

Seeking God

Vol. 2

A devotion for our BCA family
so we can seek God together.

Bethel Christian
Academy Staff



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Introduction

Dear BCA Family!

This is the second year that we have been able to put together our staff devotional for you and your family. It is a blessing and an honor to serve you and your children in any way, but we take this opportunity incredibly seriously. Our goal is for you to have a devotion every day from December 1 through December 25.

We have used this time to share with you what the Lord is speaking to us and what we hope you will hear from him as well. I love how these texts come together. We write them independently and as they are compiled into one book, the word of God threads together to point us all to him and to Christmas!

This time of year is so special. We pray that you will enjoy time as a family with our Father in his Word.

We love you all!
BCA Staff

Handmade

December 1

Natalie Burnett, Principal

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We are God's handiwork. Can you even imagine? As I type those words and even speak them to students, it really blows my mind. To be someone's handiwork means to be made from their hands! I can make a mean chocolate chip cookie, and I'm even getting pretty decent at bread, but that is nothing compared to the human race.

God created us with a specific design to do specific works. Any students who have been here for any amount of time have heard me speak and preach and even yell that we were created on purpose and for a purpose on the 6th day! We were created by the hand of God to do good works.

God loved us so much that he saw fit to knit us together so that we could all be together at this time and do what he has called us to do. I hope that you can feel his love this season and that you can step into what he has called you to do! There are people in this world that need to hear from you specifically. There are jobs in this world that you specifically can fill. There is love in this world for you specifically to give! We were created by God and we get to partner with him as we walk through life!

Prayer: God, thank you for your creation. Thank you for including us in it and bringing us together to change the world in this moment. Help us to step into what you have for us to do. Amen.

Broken, but Beautifully Used

December 2

Nat Prough, Music Teacher

Judges 7:16-22 Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside. “Watch me,” he told them. “Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon.’” Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!” While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

When Gideon went into battle, he didn't have a huge army or fancy weapons. God told him to take only three hundred men. Instead of swords, they carried trumpets, torches, and jars of clay. God wanted to show that the victory wouldn't come from their strength. When the soldiers broke their jars, the light from their torches burst into the night, and their enemies ran away in fear. They didn't win the battle, God did.

In the New Testament, Paul reminds us, “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). Just like Gideon's jars, we may sometimes feel cracked or broken. But God's light shines brightest through those cracks.

During the holiday season, things can feel stressful or overwhelming. We might feel tired, lonely, or even a little broken inside. God can still use us—right where we are—to share His light and love. When we show kindness, patience, or forgiveness, His glory shines through us.

Remember, God doesn't need perfect people or perfect plans. He just needs hearts willing to let His light shine—even through the cracks.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for loving us even when we feel broken. Help your light shine through us so others can see your love. Amen.

Waiting with Hope

December 3

Elissa Davis, 2nd Grade Teacher

Isaiah 40:31 “but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

As I’ve walked with the Lord, He’s been teaching me that waiting isn’t just about being still it’s about trusting Him with a hopeful heart. Waiting can be one of the hardest things we do, whether it’s for an answered prayer, a breakthrough, or simply for things to fall into place. But God reminds us that waiting should always be accompanied by *hope*. Romans 5:5 says, “And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” That verse reminds me that the hope we have in Christ isn’t uncertain or fragile; it’s rooted deeply in His love and sustained by the Holy Spirit living within us.

As a teacher, I often see how hope changes the atmosphere in a classroom. When a student believes they *can* grow, their effort and attitude begin to change. The same is true in our walk with Jesus—when we hope in Him, we begin to live differently while we wait. Waiting with hope means we’re not simply sitting around but we’re praising God, declaring His promises, praying, and thanking Him in advance for what He’s going to do. It’s an active trust that says, “Lord, even if I can’t see it yet, I believe You’re working.”

Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” When we wait with hope, we’re showing our faith in a God who never fails. My prayer is that we would all live this out together that in every season of waiting, we would surrender our plans to Jesus, trust His timing, and hold on to the hope that does not disappoint. Because even when life feels uncertain, we can be confident that God’s love is constant, His promises are true, and His plans are always good.

Heavenly Father, Thank You for reminding us that waiting is not wasted when it’s filled with hope in You. Teach us to trust Your timing and to rest in Your promises, even when we can’t see the outcome. Help us to wait with hearts full of faith, praise, and surrender. Fill our homes with Your peace and remind us daily that Your love never fails. As we wait, let our hope shine as a light to our families and those around us. In Jesus name, Amen.

Light in the Darkness

December 4

Debbie Bass, Art & Tech Teacher

At Christmas, we celebrate the moment when God stepped into our world—not in power or splendor, but in the quiet cry of a newborn King. Isaiah 9:2 says, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” That light is Jesus.

In a season filled with lights on houses, trees, and streets, let each sparkle remind us of the true Light that never fades. Jesus came to bring hope where there was despair, peace where there was fear, and joy where there was sorrow.

John 1:5 tells us, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” This is the promise we hold onto—not just at Christmas, but every day. No matter how dark or busy our lives may feel, His light is steady, gentle, and sure.

This Christmas, may we pause long enough to let His presence warm our hearts. May His peace settle over our homes, and may His love shine through us to everyone we meet.

Because the greatest gift ever given wasn’t wrapped in paper—but in swaddling clothes.

Let His light lead you into Christmas with hope, joy, and peace.

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus, the Light of the World, into our darkness. As we celebrate this Christmas season, fill our hearts with Your peace and our homes with Your presence. Help us remember the true meaning of this season and to share Your love with everyone around us. Guide our steps, calm our worries, and renew our hope. May the light of Christ shine brightly in us today and always. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Seasons of Change

December 5

Jodi Gentry, Administrative Assistant

Ecclesiastes 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens

One of the blessings—and sometimes challenges—of living in Ohio is getting to experience all four seasons. Each one brings its own kind of beauty, but also its own kind of change. And change, as we all know, isn't always easy. It can be hard to slow down and see the beauty that comes with it. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."

Right now, I'm in a season of change myself. My children are grown, and they don't need me in quite the same way they used to. It's easy to get caught up in the emotions that come with that—to feel a little lost—and miss the new opportunities God is placing in front of me. I'm learning to see this time as a new season of discovery, a chance to find my next purpose and follow where God is leading me.

If you're also in a season of change, I want to encourage you to look for the beauty in it—even when it's hard to see. It's there, waiting to be noticed.

Prayer:

Jesus, I just want to lift up everyone who's going through a season of change right now. You know how hard it can be, and how easy it is to feel uncertain or overwhelmed. I ask that You give us peace as we walk through this and help us adjust to the changes You're making in us and through us. Remind us that You're right here with us every step of the way. And Lord, help us to be a blessing to the people around us today—let Your love shine through us. Amen.

Speaking Good

December 6

Amber Pertz, 4th Grade Teacher

Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Why is it so much easier to speak down on ourselves than it is to speak good? In Genesis 1:31, God looked at all he had created and said it was very good. We are creations of God, knitted together, fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:13), so why is it so easy to say negative things about ourselves?

We are surrounded by negativity. The weathermen say there is a 20% chance of rain, not an 80% chance of sun. Social media has people complaining about something that happened that was out of their control. We hear "I am sick and tired..." then wonder why we are sick and tired.

As teachers and parents, we are working so hard to encourage the children that surround us to speak good, but it's hard. It's not to say that we aren't allowed to feel bad and talk about it, but imagine if we changed the verbiage. "This is a challenge, but I am capable." Think of all the things that would change!

I have a rule in my classroom; if somebody says something negative about themselves, they have to say four positive things to make up for negativity. I usually hear "I'm good at Gaga Ball" or "I have nice hair" because that's what they see in themselves now. What would it sound like if we started doing the same thing with other adults? Would we hear "I'm a great person" and "I emulate Jesus"? Why don't you go out and see?

Challenge: Start to work toward surrounding yourself with positivity. Next time you hear someone say something negative about themselves, challenge them to say three good things then. It will change the way they think about themselves and it helps you to be a bit more like Jesus. Go out and do good to all people (Galatians 6:10).

Dear God, I pray for each and every person to go out and speak good into the world. God, I pray that You are emulated through Your disciples and they follow in Your path. Lord, I pray that you guide us all to do more good to all people. In Jesus name, Amen.

A Living Hope

December 7

Pastor James Galbraith, Lead Pastor

Romans 15:13 I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hope often seems scarce in our world today. With headlines full of uncertainty and ongoing personal struggles, maintaining hope can seem impossible. As burdens grow heavier, it becomes harder to look past our current circumstances or believe that better days are coming. However, Scripture assures us that genuine hope does not stem from our circumstances but from God Himself. How can we nurture this type of hope? Paul's prayer encourages us to trust—seeing God as the stable foundation of our faith. Hope grows in the soil of trust. When we believe that God is active—even if His work isn't visible—we allow His peace to fill our hearts. Trust redirects our attention from our fears to the One who remains faithful.

What happens when hope takes root in us? Hope generates joy and peace that go beyond our circumstances. Joy does not come from external events but from the presence of Christ within us. Peace results when we trust in the certainty that God's plans are good and His timing is perfect.

If you need more hope today, remember that it is not something you have to create yourself. Hope is a gift from the Holy Spirit—a divine act within your heart. As you stay close to Him, He will renew your thoughts, change your perspective, and fill your spirit with confident expectation in God's promises.

Lord, you are the source of hope in my life. When life's challenges overwhelm me, help me trust that you are working beyond my understanding. Fill my heart with your joy and peace as your Holy Spirit continues to renew my hope.

Our Daily Bread

December 8

Sierra Penix, Kindergarten Teacher

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Over the past two years, I have gone through some personal challenges and faced unwanted outcomes and hardships, as is expected for the human experience. I have struggled and wrestled with wanting to speed up God's timeline for my life, speed up the process of healing, and to be given what I want in order to be "okay".

God has been showing me gently, but also clearly and sternly, that I have exactly what I need to get through each day. He has pointed me more times than I can recall to the story of the Israelites getting their manna for each day. Wants aren't wrong. Desires for good things aren't wrong. I want stronger relationships. I want restored harmony with my family. I want my health back. We can fill in the blank to be applicable to so many life circumstances. The beauty of the gospel is that each day we can rely on our Father for manna to sustain us through life's deepest heartaches and greatest pain. Would I like to have more than just manna some days? Of course. And that's okay. But I know in the deepest part of my being that through our heavenly Father, I have everything I could ever need. His promises stand true through generations and he has never failed. He will always give me my manna for the day, and that's all I need to worry about. Philippians 1:6 says, "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." This is not a one time deal. This is a daily occurrence. Scripture encourages us time and time again to rely on God's good work in us daily. Whether it be my students' smiles, a meaningful conversation, or time spent in the calm of evening. This is our life-giving manna. I have everything I need for today. God's got the rest in his hands. And how beautiful and relieving it is that he does so.

Thank you, Lord, that you are the sustainer of all life. Hold me close as your daughter as I rest in you. Thank you for being my champion, fighting my battles, and always winning. You alone make me dwell in safety. Amen.

The Truth

December 9

Pastor Jeremy Burnett, Superintendent

Romans 8:38-39 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

BCA students have heard for years now that they are made in the image of God, on purpose for a purpose, that God made them exactly how he wanted them to be, and that he loves them! It's a message that everyone needs to hear, but it's rarely the message the word sends! Life can be hard. People can be harsh. It can be easy to get down on yourself and even doubt your own worth. But how you see yourself doesn't change God's love for you. Your value is not in who you are or what you do, but your value is in who created you!

There is a song by Megan Woods called "The Truth" that says:

The truth is I am truly loved
By a God who's good when I'm not good enough
I don't belong to the lies, I belong to You
And that's the truth

It's a powerful message that we all need to hear...often! The Bible says that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God! When you grasp that fact, a weight is lifted off your shoulders and you see things from a different perspective. It's true. You are not good enough...but God is! You are not perfect, but God loves you anyway. Because Jesus died on the cross, you can be forgiven of every sin you have ever committed. That means you can live in paradise with him someday! Until then, his Spirit will help you become more like him! How awesome is that?!

God, thank you for loving me! Thank you for making me special. When it's hard for me to remember that, please help me to see myself through your eyes! Let me feel your love and your presence with me all the time, and help me to be able to encourage others so they can see themselves from your perspective, too!

Good News and Great Joy

December 10

Brook Morgan, Middle School Science and Bible Teacher

Luke 2:10–11 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

The angel's announcement to the shepherds was more than just news, it was good news, filled with hope and joy. The shepherds were the first to hear that the long-awaited Messiah had come. God chose them!! Not kings or scholars, to remind us that His love reaches every heart, no matter one's status.

The message of that night still rings true today, "Do not be afraid." In a world filled with fear and chaos the birth of Jesus speaks peace. He is the Savior who brings light into our darkness and joy into our sorrow. The "great joy for all people" is not temporary happiness, but lasting joy found in knowing that God is with us, Immanuel.

As we celebrate Christmas, may we remember that this joy is meant to be shared. Just as the shepherds hurried to tell others what they had seen, we are called to spread the good news that Christ the Lord has come.

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus, our Savior, and source of true joy. Help us to rest in the peace His presence brings and to share His love with others this Christmas season. Fill our hearts with gratitude and wonder as we remember the gift of Your Son. Amen.

The Hope to Which We Have Been Called

December 11

Angie Kazimir, Pre-Kindergarten 4 Teacher

Ephesians 1:18 (NIV): "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,"

In this powerful prayer, the Apostle Paul isn't asking God to give the Ephesian believers something they didn't already possess, he's praying for their spiritual perception to be supernaturally awakened. He knows they have a rich inheritance in Christ, but they need their "eyes of the heart" enlightened by the Holy Spirit to truly grasp it.

The heart refers to the very core of our being—our mind, emotions, and will. A natural understanding cannot fully comprehend the depth of God's blessings. We need divine light to illuminate the vast reality of our life in Christ. This enlightenment isn't a one-time event, but a continuous process of spiritual growth, much like gathering manna daily.

Paul wants us to know three profound truths:

- The hope of His calling: a confident expectation and an anchor for the soul, rooted in God's certain promises and His eternal purpose for our lives.
- The riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints: We often focus on our inheritance *from* God, but the text also implies that we, His holy people, are *His treasured* possession, in whom He will be glorified.
- The surpassing greatness of His power (Ephesians 1:19): This is the same immeasurable power that raised Christ from the dead, available to us who believe today.

We, too, need this divine wisdom and revelation. When worldly challenges or spiritual coldness creep in, our response shouldn't be despair, but a renewed commitment to God's Word in prayer. We can use Paul's prayer as a template, asking the Father daily to "enlighten the eyes of our heart". As we trust and obey His Word, the Holy Spirit will provide the clarity and strength needed to live in the reality of our incredible future, immense value, and remarkable power in Christ. This eternal perspective should shape our daily decisions and priorities, keeping us anchored in hope.

Lord, help us to trust and obey you. Help us to see the way you see! Thank you for holding us and giving us hope.

Healthy Eyes

December 12

Natalie Burnett, Principal

Matthew 6:22 The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

I have terrible eyes. My eye doctor appointment each year is a pretty important one. However, last year, I got busy and tried to stretch out my contacts for as long as I could. I mistakenly threw away my last pair before I knew that I did not have any extra left! So, just between you and me, I've been wearing the wrong prescription of close to expired extra contacts for an embarrassing amount of time.

I spent a little over a week with terrible headaches that I could not explain; until I remembered my eyes! I was not looking through the right lens and it was affecting everything.

Our focus is so important. When we focus on what God wants us to, we function correctly. However, when we do not, it is impossible.

So many things can affect the lens of how we see: our experience, our feelings, our attitude. We can look at each other and our circumstances through God's lens or our own. I can assure you one of those is incorrect! God's lens will help us see those around us and the events around us in the way He sees them. When we begin to look this way, we will be full of the light that He has for us.

Lord, give me your eyes to see what is happening around me. Give me your eyes to see your people the way that you see them. As I look through your lens, help me to lead others to you!

Heart Over Habit

December 13

Pastor Edgar Santos, NextGen Pastor

Proverbs 4:23: Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

For those of us who are parents or caregivers, it's easy to focus on our kids' actions - making sure they share, use kind words, and obey at home and while at school. And that's great, but if we stop there, we might only change what they do, not who they are.

God reminds us in Proverbs 4:23 that everything we do flows from the heart. That means true, lasting change doesn't start with behavior - it starts with what's happening inside. When our goal is simply to control behavior, we end up managing symptoms instead of healing the cause. But when we aim for heart change, we invite God to shape our children's love for Him and others. That takes time, grace, and lots of prayer. It means asking heart-level questions like, "What made you feel that way?" or "What do you think God wants you to do?"

Jesus didn't come to make people behave better - He came to make people new. In the same way, parenting is less about producing perfect kids and more about guiding them to a relationship with a perfect Savior. As we model God's love, patience, and forgiveness, our children begin to see that following Jesus isn't about rules — it's about a changed heart that wants to please Him.

Heavenly Father, help me to parent with Your heart. Teach me to see beyond my behavior and to point my children toward You. You are only One who can truly change hearts. Give me wisdom, grace, and patience as I do my best to lead them into a deeper, heart-changing relationship with you. I ask this in the name of Jesus.

He is our Firm Foundation

December 14

Svetlana Brenenstuhl, 3rd Grade Teacher

Christ is my firm foundation
The Rock on which I stand
When everything around me is shaken
I've never been more glad
That I put my faith in Jesus
He's never let me down
He's faithful through generations
So why would He fail now?
He won't.
(Firm Foundation by Cody Carnes)

Matthew 7:24-25 Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

As humans, we struggle. We have burdens, stresses, anxieties, and hurts that are sometimes so incomprehensible that we wonder if we will ever make it through. This is not a new revelation. But neither is the faithfulness of our God. God reminds us that HE is our firm foundation. He reminds us of the truth that we can cling to in our darkest moments. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) We can have peace knowing that we have a God who loves and cares for us. Even when we don't feel it and even when we don't see it, God is making a way. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) I hope this encourages you to be reminded of God's faithfulness and His deep love for you. Even when we don't feel it, God is working. He is moving and He is doing a good work. (Philippians 1:6) In your struggles, in your hurt, in your frustration, in your darkest moments, He sees you. God is our firm foundation and He won't fail.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." (James 1:2-4)

Growing Strong Roots in God's Love

December 15

McKenna Marcus, 1st Grade Teacher

Colossians 2:7

"Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."

As a first-grade teacher, I get a front row seat to one of the most amazing parts of a child's journey. Every day, I watch my students' minds and hearts bloom as they learn new things, make new friends, and discover the joy of growing. It's a reminder that each little step they take is part of a much bigger plan that God is unfolding in their lives.

Colossians 2:7 reminds us that real growth begins with being rooted in Christ. Just as plants need strong roots to grow and thrive, our students need to be grounded in God's truth and love. When they build their lives on Him, they can stand firm no matter what challenges come their way whether it's learning to read, making wise choices, or showing kindness to others.

As parents and teachers, we share the privilege of helping these young learners grow deep roots of faith. We do this by praying for them, encouraging them when they struggle, and celebrating every victory big or small. Even in the moments that feel ordinary, God is shaping their hearts and preparing them for a lifetime of walking with Him.

Let's continue to nurture their growth with patience and love, always reminding them that they are deeply loved by God and created with purpose. When our children are rooted in His love, they will not only grow strong but also overflow with joy and thankfulness wherever they go.

Dear God, thank You for the gift of watching our students grow in knowledge and in faith. Help us as parents and teachers to plant seeds of truth and encouragement in their hearts. May each child learn to build their life on Your Word and trust in Your love. Strengthen their roots in You so they grow strong, confident, and grateful. Bless our classrooms and homes with peace and joy as we partner with You in shaping these precious lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Planning Ahead

December 16

JaneAnne Curless, 5th Grade Teacher

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

I recall a family vacation my family took to Colorado in a station wagon. It was a big adventure for the six of us. There was much planning by my parents as we lived on a dairy farm. One cannot just pick up and go places.

Dad had to plan on going after crops were in and hay made. He had to get a few people to milk the cows and feed the livestock for seven to ten days. My mom made plans for packing clothes, food, and lodging along the way. We would drive to a relative and spend the night, maybe more and travel until we arrived at another aunt and uncle's house the next day. I know this took letters, phone calls, and much more to come together for our family. Such planning!

God, so many years ago, planned for Jesus to come to Earth as a baby, live for 33 years, die and be buried, and rise on the third day. What a wonderful plan. May we celebrate the Christmas season with joy and thankfulness.

Dear Lord, In your Word you displayed so many plans for so many people for us to learn about. Thank you for giving us those plans to see how you worked in their lives. Thank you for the plan of salvation. Thank you for the birth of Jesus. Thank you for your plan for each one of us. Amen.

A Harmonious Attitude

December 17

Kim Hopkins, 2nd Grade Teacher

Philippians 2:3-5 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

When Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi, he was concerned about their attitudes. He urged them, as a church family, to live in harmony—united in heart, mind, and purpose. This was vitally important because the church was facing pressure from the surrounding culture to reject Christ and abandon His ways—just as we often experience in our world today.

To encourage unity, Paul didn't offer a motivational speech or hand them a book on the "5-steps to Harmony." Instead, he pointed them to the one essential ingredient for true harmony: humility. Paul points to Jesus Christ as the perfect example of humility. Only through Christ could the church be renewed in the kind of humility that would shape the minds of the Philippians and lead them into truly harmonious relationships.

We all know how a careless word or an unkind gesture can damage relationships and disrupt unity. It's surprising how quickly small offenses can break trust and even end friendships. At the root of these moments, if we're honest, we often find pride—the very opposite of humility. Pride fuels selfishness and the desire to elevate ourselves above others, and it's this attitude that so often leads to conflict and division.

It's easy to ignore the pride in our hearts or make excuses for it. But instead of brushing it aside, we need to turn our eyes to Jesus—the perfect example of humility. We can't become truly humble on our own. We need the Holy Spirit to help us. As we read Paul's words to the Philippians, let them encourage us to look to Christ. Think about His selfless love and obedience, even to the point of death. When we do, our pride begins to fade in the light of His perfect humility.

LORD, call me to think differently about others and to order my affections in the right way – the way of harmony. Jesus, give me the strength and humility to align my thoughts, words, and deeds with Your will each day. Enable me to promote harmony and unity of heart, mind, and purpose through you. In Your Holy Name, Amen.

Unwavering Faith

December 18

Sarah Harmon, Middle School Language Arts and History Teacher

Matthew 2:10 “When they saw the star, they were overjoyed” — Matthew 2:10

The story of the Wise Men is one unwavering faith. These traveling men came from far away, likely hundreds of miles, following a star they believed would lead them to the promised King. The King they had been waiting for was finally here! They didn't have all the answers, but they had faith that God was guiding their journey.

When they finally found Jesus, they didn't find Him in a palace or surrounded by wealth. He wasn't in meetings with the most powerful men. They just found a little child with his mother and father. Even though he was still a child, they recognized Him as the King of Kings and offered their best gifts.

The Wise Men remind us that Christmas is about seeking Jesus above all else. Their journey wasn't easy or convenient. They didn't know how long the journey would take, but every step led them to their Savior.

This Christmas season, may we seek the leading of the Lord. May we be willing to go where He leads us. Whether our journeys feel uncertain or long, we can trust that when we seek Him with sincere hearts, we will find Him.

Lord, thank You for leading us just as You led the wise men long ago. Help us to seek You with all our hearts and keep our eyes on You.

Rising to God's Challenges as a Parent

December 19

Laura Roggy, Kindergarten Teacher

Isaiah 40:31 But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles.

Parenting is one of God's greatest blessings — and one of His most stretching callings. There are days when we feel like we're soaring, full of joy and gratitude, and others when we can barely lift our heads. Every stage brings new challenges: sleepless nights, teenage tears, or adult children finding their own way.

In these moments, it's easy to ask, "*Lord, why is this so hard?*" Yet every challenge is a divine opportunity — not just for our children's growth, but for ours. God uses the pressures of parenting to shape our hearts, deepen our faith, and draw us closer to Him.

When we face uncertainty, God invites us to trust His wisdom more than our own. When we feel exhausted, He reminds us that His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). When we don't have the right words, His Spirit intercedes and guides us.

Rising to God's challenges as a parent doesn't mean doing everything perfectly — it means walking faithfully. It means showing up in love, even when we feel empty. It means praying instead of panicking, listening instead of lecturing, and surrendering instead of striving.

The truth is, God is not only using you to raise your children — He's using parenting to raise **you**. Every test of patience, every act of forgiveness, every tear and triumph is shaping you into the image of Christ.

So, when parenting feels like too much, lift your eyes. You are not alone. The same God who entrusted you with your children walks beside you every step of the way. His grace is enough, and His strength will carry you through.

Lord, thank You for trusting me with this sacred calling. When I feel weak or unsure, remind me that Your strength is enough. Help me to love my children as You love me. Amen.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
— 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)

The Way, The Truth, The Life

December 20

Angie Kazimir, Pre-Kindergarten 4 Teacher

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

There are times when life feels like one long road filled with detours, confusion, and fog. We think we know the way forward, and then, out of nowhere, everything changes. I've had moments like that when I've said, "Lord, I just don't know where to go from here." And every single time, His answer has been steady: "Follow Me."

Jesus doesn't simply show us the way, He is the way. He doesn't just teach truth, He is truth. And He doesn't just give life, He is life itself. Everything we need to reach the Father is found in Him.

That means when we feel lost, we can trust His direction. When the world's lies get loud, His truth still stands. And when we feel empty or weary, His life fills us again.

Sometimes, it's not that we need to figure out our next step, it's that we need to walk closer to the One who already knows the path. He isn't a distant guide giving directions from afar; He walks beside us, hand in hand, leading us home.

Where in your life right now do you feel lost or uncertain? How can you surrender that area to Jesus today and trust Him to lead you as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Lord Jesus, thank You for being my Way when I feel lost, my Truth when I am uncertain, and my Life when I am weary. Help me to keep my eyes on You, even when I can't see what's ahead. Lead me in Your truth today and remind me that I don't have to have it all figured out—I just need to follow You. Amen.

Pray in Every Season

December 21

Jill Oman, Physical Education Teacher

James 5:13 “Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.”

Life is full of all kinds of moments—some great, some tough. This verse reminds us that no matter what’s going on, we can always go to God. When we’re stressed, sad, or confused, we can pray and ask Him for help. And when things are going well, we can thank Him and celebrate what He’s doing.

God doesn’t just want to hear from us when things fall apart—He wants to be part of our everyday life, the good and the bad.

Out of Lo-Debar

December 22

Pastor Tara Galbraith, Vice Principal

"The king said, 'Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?' ... Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-Debar. Now when Mephibosheth ... came to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, 'Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness ... and you shall eat bread at my table continually'" (2 *Samuel* 9:3–7).

Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan and grandson of King Saul, the last male heir of Saul's line. Despite his royal birth, his life turned tragic when he learned at age five that his father and grandfather had been killed in battle. Fearing the new king David might kill Saul's remaining family, his nurse tried to escape with him but dropped him, leaving him crippled. Mephibosheth then lived in exile and fear, hiding in Lo-Debar, a barren, desolate place east of the Jordan River.

Years later, King David remembered his covenant with Jonathan and asked if anyone from Saul's family was still alive to show kindness to. When he heard about Mephibosheth, he summoned him. Fearing he might be harmed because of his connection to Saul, Mephibosheth was reassured by David that he would be treated kindly for Jonathan's sake. David promised him his land would be restored and that he would dine regularly at the king's table.

Mephibosheth's story shows salvation and grace. When he was broken and alone, God noticed him and sent David with compassion. He was invited to sit at David's table, where his crippled feet were hidden. The same offer is for everyone who believes in Christ: God sees us when we're broken, comes with compassion, and invites us to His table. God's grace covers our past and brokenness, redeeming us into fellowship with Him.

Your life may not be like Mephibosheth's, but if you're feeling isolated living in a barren place like Lo Debar, remember that the same God who created the universe and created you is the same God who sees you now and has a plan to renew and bring you to His table.

Lord Jesus, thank You for calling me out of my Lo-Debar. Thank you for your kindness that restores and renews. Help me to sit daily at your table and to extend your grace to others who still live in brokenness. Amen.

Wisdom While Facing Anxious Thoughts

December 23

Megan Sack, 1st Grade Teacher

Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

As a 1st grade teacher, I feel so privileged to be able to have a career where I am able to help guide young students, in their early educational journey, towards a successful future. It is truly so rewarding getting to see students learn, grow, and thrive academically, socially, and personally. Being a new teacher at a brand new school is such a wonderful and exciting experience! Although, starting anything new can be nerve wracking and intimidating, due to its unknown factors and the uncertainty of what lies ahead. In my times of worry, no matter how anxious I am, I always remember that I can turn to God. He is always there to listen, to help, and most importantly, to love us.

"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just" (Deuteronomy 32:4a). Even though it may feel overwhelming to us, I know that no worry or anxious thought is too much for Him to handle. God knows what's on our hearts and He's there to grant us peace and wisdom whenever we need it. Knowing God is there and so willing to help us during all hours of the day is such a beautiful thing. I am so blessed we have such a good, Heavenly Father.

Dear God,

Thank you for always being there for us. You know every thought and worry we have and so, I pray that you give us the strength we need to fight our anxious cares. I ask that you please fill us with your peace, Lord, and surround us with your unconditional love. Thank you for all that you do for us! We love you and praise you; in your name we pray, Amen.

Hope That Overflows

December 24

Janet Peto, Pre-Kindergarten 3 Teacher

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hope isn't something we create on our best days; it's something God pours into us when we choose to trust him. Paul reminds us that God Himself is the source of hope. Not circumstances, feelings, or the outcomes we long for. Hope flows from a Person—one who never changes, never fails, and never withdraws His love.

When we trust Him, He fills us with joy and peace. These aren't emotions that depend on every thing going right. They're Spirit given gifts that steady our hearts in the middle of uncertainty. And as God fills us, He doesn't stop at just enough. He causes us to overflow. To carry more hope than we thought possible. So much that we spill into the lives of those around us.

Whatever season you're in right now; God's hope is not limited. It is new every morning, powerful enough to lift weary hearts, and faithful enough to anchor your soul.

Lord, You are the God of hope. Fill me today with Your joy and peace. Teach me to trust You so that your hope overflows in my life. Let your Spirit remind me that my future is secure in You. Amen

Light in the Darkness

December 25

Tara Lloyd, Middle School Math Teacher

Isaiah 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the deep darkness a light has dawned.

Christmas is often described as a season of joy, laughter, and togetherness. Yet for many, it is also a season of quiet sorrow, empty chairs, and heavy hearts. The world can feel cold and dim, and hope can seem far away. But Isaiah's words remind us that even in our darkest places, God's light has not gone out—it has *dawned*. The light Isaiah spoke of is Christ Himself—God stepping into our shadows, not to erase them immediately, but to walk with us through them. The manger in Bethlehem was not just a cradle for a baby; it was the arrival of hope wrapped in flesh. Jesus came for those who feel unseen, burdened, or broken. His light does not shame our darkness—it transforms it. If this season feels heavy, know that you are not forgotten. The same God who promised light to those long ago still speaks today: *"You are loved. You are not alone."* The dawn may come slowly, but it *will* come.

Lord Jesus, Light of the World, shine into the dark corners of our hearts and lives. For those who mourn, bring comfort. For those who fear, bring peace. For those who have lost hope, let Your light rise again. Remind us that Your presence is stronger than any night. Amen.