



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## FOCUS IN FEBRUARY

Have you ever answered a knock at your door and found someone from another group wanting to talk to you about religion? What went through your head when you opened the door? Were you wondering whether you should talk to them or not? Were you searching for a word to send them away without being rude? Were you sorry you opened the door to begin with? Or were you trying to remember the five points of the gospel and preparing to share with them about Jesus? How should we react in these situations? What would God have us do?

Maybe you have seen the distinctive Mormon elders in their black and white suits walking or ri-

ding their bikes and wondered what they were sharing with the people they were contacting? Maybe you have driven past a Seventh Day Adventist Church building and wondered what makes them different other than the sabbath being on Saturday? Have you heard about Scientology from some of your favorite celebrities and wondered what they were talking about?

Our 2026 Focus in February series will be centered on cults. We will think about questions like: How do cults differ from religions? What do specific cults like Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, 7th Day Adventists, and others believe? How should we respond

when adherents of different cults come to visit us?

We kicked off the discussion this past Sunday evening and will continue February 15 and 22 in the sanctuary from 6:00 to 7:00 (We will have no Sunday Evening activities on February 8). On March 1, we will have a panel discussion with all our pastors discussing this topic and answering any specific questions that you have.

Even if you do not normally attend our Sunday night gatherings, we hope you will make it a priority to be with us for these special services.

# Simple Steps for Personal Bible Study

Matt McBroom | Pastor

Do you regularly study the Bible on your own? Many people struggle to get started because they do not know where to start. In this article I would like to lay out some principles that I hope you will find useful and I also hope that they will encourage you to begin to study the Bible on your own.

To get started I would suggest that you consider studying a book that is being taught in one of our mid-week Bible studies, in your Sunday school class, or being preached through in our Sunday morning services. I make this suggestion because this will allow you to study the content on your own and then be able to come and hear it taught and discussed in a group setting. This will help reinforce what you are studying, it will help you to more actively participate in the studies, and it will help you know if you are on the right track in your interpretation and application of the scripture.

You do not need any commentaries or study tools to get started. All you need is your Bible, a notebook, and pen/pencil to take notes. Try to set aside a consistent time each day that you can spend 15-20min in study. If you are unable to do it every day, try to make time to study at least three days during the week.

Each time before you open the Bible to study, take time to pray and ask God for guidance as you read the scripture. Pray that he would help you to understand what you will be reading. Pray that he would help you to rightly apply it to your life. When you are done praying, open your Bible and read. Do not try to cover too much Scripture at one time. The point is not for you to finish chapters and books in one sitting. The point is for you to internalize and understand what you are reading. Many Bibles provide headings for sections with breaks in between. Use these as starting and stopping points while you read. You may also choose to break up your study by reading a full chapter each day or time you study.

If you choose to read full chapters, select your favorite verse(s) from the chapter and write them down in your notebook.

As you read, remember to take into consideration who is writing and the audience that they are writing to. Knowing the who, what, when, where, how, and why for the book will provide you a reference point and aid your understanding of the book. Pay attention to the main theme of the book. Think about how the passage would have applied to the original audience. Then think about how the passage applies to people (aka you) today. As you read, take notes in your notebook, making sure to write down any questions that you may have on the passage. Also write down things that you have learned. If there are passages that you find to be important to you, write them down and then try to memorize them.

I hope that you find this quick guide to be helpful and that you use it to begin studying the Bible.

# The Beginning of Wisdom

Garth Farmer | Pastor

This past Sunday we started a new Sunday School series through the book of Proverbs with our students. I can't say that as a student growing up in Youth Ministry I ever heard much teaching from the book of Proverbs. There really isn't anything quite like Proverbs in the rest of the Bible. The wisdom and sayings of this book have popularity even among people who have no interest in attending church. Everyone is drawn to the idea of wisdom. I had a professor in college who once defined wisdom as "the ability to live with skill." Who doesn't want to their life to be described like that?! And yet, as desirable as wisdom is, not nearly enough people find it.

We shouldn't be surprised that not enough people find wisdom. If we are searching for it apart from God it will never be found; Solomon makes that much clear for us. And yet this has been the tendency of humanity from the very beginning. In Genesis, while Adam and Eve are being tempted to defy God and eat the fruit, we read this: "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband and he ate" (Gen. 3:7). There it is. From the very beginning, in their search for wisdom, humanity has looked in all the wrong places.

The beauty of Proverbs is that it is so clear on where wisdom is found. Wisdom is found in God, not apart from him. The author of Proverbs (Solomon mostly) doesn't leave us wondering on where we find wisdom. He comes right out and says it. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). Wisdom begins when we recognize that God is holy and completely different from us. That he is far superior to us in every way and that we have a desperate need for him to redeem us in every way, including our pursuit of wisdom and how life is lived best. C.S Lewis wrote on the concept this way:

**"In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that - and therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison - you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you."**

Paul reminds us of a similar principle in 1 Corinthians. We don't know God through wisdom or becoming wise. It is quite the opposite. When we know God and understand our need for him we gain wisdom. Paul says this, "And because of him (God) you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord'" (1 Cor. 1:30-31). Wisdom is found in God, and most plainly in his Son. When we trust in Christ and come to know God, we find true wisdom. We discover how we can live life best. Living in light of the redemption that can only come through Jesus.

I am incredibly excited for the book of Proverbs. There is so much to be learned. But the book of Proverbs, like the rest of the Old Testament points us forward to Jesus, the wisdom of God. My prayer is that our students would grow in wisdom as we study it together. May we grow in wisdom as we grow in our knowledge of Christ.