenever you want.

What has our attention

When you meditate, you focus your attention. This can silence muddled thoughts and clear the mind of information overload. This information—a lot of which is doom and gloom—crowds the mind and causes stress. When you meditate, you refocus your attention on something that calms and relaxes you. For example, a favorite song, scripture, or inspirational saying that brings balance and a sense of calm and peace.

Refocusing our attention benefits us physically, mentally, and spiritually. Benefits of meditation:

- Lowers heart rate
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces stress
- Improves quality of sleep

- Redirects thoughts
- Focuses on what is peaceful
- Focuses on God and His promises
- Casts your cares to God

Physical

Meditation is thought to be useful for managing medical conditions that worsen because of stress. The jury is still out, but some researchers believe that meditation may help with the management of anxiety, chronic pain, depression, high blood pressure, sleep issues, and tension headaches. Note: It is important to consult with your primary doctor on any benefits of meditation to your health.

You can combine walking and meditation and kill two birds with one stone. You can exercise and enjoy God’s creation while focusing on what you see (the beauty of the mountains, water, trees, etc.), hear (chirping birds, buzzing bees, barking dogs, etc.), and smell (flowers, freshly cut grass, food, etc.).

Mental

Meditation is about living in the present moment and not brooding over the past or worrying about the future. Overthinking can lead to stress, which is a silent killer. Simply observe the thoughts and emotions—without judgement of right or

wrong—breathe, turn it over to God, and let it go.

The Bible says a lot about meditation, and scripture tells us what to meditate on.

Spiritual

The Bible says a lot about meditation, and scripture tells us what to meditate on. A few scriptures to study are Isaiah 26:3, Genesis 24:63, Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2, Psalm 19:14, and Psalm 49:3.

Prayer is a great way to meditate on the Word of God. You can say your own prayer, read a prayer written by someone else, or pray scripture.

You can read and reflect on scripture or words you find inspiring.

Here are some scriptures to meditate on when feeling anxious, depressed, or overwhelmed:

- Deuteronomy 31:8
- Psalm 23:4
- Psalm 34:4
- Psalm 34:18
- Psalm 40:1-2
- Psalm 55:22
- Psalm 34:17
- Psalm 94:19
- Psalm 143:7-8
- Jeremiah 29:11
- Isaiah 40:31
- Isaiah 41:10
- Matthew 11:28
- Philippians 4:6
- John 14:1
- 1 Peter 5:7

You can also meditate to music you find inspiring.

Putting it all together

There are a few techniques I use when my mind becomes distracted. Music is powerful and can set the atmosphere, so I play songs that uplift and inspire me. I also do grounding exercises like using my senses. I do deep-breathing exercises—focusing on inhaling and exhaling, especially while driving!

Whatever you do, know there is no right or wrong way. It is very common for our thoughts to wander. The key is bringing the focus back to *whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy.*

Creative Expression

Sister Ursula Lovely
We Refuse to See

If we choose to go through life with a closed mind,
It's like living our lives with our eyes permanently closed.
We are blind.
We aren't seeing things placed before us in a truth that is so clear.
We refuse to acknowledge it, and I don't know why. Is it just fear?
We daily enter our homes and turn on our TVs, and there
Are so many stories that are close to us. So many tragedies.
As you watch, have these words ever crossed your mind,
"There but for the grace of God go I."
Not even one time?
The decision you made to turn left and not right.
The time you stayed home or by chance you just missed a flight.
As human beings, we tend to try and attribute everything to luck
and fate.
When we should open our eyes and recognize God before it's too
late.
In this day and age—and with the things that we can so easily
perceive—why on earth is it so hard for us to have faith in God
and believe?

Happenings and Events

Bible Study—Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. preceded by prayer at
6:30 p.m.

Family Prayer—Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.

Remember our ongoing food drive!

PCC Scroll Editorial Policies

- Members of PCC are encouraged to submit Testimonies, Book Reviews, Creative Expressions, and Healthy Recipes.
- Please limit your submissions to original work.
- Please submit your material electronically. The preferred format is a Word document.
- Please limit your word count to 600 words or less.
- All submissions will be edited by the *PCC Scroll* Editing Team.

If you would like to receive an electronic version of the newsletter, please send your request to latonjab@hotmail.com.

Pentecostal Covenant Church

10033—55th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98178
(206) 725-7469

pcchurchoffice3@gmail.com
www.pentecostalcovenant.org



Pastor Hairston
Minister Jo Ann

PCC Board of Officers

Board Members

Suffragan Bishop W. T. Hairston,
Pastor/Chairman
Minister Terry Hairston,
Associate Pastor
Sister Sandra Moore-Jones
Minister Jo Ann Hairston
Sister Marla Brown

Deacons

Deacon John Matthews
Deacon Marcus Polk

Trustees

Trustee Larry Boyd

PCC Scroll

Founded in 2002

Fall 2022, Volume XXI Issue IV

Publisher: PCC

Editors: LaTonja Brown, Crystal
Hairston, Jo Ann Hairston

Contributing Writers: Cassandra
Broomfield, LaTonja Brown, Crystal
Hairston, Jo Ann Hairston, La'Shandra
Perkins, Mei-Li Thomas

Layout/Design: LaTonja Brown