



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: Checks and Balances (Check It Against the Word of God and the Example of Christ)

Editing Team

In this issue of the *PCC Scroll*, we continue the overarching theme “Discerning Truth: Learning to Recognize the Character and Word of God in a Sea of Information.” In the fall, we came from the subject “My Sheep Know My Voice: Your Road to Emmaus.” In the winter, we came from the topic “My Sheep Know My Voice: Transaction vs. Transformation: Relationship Building Beyond Routine behavior.” In this issue, we continue the overarching theme with the topic “My Sheep Know My Voice: Checks and Balances (Check it against the Word of God and the example of Christ).”

John 10:27 says, “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*” When the editing team met to put together the editorial calendar year last summer, we talked about the importance of knowing the voice of God. We talked about how—as believers—we had to filter out so many other voices to hear God’s voice. We discussed how important it was to use the Word of God to filter everything.

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV) says, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the*

second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’”

These are the words of Christ. From scripture and the life Jesus led, we know that anything that is not rooted in love is not rooted in God.

As we have discussed in past issues, building a relationship with God takes time. As you spend more time with God, you become more intimate with Him. This intimacy is built by studying the Word of God. The Gospels recount the life, teachings, and actions of Christ. If you really want to know “What Would Jesus Do,” read the Gospels. From them you can see how Jesus treated people and the types of people He spent time with. His life was about service and meeting the needs of ordinary people, often those on the fringe of society. The Bible tells us that, “*For God so loved the world that he gave (his only son).*” God’s love for us was through action not words. Tune into Wednesday Bible Studies to hear more from the Word of God, and also be sure to set aside time for personal Bible Study.

Prayer is the perfect opportunity

for communication with God. Prayer time is for two-way communication, not a one-sided conversation where we list a bunch of wants and needs. Although prayer is the perfect time to cast your cares upon God, which does include wants and needs. Just be sure to include time for silence to hear back from God. We also have corporate prayer before Bible Study on Wednesdays and Saturday mornings, including quarterly prayer meetings with speakers.

Spending time with God in praise and worship is also important. This time can be personal time or part of our larger gathering on Sundays. Speaking of Sundays, we can also hear more of God’s Word as part of the church service on Sundays. You can also sing praise and worship as you are driving, walking, making dinner, etc.

As we navigate today’s world, which is filled with so many voices, check what you are hearing against the Word of God and character of Christ. When we do this, we can move beyond the rhetoric and truly make decisions based on what Jesus would do.

Editor's Corner—Knowing My Vitals

Sister LaTonja Brown

Before the pandemic, many of us had overly active schedules. During the pandemic, our schedules went from 100 to zero within a short timespan and many of us became mostly homebound. I enjoyed the slowdown of my schedule.

As the world slowly reopened, it felt like things were getting back to “normal.” I had returned to work one day a week, and I began making more lunch and dinner plans to catch up with friends. In 2022, I resumed my traveling. My schedule began building back up, but I am determined to keep a balance and maintain some level of free time and not fill my schedule like before.

During the pandemic, I did a lot of soul searching. Part of my balance requires being healthy. As 2023 rolled around the corner, I was determined to be healthier: physically (body), emotionally and mentally (soul), and spiritually (spirit). I find I do better with a level of accountability, so I have enlisted help from experts in their respective fields.

In the last issue’s “Fit for the Kingdom,” I shared steps I am taking to get my physical health in order. In case you missed it, here is a quick recap. I have joined a gym, which is an investment in my future health. I want to lay the foundation now for excellent health in the future. I currently am going three days a week in the morning, followed by a quick walk before work starts. I also try to walk 10,000 steps Monday-Friday. The gym always has a trainer or two on the floor to correct technique when needed and offer encouragement. I also enjoy seeing the women in the gym who are on the same schedule as me. Some things are easier with a level of accountability and a partner, which is why I also have enlisted walking buddies.

I am also seeing a nutritionist who is part of my primary healthcare provider’s network. This is working well because she can see notes from my primary healthcare provider, and my primary healthcare provider can see what the nutritionist has suggested, which offers another level of

accountability. She helps me make better choices with how I fuel my body. As I mentioned last issue, I am aiming for the 80/20 rule, which allows me some flexibility when I want cake, chips, or other foods I am trying to eat in moderation. Unfortunately, we live in a society where “junk” food is cheaper than healthier options, so I think of my food choices as investments as well. I can pay now, or I will pay in my later years.



In my healthcare network, I also see a behavioral therapist, who I check in with. She serves as a garbage collector for unhealthy thoughts and habits. I can talk through issues I am dealing with and receive tools to help navigate them.

In conjunction with that, I am part of a one-year cohort where I talk to a spiritual advisor, who prays with me and helps me make decisions based on Biblical principles and knowledge. With her, I get support with mental and spiritual health.

I would add that knowing your financial vitals is also important. If you have not done so recently, look at your financial portfolio. It’s important to know your assets as well as liabilities. If needed, seek help from an advisor. That too is an investment in your future.

It is important for you to know your vitals. As you make changes to become healthier, be aware of what works for you and your lifestyle. Setting unrealistic expectations often leads to frustration and a sense of failure. It’s also important to know yourself and know what areas you may need to enlist professional help in. If you are disciplined and can do some things on your own, do so. But if you need accountability, you are worth the investment.

We are body, soul, and spirit. Let’s make sure we know our vitals in each area and are doing all we can to be wholistically healthy.

Inside this issue:

Editor’s Corner	2
From the Archives	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

Let’s make sure we know our vitals in each area and are doing all we can to be wholistically healthy.

From the Archives: It is Finished

Reverend Dr. W. Tali Hairston, PhD

It is finished. That is so hard for me to say. I am good at holding on to the past. If there was a degree, I would have a Ph.D. I love the History Channel, but being a lover of history is a sorry excuse for not being willing to let go of the past. It doesn't work that well in the end. Learning to bring closure to experiences, especially painful ones, is something Jesus exemplified for us. The more I experience pain and share in the pain of others, the more I realize that learning to experience healthy closure is more than just saying, "It is finished." But it is a good place to start.

Where did Jesus model this for us? In John 19:30, Jesus was hanging on the cross. He was beaten and battered, and they shoved a sponge full of vinegar into His mouth. Jesus, full of pain and agony, opened His mouth to say, "It is finished." He bowed His head and gave up the Ghost.

Before we go there, have you tasted vinegar lately? First Lady Jo Ann has Pastor sipping apple cider vinegar to better his health. Since I have taken it for some time now, I am aware why Pastor

cannot stand the taste. Vinegar is bitter. I laugh when I see him struggling to get it down. "Who cares if it is good for you," he says, "It tastes awful."

Now, imagine you have been beaten to within an inch of your life, and someone shoves a sponge full of bitter vinegar down your throat. Remember, Jesus was literally suffocating. His arms were pulled to the side and hands and feet were nailed to the cross. Each breath required He lift Himself up, sliding His bloodied back against a wooden cross, which created tremendous pain for the slightest amount of air. Whatever was put into His mouth was going to be

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inhaled as if it were air. Can you imagine that moment? In that moment, Jesus used His last breath to say, "It is finished." His journey was complete and earthly ministry had come to an end.

Those moments, when the experiences of life have been the most painful and bitterness has filled our hearts, are when we have the hardest time realizing closure. When the pain of life keeps you



from declaring, "It is finished," I encourage you to say it. Say it when you wake up and before you go to bed. Say it until it resonates in your spirit. Regardless of how much pain you experienced, don't move on until, "It is finished," becomes your daily bread.

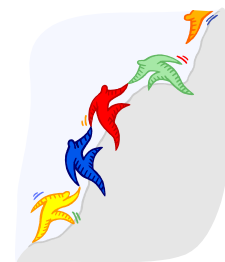
You can't live in the past. You also can't move to the resurrection until you come to that place where, "It is finished," signals that whatever you just came through, it is done. It is over. You are not over, and you will rise again. But, that situation, it is finished. It will feel like death. But, in the Kingdom, resurrection always comes after death. The next words Jesus heard in the grave were, "Come forth."

Prayer Requests:

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



Empowered by God to Empower Others



Women of the Bible—Jochebed

Sister La'Shandra Perkins

Name: Jochebed

Meaning: *Yahweh is glory*

Her Character: *She was strong and had great faith.*

Her Sorrow: *Pharaoh made a decree to murder all Hebrew baby boys.*

Her Triumph: *She was able to save her son.*

Key Scriptures: *Exodus 2:10, Numbers 26:59, Hebrews 11:23*

When I think about Jochebed, I think about how she and her children were predestined for greatness. She was not just any woman. She was a daughter from the tribe of Levi who was married to a son from the tribe of Levi. Jochebed gave birth to three leaders (Miriam, Aaron, and Moses) who were used in their own way by God.

Jochebed's faith was strong, and she was determined and courageous. She knew the pharaoh had ordered the Hebrew midwives to throw all the Hebrew baby boys into the Nile, but they refused, and the Hebrew nation grew. Jochebed chose to trust her faith and know that was not going to be her child's fate. Scripture says that Moses was a beautiful baby, and her love for Moses overrode her fear of pharaoh. She did not only risk Moses' life by keeping him; she also risked her own.

I'm sure Jochebed prayed that God would keep her baby safe. She also used her faith to trust God and the future God had for her children. No matter what was going on around her, she trusted her relationship with God. She listened

for His voice for guidance and direction. She made sure she didn't do anything out of her flesh. She moved with grace and favor and loved on her baby until she could no longer hide him.

I'm sure she spoke into his life and covered him in prayer during the time she had him. Jochebed had to be courageous and trust God's plan. As a mother, she had to protect her child. I'm sure she questioned God when the time came to build a small bassinet and send it down river. I know I would have had many thoughts and questions. No matter what thoughts and questions were running through her mind, Jochebed had to step out on faith and trust that God had a master plan.

Jochebed put her baby in the Nile. She didn't know what fate awaited her baby, but I believe she knew that she would see him again. The scripture goes on to say that his sister, Miriam, watched the bassinet as it floated down river and got stuck in the reeds in the Nile. God had to have told Jochebed where to place Moses. It wasn't by chance that Moses' bassinet got stuck in reeds exactly where pharaoh's daughter would be bathing. It wasn't fate or chance that the only person that could override pharaoh's decision would be his daughter.

Miriam was a vessel being used to fulfill a greater victory to come. She saw what was taking

place and decided to show herself and ask if she should go and get a wetnurse for the baby. Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and Miriam went and got their mother. God turned a dire situation into something good. Moses was reunited with his mother, and she was paid for her services.

Jochebed had to be rejoicing and praising and worshiping God. She was faithful, and God rewarded her. She had her son back in her arms, and she was able to cover him further in prayer. Because she knew he would be taught about the Egyptian's false gods, she put the word of God in him. It took root, and he would reach down and grab it one day.

Jochebed listened to God. She knew His voice, and she followed His guidance. She was rewarded to have her son for four years in her care when he should have been murdered. I don't know if Jochebed knew that her child would lead the Hebrew nation out of bondage.

God is looking for loyalty and for people who are humble and will listen to hear His voice. God has a mighty work for you to do; are you ready?

God has a mighty work for you to do; are you ready?

Men of the Bible—John the Baptist

Sister Cassandra Broomfield

Name: John, Yohanan, Yochanan, Johanan

Meaning: *Yahweh is gracious*

His Character: *He was devout, steadfast, unwavering, selfless, and a proclaimer of truth.*

His Sorrow: *Questioning Jesus.*

His Triumph: *He was the forerunner of Jesus.*

Key Scriptures: *Matthew 11:2-3, John 1:23, Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:1-3*

Nazarite: *Root word Nazir: holy or set apart*

John was the son of Zechariah (a Jewish priest) and Elizabeth. It is widely believed that Mary and Elizabeth were cousins. They both experienced God in miraculous ways. Mary was a young virgin engaged to marry a man that was arranged by her family. Elizabeth was old in years and had never conceived a child. Both were anointed to carry purpose. Elizabeth carried John, whom we now call the baptizer, and Mary carried Jesus, the one who would deliver us from our sins and reconcile us back to God (Romans 5:10).

John was a Nazarene and took a vow to forgo certain pleasures in life to commune with God and remain in a state of holiness. John chose a life of solitude and preaching to those who came near him. Matthew 3:4 describes the attire that John was clothed in. His garments were made from camel's hair. This is significant because it depicts an image of a caveman or being unkempt but that may not be

the case. Camel's hair was used for tents and as carpets. It was also used as insulation. John's parents were wealthy, and he had access to the best tailors that were available. John's clothing was chosen for his wilderness preaching. He would have worn something that protected him from the heat during the day and the cold at night.

His food was locust and wild honey. He could not allow others to handle the food he was eating, so he chose a diet that would suit not just his hunger but his nutritional needs as well. He was known as "the voice of him that cries in the wilderness." His cry was not of tears but as a plea. He encouraged others to prepare for the Christ and to make the path straight (Isaiah 40:3). John 1:6-7 says that John was sent from God to testify about the light (that shines in darkness) so that through him all might believe. The urging was to lay aside previous thoughts and ideas of what they thought the Savior would be or do. He wanted them to know that the coming

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Savior would deliver them from their sins.

John chose the symbolism of baptizing

with water to wash away their sins. He taught them that the Christ had the power to forgive people of their sins. This thought was so contrary to how the people had been taught that it caused a large division amongst the people. John

wanted everyone to know that he was not the Christ. In John 1:19-21, John told the people—including the priests—that he was neither a prophet nor Elijah. He told them that there was one that was coming after him whose shoes he was unworthy to untie (John 1:26).

John and Jesus met again in the Jordan River. This meeting marked the end of John's ministry and the beginning of Jesus'. John continued to preach repentance, declare Jesus as the Savior, and to speak to the evildoers, including the king. This led to his death, but his words and work continued to flourish.

John had sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "*Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else,*" Luke 7:19-20 (NIV). John knew what was about to happen; he knew that his time was almost over. He needed to be sure. We all get to a place where we will question the very existence of God. John was no different.

Jesus grieved alone for John, His forerunner and kinsman. In Matthew 11:11 (NIV), Jesus said "*Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist.*"

Your Money Matters—Room Enough to Receive: Checking for Capacity

Sister Mei-Li Thomas

In conducting research for this issue's theme of "Knowing Your Vitals," I typed "Why monitor your vital signs?" The response that stood out to me was, "[The] early detection of preventable outcomes is key to timely intervention." Instead of producing an itemized list of financial vital signs, we are going to explore what early detection looks like in preparation for God's abundance.

One of the first verses we learn around abundance is about the tithe. Malachi 3:8-12 instructs us to bring our tithe to the storehouse, challenges us on if a person would rob God, and promises an opening of prosperous floodgates. As good as God's floodgates sound (especially in the current state of inflation), it can also be overwhelming, which is why checking our vitals for capacity is so important.

Matthew 6:33 implores us to seek first the Kingdom of God. Checking our vitals means ensuring that how we manage our resources align with both Word and Will. Deuteronomy 28:12 confirms that God wants to bless us abundantly. However, how we handle the resources currently in our hands matters greatly. Meditating on Luke 16:10-13 and 14:28-30, respectively, reminds me that no matter how much I have been assigned to manage, there needs to be a plan to utilize my resources with purpose.

Whether I am budgeting my money or my time (right now I am doing

neither too well), tapping into the Word and Will of God increases my capacity to receive the "floodgates" bounty. God gives to us freely and expects us to do so out in the world to advance the Kingdom (Proverbs 11:24-28) and knowing what that means for our individualized purpose aids in the timely intervention of mismanaging that with which we have been entrusted.

I encourage you to take some time this week to check in with God on *your* individualized charge to advance the Kingdom with what has been entrusted to you right now. Only you and God can identify what your vitals are, connect that with the Will of God,

and pinpoint the places of intervention to prevent outcomes that are out of alignment. God's resources are infinite, and it's about time we tap into that don't you think? So, I leave you with this final question, "Do you have room enough to receive?"

God's resources are infinite, and it's about time we tap into that don't you think?



Fit for the Kingdom—Knowing Your Vitals – Life or Death

Minister Demetrius Robinson

Knowing your vital signs helps you understand where your health is.

When we go to the doctor or to the clinic, the first thing the intake nurse does is measure our vital signs. If we are in a hospital for surgery or a procedure, we have our vital signs taken every four hours. In the ICU, patients are monitored constantly. Why are we monitored like this? Our vital signs are proof of life and health because a dead person has no vitality.

The word *vital* is defined as manifesting life. Another meaning is essential to life, being a source or support of life. Vitals are indispensable. The origin of the word *vital* comes from the Latin word *vita*, meaning life. Vitals are body temperature, pulse rate, respiration rate, and blood pressure.

The body temperature ranges from 97.8°F to 99°F. Your temperature depends on gender, recent activity, food, and liquid consumption, along with the time of day. The body temperature is often taken orally, auxiliary (under your arms), by ear, by skin, and in some cases, rectally. An abnormal body temperature reading can be high because of fever (just one or more degrees over the normal temperature). Low temperature is called hypothermia, which is below 95°F.

The pulse rate is the rhythm of the heart. In healthy adults, it ranges from 60 to 100 beats per minute (bpm). It fluctuates with exercise, illness, injuries, and emotions. Athletes may have rates near 40 bpm. To measure your

pulse, place two fingers on the inside of your wrist and count your pulse for 60 seconds or 15 seconds and multiply by four.

Next, let's talk about your respiration rate. This is the number of breaths taken within a minute at rest. Rates may increase with fever, sickness, or other medical conditions. Normal range for your respiration rate is 12 to 16 bpm for adults.

Your blood pressure is the force of circulating blood on the walls of the arteries. The measurement of blood pressure takes two measurements. The systolic measures the heartbeat when blood pressure is at its highest. The second measurement is the diastolic, which is measured between heartbeats when blood pressure is at its lowest. There are four stages of blood pressure:

- Normal – 120/80
- Elevated – 120-129/80
- Stage 1 – 130-139/80-89
- Stage 2 – 140 or higher/90 or higher

Before you take your blood pressure, don't drink coffee or exercise 30 minutes prior. Do go to the bathroom, relax for five minutes, sit with back supported, and take multiple readings. It is important to take your blood pressure reading the same time every day. When recording your blood pressure, also record the date and time. Be sure to take your record with you to your doctor.

Having vital signs means you're alive. If your vitals are not in the range you would like them to be, you can change them. It's not too late. The Bible says:

“Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple,” 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NLT).

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body,” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NLT).

Honor God with your body. Let's trust the creator of our body and remember this is the only one we get on earth. Let's take care of our vessels. Know and take care of your vitals.

Honor God with your body.

Recommended Reading:

- Exodus 2
- Matthew 3

Creative Expression

Sister Ursula Lovely

What is Hope?

I have a hard time distinguishing between faith and hope. Knowing that I need and use both to get through life, just to cope. Sometimes in today's reality the answers are hard to find. They both have so much in common, but one comes from the heart and the other through the mind.

We have faith that is given to us by the Word of God, and with this knowledge of truth, we are filled. We realize that God gave us the gift of grace when our Lord was revealed.

Many times, we are challenged by the trials and pain that we know. We depend and trust in God and rely on His Word; that is faith, and we grow. Hope is what we need to get us through the day. Faith is what we use to guide us on our way. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hope is our faith in the resurrection of Christ and our salvation, a gift from God and a chance for eternity.

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.

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.

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