



PCC Scroll

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

PCC Cover Person

Chelon Jackson

You probably recognize Chelon as an usher at PCC, where she welcomes you with her bright smile and engaging demeanor. When you talk with her, you learn how proud she is of her daughter as well as the many children she has had an impact on during her 30+ years in the childcare business. You also know that she is enjoying her time as an empty nester by traveling!

Where are you from? I am from Los Angeles, California.

Describe yourself in one word. Blessed and successful.

What's your best trait or one thing you like about yourself? I like that I am trustworthy, and that people can trust me. Many of my friends confide in me because they know it will not go anywhere else.

Tell us about your family. Family is very important to me, especially my daughter, Eriqua. I am the oldest of six kids. There are four girls and two boys. We all live in Washington state, and we are a close family. I love cooking for my family. My siblings come to big sister's house every year for a holiday dinner with all of the families.

Do you have any pets? If so, what kind of pet(s) do you have? I have no pets, but, as a child, I grew up with a dog.

What is your favorite color? My favorite colors are red and orange.

Do you have any hobbies? I enjoy cooking and coloring in adult coloring books. I try not to go to Target every weekend to buy more.

What do you do in your spare time? I like relaxing with a candle. I also like listening to jazz. I enjoy meditating, and I enjoy reading my Bible.

Have you read any interesting books lately? Yes; I enjoyed reading *Your Battles Belong to the Lord* by Joyce Meyer. I also enjoy reading the Bible.

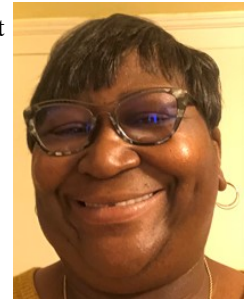
Who are your role models? My grandmother is my role model. She talked to me about life at a young age. She would tell me to take whatever I was going through to the Lord because it's His job to fix it. I attended church with her. My grandmother had me going to Sunday School education in the early morning and then morning service. Later that evening, we would go back to church again. She also had me cooking in the kitchen, making everything from scratch. As an adult, I appreciate the time I had with her. Sometimes, I will find myself sounding just like her.

Career-wise, what are your long-term goals? I may retire in 12 years, but I will still be involved in the area of early childhood in some capacity. In retirement, I look forward to traveling because it is something I enjoy doing. I also like working in my yard.

What steps do you take when you make decisions? I like to pray to discern what impact that decision is going to have on me and my business.

What is the most challenging/exciting experience you've had so far? A few years ago, my daughter and I went to Cabo, Mexico. She wanted me to go on an ATV ride, and

I said, "Okay." It started off great, but after 10 minutes, I was scared. I prayed the whole time. It is something Chelon will never do again!



What does friendship mean to you? To me, a true friend is someone I can trust and someone who has my back during a time when I am in need. Life is too short for fake people. I will be a friend who opens her heart. Friends must tell me the whole truth, even when I am not ready to hear it, and I will do the same thing.

Tell us about your most important friendships and what you like to do with your friends. One of my closest friends and I met when our daughters were in band together. We have built a very strong friendship, with our faith keeping us on the same level. We go out to eat, and she loves my cooking. I love Jazz Alley, and we go to jazz concerts there. We love to travel together. For example, we have gone to eastern Washington, and we are going to New York in 2020.

What is your favorite scripture(s)? My favorite scripture is Philippians 4:13.

Spiritually, what are your long-term goals? Spiritually, I want to continue to walk with Christ in my life and to trust in the Lord. I am thankful to be dedicated to the Lord and that I have seen spiritual growth since being at PCC.

Guest Columnist—Jesus and therapy

Sister Larkita Demps

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Seeing so many Christian leaders and pastors die by suicide further indicates the need for more mental health conversations in the church.

Jesus and therapy. Two powerful and valuable sources that are rarely accepted and simultaneously utilized. Growing up in church, I was taught, when faced with life challenges, you simply prayed, sought God, had faith and everything would be all right. Philippians 4:6 NIV says, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."* But what happens when you've prayed, let your requests be made known, yet sadness and worry still resides?

Shortly after giving birth to my oldest son, I was diagnosed with postpartum depression. My religious beliefs had given me the confidence to know God would heal and transform my mind. So, I prayed, and prayed and prayed some more. What religion didn't provide me with was coping mechanisms, stress management strategies and guidance on trying to understand the emotional rollercoaster ride I was on that left me feeling drained and exhausted. I felt overwhelmed and alone.

That is the effect of stigmatizing mental health in the church. It causes spirit-filled, God-fearing Christians to suffer alone. Seeking therapy does not mean your faith is weak, and it does not mean that you do not trust God. It means you are human. Did you know one in four individuals worldwide will experience mental health issues and one in five Americans are living with a mental illness? You are not alone. Jesus himself was not a stranger to pain and suffering. He too wept, grieved and experienced exhaustion.

Our inability as Christians to recog-

nize the bio-psycho-aspect of human brokenness has become increasingly detrimental not only to the church but

to our society as a whole. Seeing so many Christian leaders and pastors die by suicide further indicates the need for more mental health conversations in the church. God placed individuals in my life that helped me understand therapy and Jesus were not mutually exclusive; they could co-exist.

Seeking professional help does not equate to defeat, nor should it generate embarrassment. It does, however, convey the extent of your strength, courage and faith. I am a stronger Christian because I sought help at one of the darkest times of my life. My breakthrough didn't occur during a church service; it transpired when I sat in a space of vulnerability. This is the space in which I find God uses me the most. Previously, I was ashamed that postpartum depression was a part of my testimony, but I now understand that addressing my pain was worth the healing I have experienced.

Therapy does not replace God's ability to heal and transform, but it does assist with validating the pain and affliction. Even though therapy can effectively bring about change in our lives, God's power is still needed to bring about change in our hearts. God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient. He will always remain as the healer of pain, but therapy may just be the answer to the prayers and petitions that you've made known to Him.



Editor's Corner—Getting your house together

Sister LaTonja Brown

The theme of this issue is “Getting your house together.” It is crucial that we make positive steps toward improving our overall health (emotional/mental, physical and spiritual).

While the terms emotional health and mental health are often used interchangeably, some separate emotional health as the ability to express feelings based on circumstances and mental health as the ability to process information. Others refer to it all as mental health, which includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. For the purpose of this article, we will use the latter.

Our mental health impacts how we act, feel, think, handle stress, relate to others and make decisions. Mental health is important from childhood to old age because feelings like anxiety and depression can occur in all age groups. If you are overwhelmed and need help, please seek counseling! There is no social taboo to this. Many employers offer an Employee Assistant Program, which often includes a few free sessions. If more counseling is required, a referral can be made, and counseling may be covered by your insurance.

In addition, many suffer from stress. Stress can impact our mental and physical health. I can’t emphasize enough how important it is that we reduce situations in our lives that are causing us stress, especially if they are

things we can change. For example, work can cause stress so determining if it’s a “normal” level of stress or a toxic work culture that needs to be left is key. Some ways to reduce stress are exercising, being outside, having pets and journaling. Also remember that the Bible says that laughter is good medicine, so seek things that bring you joy. Research shows that laughter boosts your immune system, eases pain and relaxes your body – all ways to reduce stress!

I also sincerely encourage the practice of taking good care of your physical health! Some of us face health issues like high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol. This could be because of genetics as well as poor diet and lack of exercise. A huge part of physical health is eating nutritional foods, exercising, drinking water and getting enough rest. Don’t forget about routine health checkups like getting your eyes examined, teeth cleaned, annual physicals, prostate exams, breast exams, colonoscopies, etc.

On the spiritual side, I find that simply singing encouraging music while I am walking is very effective.

As you turn the page to a new decade, place a priority on improving your emotional/mental, physical and spiritual health.

It is a way I turn my mind off when my thoughts start to wander in unnecessary areas. I simply refocus my attention by singing praises to God. I find myself walking around my job humming songs. In addition, prayer



and Bible Study are always key to improving your outlook on life.

In this season, I am so aware of the importance of having a loving church community. Members of PCC, you guys are awesome. We do a good job of coming together and showering each other with love and fulfilling needs that arise. Having strong connections and a strong support network (be it family, friends or church) contributes to your overall happiness.

A big part of getting your house together is getting help from any addictions. These addictions could be drugs, alcohol, sex, food, cigarettes, exercise, etc. Basically, anything you do to self-medicate.

To be your best, you must get your house together! As you turn the page to a new decade, place a priority on improving your emotional/mental, physical and spiritual health. Freeing yourself gives you a chance to pursue the hobbies and relationships that give you the most pleasure and support your purpose.

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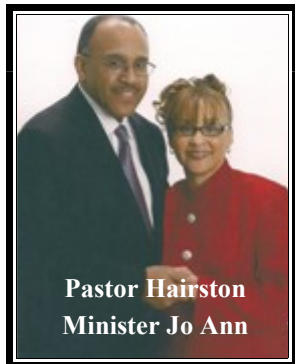
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Word of the Quarter—Getting your house together

Editing Team

Last issue, we started a new overarching theme of “Anchored” with the topic of “Returning to the source.” With this issue, we continue the overarching theme with the subject of “Getting your house together.”

When the editing team met, we asked the question, “How do you know your house is not in order?” There could be signs and symptoms in your behavior like lashing out at loved ones or unhealthy coping mechanisms (food, alcohol, drugs, etc.). There could be emotional and health symptoms like depression, anxiety, stress and high blood pressure. There could be relational issues like abuse or codependency.

Unfortunately, we go so fast that it often takes a tragedy or a health condition to slow us down. If you don't slow down to recognize the condition of your house, life may slow you down.

In Matthew 6:33, the Bible tells us, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* So, the first step is putting God in the right place. This will direct the rest of your decisions. Take the first part of the day to acknowledge God and ask for direction. As you go through the day, prioritize. Ask yourself, “What are my priorities?” If you say God and family but consistently work hours of overtime, with no time for either, then you need to readjust. As you readjust, it may be wise to seek an accountability partner.

Take care of yourself and then take care of others. It's like when you fly on an airplane. The flight attendant tells you to put your oxygen mask on

before helping others. At some point, we all have needed help be it emotional, spiritual or financial. It could also be needing help with running errands or doing chores. Don't be afraid to reach out for help and invite support from trusted family and friends. We don't have to do everything by ourselves. If you need to be held up in prayer, ask. If you need help with errands and chores, ask.

It is important to know when you can help someone and when helping someone will pull you away from your call and purpose or drain you emotionally. Learn when to say, “No.” That is why it's important to know your purpose. The more you align with your purpose, the more you know when it's time to say, “No.” Whatever you do should be aligned with fulfilling it. If necessary, seek counseling. To supplement therapy, you can also read or listen to self-help books.

Getting your house together aligns with the previous subtheme of going back to basics. This could start with your family. Teach your children life skills to be independent and less reliant on you, especially as they get older. In addition to providing shelter and food, we need to give our children a sense of belonging, purpose and support as well as instill life skills. We

Take care of yourself and then take care of others.

encourage you to find balance. It could be putting the phone down at the dinner table to connect with family and friends.

Why are we getting our houses together? Getting yourself together gives you the ability to give back. When you are fully anchored, you can live out your purpose and live more intentionally.

Spiritual Assortment—2020 spiritual vision

Sister Angela Davis

There has been a significant shift in human behavior that directly correlates with electronic intelligence, social media and generational shifts in what relationship, faith and religion mean in a person's life.

As we become more attached to our electronics, the need to humanely deal with those we don't personally know becomes more challenging everyday. Empathy, compassion and solidarity with the oppressed seem to be less important to humanity with every passing year.

Joy and happiness in this life is framed for us through social media and reinforced by in-group biases. Based on this perception of joy, success is defined by consumerism, with shallow and superficial displays like the clothes a person wears or the car a person drives. These things may temporarily sustain our natural desires, but fullness of joy can only be achieved in our relationship with Christ and being used for His glory.

The electronic deceptions that appeal to our natural senses can dull our ability to hear from God and be available for His purpose. Terms like virtual reality, holograms and artificial intelligence can lull us into worlds of deception if we are not careful to wisely discern and learn what these technologies benefit.

The embarking of 2020 and a new decade naturally leads us to reflect on what we have done: good, bad, happy or sad in the years prior. This also leads us to examine what we are going to do differently.

In my case, I could not imagine that turmoil, anguish and disappointment would bring joy and direction to my life. How can the unfathomable be the expression of love and miracles? Because God is all-powerful and all-knowing and holds all power in His hands. If we are willing, He can turn our pain into purpose and our trials into testimonies.

In the past, I dulled my natural senses in order to survive but was not truly living and thriving. Because I numbed my God-given purpose, I was no different than those who have masked their issues with the pull of the electronic world we exist in today. No matter what form the dulling of our true selves looks like, clarity comes in His word. Galatians 5:1 says, "*Stand*

During the time of being in the deepest depth of pain, turmoil and seemingly endless unresolved conflict, there were people of God placed in my life to be the hands, feet, ears and heart of Christ for me.

fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

The Bible says, "*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord as laid on him the iniquity of*

us all," in Isaiah 53:6 NIV. As Christians, we are here to be the temple of God in a world that has yet to know how He heals, transforms and sets free. The spirit of God moves and breathes through us so that we can let others know the amazing power of His love.

During the time of being in the deepest depth of pain, turmoil and seemingly endless unresolved conflict, there were people of God placed in my life to be the hands, feet, ears and heart of Christ for me. I must say it was more than I could do for anyone then, and I strive to be able to be used for the advancement of the heavenly kingdom. How can I tell someone how to get to Tacoma if I have not driven there myself? In a similar vein, how can I witness and testify that a person can be free of mental and emotional turmoil if I have not been free of it myself? Spiritual wisdom will lead, guide and equip us for our call. As we close 2019 and approach 2020, I pray we all clearly see God's purpose and strive to be about His business while we are here.

Recommended Reading:

- Jeremiah
- Genesis 34

Women's Corner—Let go for peace sake

Minister Demetrius Robinson

Princeton Jerome (PJ) was a basketball player. He was a good baller with dreams of attending college and playing in the NBA. PJ could drop back behind the three-point line and deliver nearly every time. He could drive to the basket and slam it home. Look out opponents; PJ is coming through.

During his teenage years, PJ displayed bouts of anger. In his twenties, he became paranoid and his moods unpredictable. They were so unpredictable, and his family had no idea of what was going on with him. They had no clue of the internal turmoil that he faced daily. During his later years, a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenic was made. PJ left too soon; he was only 28 years old. After his accidental death, I vowed to advocate for mental health.

Mental health is extremely important.

Growing up in the south discussing it was taboo. If there was any sign of mental weakness, you were outside of normal. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), "Mental illnesses are common in the United States. Nearly one in five in the U.S. live with a mental illness (46.6 million in 2017)." When you have abnormal feelings, it is beneficial to seek help.

A healthy balance of the spiritual and natural mind leads to a peaceful

mind. Having a strong spiritual mind cultivates a healthy natural mind. Letting go of issues, drama, chaos and hurtful circumstances brings peace. The Bible, God, sound spiritual guidance and counseling are tools to use when seeking peace of mind.

God desires for us to be in good mental health, and the Bible supplies many scriptures pertaining to God's promise of peace. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You," Isaiah 26:3 NKJV. Focus on God, and watch things work out. Think positively, watch and wait on God.

If you are confused, know that confusion is not from the Creator. Ask God for peace, and He will be with you. "For God is not the author of

confusion but of peace....," I Corinthians 14:33 NKJV.

Letting go of issues, drama, chaos and hurtful circumstances brings peace.

Tranquility is a sense of peace and quiet. The roots of tranquility are in the Latin translation meaning "exceedingly rest or quiet." What areas of your life do you need tranquility in?

When you are calm and at rest, you can achieve or conquer any obstacle. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you," II Corinthians 13:11 NKJV.

Freedom from disturbance of peace is ours for the asking. "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," John 16:33 NKJV.

PJ was my brother. His death was painful, but it was not in vain. We now know the importance of recognizing signs leading to mental illness. We now know the importance of getting help. With God and spiritual guidance, peace is possible. Let go, and let God grant His promise of peace.

Prayer Requests:

- ♥ Pastor and Minister Jo Ann
- ♥ Sis. Rachel Jackson (in Botswana)
- ♥ National and local leaders
- ♥ Military and their families and veterans
- ♥ Youth, families, singles and marriages



To Our PCC Family,

Our daughter, Niara (nee-ARE-uh) Tafari Dawkins, was born on Sunday, December 1 at 4:07 a.m. weighing 7 lbs. and 9 oz.

We cannot emphasize enough the powerful impact The Bean's shower had on not only helping to prepare us for a newborn, but also bringing together multiple generations through very powerful prayer. And while we would love to thank each and every one of you individually, we appreciate your grace at this time as mom and baby spend the next couple of weeks at home resting, and big brother and sister get to know their new sibling. Still, we could not let another day go by without thanking you all for the love you have embraced us all with. Thank you so much for all of your thoughts, prayers and support during this process.

Mei-Li, Shawn and Niara



A very Merry Christmas from the PCC Scroll Staff: Angela Davis, LaTonja Brown, Titus Robinson, La'Shandra Perkins, Demetrius Robinson, Jo Ann Hairston; not pictured Crystal Hairston.

Women of the Bible—Dinah

Sister La'Shandra Perkins

Name: Dinah

Meaning: *Judged and vindicated*

Her Character: *Coming from a lineage of strong women (Sarah, Rebecca and Leah), Dinah had been an outgoing, influential and charismatic young lady.*

Her Sorrow: *Dinah experienced the trauma of being raped.*

Her Triumph: *Her brothers fought for her honor.*

Key Scriptures: *Genesis 34*

Let's talk about something that is a hard subject to discuss. We like to sweep the topic under the rug and hope and pray that it goes away: rape. As women, we may not want to talk about it because retelling the story and reliving the trauma can make us feel attacked all over again.

If it's a hard subject to discuss now, how would Dinah have felt in her world: a world without support groups and that was ruled by men. In that era, being a virgin gave a young woman status, and her family could marry her to a good family with equal or higher rank. One man's selfish act changed Dinah's world forever.

Like many young women, Dinah was social. On the day she was raped, she was going to visit friends, but, she never made it. In route, she was taken against her will, raped and held captive. What could have been going through Dinah's mind? She'd been raped and was no longer a virgin. She may have felt shame, hurt and pain. She knew she would have to face her father, brothers and community. Dinah probably rethought her day as she wondered how she had gotten into

the situation. She, like many women who are raped, may have blamed herself. She may have wondered what she could have done differently to prevent it.

Shechem, the man that raped her, was uncircumcised. That made Dinah defiled and an outcast because she was now unclean. Dinah was probably an emotional wreck because her world, as she knew it, was over. Then she was violated again; this time emotionally. Her attacker told her he had taken her against her will because he "loved" her and that he "cared" for her. Those statements could confuse a grown woman; imagine how that would torment a young girl's mind.

After the attack occurred, Shechem tried "to make it right" by having his father, Hamor, ask her father, Jacob, for her hand in marriage. Dinah was in her attacker's home waiting to find out her fate. She was scared, lost and confused. As a woman, she had no say in her life, which is trauma in itself. She had to wait to see what her father proposed. Imagine not being able to voice your opinion and not being able to say, "No." Her father and

She, like many women who are raped, may have blamed herself.

brothers agreed that Shechem may have her as a wife. This deal had been made no matter how shocked and furious her father and brothers were. With the proposal of marriage, she would not be an

outcast. Shechem would make her his wife after conditions were met: Hamor, Shechem and their tribesmen were circumcised.

Dinah was mentally preparing for life as Shechem's wife. But her brothers, Simeon and Levi, had made a false promise. Her brothers refused for her to be treated as a harlot. There was no amount of gold or livestock that could be given to replace what had been taken from her. Their family had been disrespected and the culprit asked for it to be made right after the crime had already been committed. While the men of the village were recovering from their circumcisions, Dinah's brothers killed every man in the city, including Hamor and Shechem. Shechem hadn't consider what type of reaction his decision would cause. Dinah's brothers plundered the city, taking all of its riches and livestock as payment for the wrong done to their sister. Women and children were taken captive and made slaves.

Dinah was taken back to her father's house. She lived with the loss of her future and the trauma she experienced. She suffered a great injustice. I believe that, through God, she was healed and made whole. I believe her life wasn't over because of the trauma she suffered from being raped. Dinah was vindicated by her brothers because they saw her value.

Men of the Bible—Jeremiah

Sister LaTonja Brown

Name: Jeremiah

Meaning: *Jehovah establishes, or the Lord is exalted*

His Character: *Although Jeremiah struggled with feelings of loneliness, insecurity and doubt (because he constantly faced opposition), he spoke God's messages with honesty and conviction.*

His Sorrow: *The people did not heed his prophecies, and he knew what the cost of their disobedience would be. The people not listening caused him deep sorrow, and he suffered from depression. Under Jewish tradition, he was stoned to death by fellow Jews in Egypt.*

His Triumph: *Despite the personal costs, Jeremiah was a faithful and true messenger of God's words. In the end, his prophecies did come to pass but that was no comfort to him because of the suffering the people went through.*

Key Scriptures: *Book of Jeremiah*

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah. Hilkiah was a priest from the tribe of Benjamin and from the city of Anathoth, which means “answered prayers.”

Jeremiah was a prophet of God, and he is the author of the book of Jeremiah, which is found in the Old Testament. The book of Lamentations is often credited to him. He is also believed to be the author of the two books of Kings. His 40-year ministry took place during the reigns of the last five kings of Judah. His messages primarily pertained to

Judah, but he also received messages for other nations.

When God called Jeremiah into ministry through a vision, God told Jeremiah, “*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*” Jeremiah’s response was that he was too young. He is believed to have been 12 or 13 at the time. God’s response was, “... *Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak... behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*”

Jeremiah spoke during a time when society was deteriorating spiritually and politically after the death of King Josiah. For a time, King Josiah had brought Judah back into alignment with God. There were wars, and God’s words were not wanted or heeded. Jeremiah’s main message was that repentance would postpone the judgement that was coming to Judah at the hands of the Babylonians. Regardless of Jeremiah’s passionate and consistent prophecies,

We chose Jeremiah because he is an example of the toil our walks with God can sometimes have on our psyches.

the people would not listen. Although he admonished them to act, they refused to do so.

Despite many attempts on his life, Jeremiah continued to act as God’s prophet. He was thrown into prison and into a cistern. He was taken to Egypt

against his will. He was rejected by most: family, friends, neighbors, kings and audiences. Jeremiah often stood alone and struggled with isolation. Despite all of that, he pressed on with his messages of doom and wept over the fate of his country.

Jeremiah was a man whose grief, sorrow and anguish ran deep, and he is known as the “weeping prophet.” He was brokenhearted because he knew, as God’s prophet, what lay ahead for the country of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem. Jeremiah wept because he knew God’s judgement would rain down and destruction would follow. He wept because the people had rejected God and their sinfulness would bring suffering and exile. His sadness ran so deep that he cursed the day that he was born.

As the Bible tells us in Ecclesiastes 3, “*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven...a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.*”

We chose Jeremiah because he is an example of the toil our walks with God can sometimes have on our psyches. As Christians, we forget that we have examples of people who have walked closely with God who have dealt with sadness and loneliness. Yet despite the costs, they continued with their ministries and walks.

Your Money Matters—Seeking help

Sister LaTonja Brown

Juggling finances is not for the faint of heart. There are so many goals and priorities that compete for our limited resources. There is balancing basic month-to-month expenses such as housing, transportation, utilities, groceries, etc. There is managing debt like student loans, credit cards and car payments. There is building savings accounts and emergency funds. There is investing in 401s and IRAs. There is enjoying the fruit of your labor with things like vacations and eating out.

When it comes to managing finances, there is a wealth of information online. For example, Dave Ramsey and NerdWallet have websites centered around financial advice and information. Companies like J.P. Morgan and Charles Schwab have a wealth of information available online as well. With all of the information available, how do you know which information is true and can be trusted? Online information can lead to other questions as well at which point it could be necessary to seek professional advice.

How do you know when it's time to seek a financial advisor? There could be various reasons. Some people don't want to manage their financial portfolio. It could be because they lack the time to manage it or lack the knowledge on how to manage it. Others feel lost and overwhelmed when it comes to planning, so they need guidance. Others may just want a neutral third

party when it comes to making financial decisions. Recently, my advisor gave me counsel that stopped me from making a decision based on a short-term gain by reminding me of my long-term goals. This advice not only saved me money; it will also grow my account over time. Needing financial advice could also be situational like nearing retirement, getting married or starting a business.

The right financial planner will help you make decisions that align with your long-term financial goals simply by reminding you of what they are. They will also listen to you and respect your risk comfort level. An advisor can help you with your finances in areas like investing, financial planning, retirement planning, etc. Dealing with stocks, estate management and retirement accounts can be complicated. An advisor can help you navigate these channels.

For me, the decision to hire a financial advisor came down to self-discipline. History has taught me that I am not disciplined in keeping track of the market and adjusting my portfolio as needed.

One statistic says that almost half of Americans are not planning for their financial futures.

So, for me, it's worth investing in an advisor who is paying attention to Wall Street. In theory, the fee will pay for itself in the long run. In addition, there are times when I am prepared to pay for services in areas I am not good in. Financial planning is not my background, so I

sought a professional in that area. This is along the same lines as me having a hairdresser, lawyer and mechanic. I know where I am gifted and where I am not. While I can create a monthly budget all day, any day, long-term planning remains a little foggy to me.

Tax season is also a good time when seeking professional help may be useful. As your taxes get more complicated, it could be good to seek help. If you do your own taxes, it may be a good idea to periodically have an expert do them, if only to make sure you are catching everything.

Of course, do it yourself is always an option. It could be because you want to do it yourself. It could be that your budget is tight as you pay off debt. Just make sure you are investing for your future and that you are disciplined enough to keep an eye on your investments. One statistic says that almost half of Americans are not planning for their financial futures. Do not be one of them!

When you seek financial help, it is because you are trying to make sound financial decisions and need guidance on how to do so. Be sure to do your due diligence when finding an advisor and be sure to understand their fee structure. Their guidance should lead to peace of mind that you are on the right track.

Fit for the Kingdom—Seeking help

Minister Titus Robinson

When trying to start a new exercise routine or diet program, we have probably all asked the same questions:

- “Where do I start?”
- “How do I begin?”
- “What do I do first?”

Starting a new exercise or diet program is not always an easy task. Actually, let me change the word *task* to *life change*. Making life changes is not easy. In order to successfully make a lasting life change, seeking help may be a good idea. To effectively seek help, you should have some understanding of what you need. You can start this process by developing what’s sometimes called a “grocery list of needs.” For example, “I need to lower my blood pressure,” or “I need to lower my cholesterol.”

For instance, when we are shopping, we have the tendency to window shop and browse every aisle. While doing so, we end up buying lots of unnecessary items because we want what we see. But, if you have a grocery list of needs written out when you enter a store, you tend to only get what you’re looking for. You are focused on just what you need and tend not to browse every section.

When I began my life change, I knew I needed to lower my blood pressure, so I began seeking help and

I focused on the things that helped change my life, and I have been able to sustain my life changes.

resources from the best-known place on the planet: the internet. The internet can be very helpful. But, with all of the information out there, it can be overwhelming as well. This is why I used a grocery list of needs to help reduce the output. When I began my search, I typed, “How do I lower my blood pressure?” It was that easy, and the internet had lots of information on the area I was searching.

Like a lot of other people, before searching the internet, I tried commercials with celebrities and spent lots of money. But, I didn’t get the change I really needed until I sought help personalized to my needs.

It’s just like when we go to Jesus seeking help. We cannot go for anyone else’s reasons but our own.

“And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, art thou he that should come? Or look we for another,” Luke 7:19.

I wanted real-life change, period.

In order to know how to build your grocery list, first go to your doctor for a health checkup. You don’t want to blindly search. So, start your list with your doctor. It may also be a good idea to share the final version of your plan with your doctor. Though helpful, the internet can also contain false information. So, validate your plan’s feasibility with your doctor.

“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch,” Matthew 15:14.

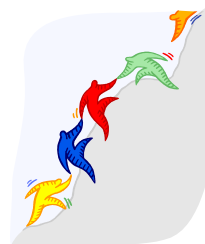


The internet has lots of helpful tips on diet and exercise programs, many of which are **free**! For example, there are lots of walking programs on there. When you do your initial search, you can focus on what you are interested in trying. As I focused more on what I was looking for, I was able to stop wasting time looking at things I didn’t need. I focused on the things that helped change my life, and I have been able to sustain my life changes.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,” Matthew 6:33.

Until next time. May many blessings be added to you.

Empowered by God to Empower Others



Creative Expression

Sister Ursula Lovely

Listen, He speaks

It took me years to learn to listen as God spoke.
I didn't realize who was trying to lead me and help me to grow.
I learned later in life about things that my loved ones had done that I didn't know.
I truly believe now that the things they chose to do to me were for my benefit and lead me on a different path as I did grow.

Something inside (I truly believe that was God) made me love them then and now.
Sometimes I believe you need to look for the why of what people choose to do.
Try to understand and judge others the way you would want them to judge you.
It has taken me many years to learn and grow.
A long time to finally understand what many others already know.

For many years, I lived in the shadows and in fear.
Most of the time it was caused by my loved ones and their reasons were not clear.
You need to understand the why of what people do.
Find out the things that they lived through instead of being angry or depressed.
I had to learn to listen and understand the why.

Now, if you asked me, "Who does God say I am as opposed to what others say that I am?"
I think I would answer you this way:
God is my creator; He knows what is inside of me and that I no longer want to hide.

There are those that see me and only see the physical me.
I have learned from the past not to rely on what others say and see but to listen to my Heavenly Father and strive to do what He wants of me.
I try to listen as He speaks because His eternal presence I seek.
That is why I say, "Listen as God speaks."

Happenings and Events



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

Spiritual Steps (Leadership Training)—2nd and 4th Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Family Prayer—Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.

Remember our ongoing food drive!



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- 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 Editing Team.

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