

PERSPECTIVE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH

IN DEFENSE OF
MOTHERHOOD

JULY

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IN DEFENSE OF MOTHERHOOD



Why Defend Motherhood?

Does motherhood actually need defending? After all, children of all ages annually acknowledge their moms with cards, flowers, trips to fancy restaurants, and other gifts.¹ Some proud children even splurge to express their appreciation with an “I love Mom” t-shirt, bumper sticker, or even a tattoo! So it’s a fair question. However, despite all this, the culture’s loud messaging about motherhood often stands in stark contrast with the Bible, and we really shouldn’t be surprised. It should not shock any Christian that a world that champions feminism minimizes the value of motherhood. So, yes. YES! Motherhood clearly needs defending in the public square. Motherhood is good and to be celebrated, not just on one customary day. That’s a message worth spreading.

But what about in Christian churches around the globe? Does motherhood need defending *there*? The question makes me think of a fitting, albeit imperfect, analogy I once heard from a friend. He explained that losing the gospel doesn’t happen to a church overnight. It is typically a four-generation process. The first generation accepts the gospel, the next generation assumes the gospel, the next confuses the gospel, and finally, devastatingly, the fourth generation does not understand or believe the gospel. When we go from accepting the gospel as churches to *assuming* the gospel, we are on a slope

that is not just slippery; it’s deadly. The explanation is terrifically helpful and equally terrifying.

Similarly, churches can assume we have a good grasp on what God has to say about motherhood. We take it for granted that we all recognize and value a mother’s God-given role and contribution to society. Surely, everyone singing in our pews is on the same page about motherhood. But the pull of the world is strong. And the voice of the culture is loud. Maybe, even possibly, your neighbor in the pew has quietly started to drift. She’s unwittingly breathing in an unbiblical view of motherhood—show after show, podcast after podcast, book after book, and post after post. How long will it be before she doesn’t see the point and value of motherhood at all? Might the cultural currents carry her to the point of snuffing out her God-given desire for children? And if she does have children, what will she teach them about motherhood? Just as the gospel can be assumed, confused, and then lost, we can lose our bearings on motherhood.

As a church, we must defend motherhood to our culture and our neighbors, but we must also defend biblical motherhood to one another and to our children. We must “show and tell” the Christians in our lives and spheres of influence how motherhood is valuable to God. Much closer to home, as a mom, my own heart needs strong and consistent reminders that this God-given role is precious indeed.

A Mother's Job

To faithfully defend motherhood, we must begin by asking an important question: What do moms do? The answer may seem obvious. But as we've seen, it is dangerous to assume we understand the biblical calling of motherhood. To uphold and defend motherhood, we need to know what God calls a mom to be and do. Consider eight characteristics of a biblical mother:

- Mothers diligently teach their children the Word of God and the gospel (Deut. 6; Eph. 6; 2 Tim. 1:5, 3:14–15).
- Mothers love their children by correcting and disciplining them (Prov. 13:24; 22:6, 15; 29:15, 17).
- Mothers provide care and comfort (Isa. 63:13).
- Mothers are known for gentleness and tenderness (1 Thess. 2:7).
- Mothers love their children (Titus 2:4).
- Mothers model and explicitly teach Christian character (Proverbs, 2 Tim. 1:5).
- Mothers model a good work ethic (Prov. 31).
- Mothers are (usually) also wives,² who must learn to manage a home and love and submit to their husbands (Titus 2, Eph. 6).

So much more could be said, but I hope you can see that the Bible has much to say about what a mother is to be and do. God has indeed given us all we need for life, godliness, and motherhood in his Word!

Motherhood Is Hard but Good

Mothering is hard work. It's labor from the start (ha)! That's one of the main reasons it needs to be defended. As you can see from the list above, a mom has a lot to do. One of my mothering mentors (the kind you never meet, but so appreciate) is Carolyn Mahaney. I'm dating myself here, but when my kids were babies, blogs were the thing. I followed Mahaney's blog³ from its inception and have benefited greatly from her writing ministry. In *Feminine Appeal*, a book to which I have often returned, she shares a quote about motherhood that always makes me smile:

"No job on earth takes more physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual strength than being a good wife and mother. If a woman is looking for the easy life she might try teaching tennis, cutting diamonds,

*or joining a roller derby team. There is nothing easy about good mothering. It can be back breaking, heart wrenching and anxiety producing. And that's just the morning."*⁴

This isn't to minimize the demanding callings of presidents, pastors, CEO's, and classroom teachers, or even to minimize the good labors of "teaching tennis" (or pickleball!), but it is to say that mothering uniquely demands ceaseless sacrifice. And, in our flesh, "ceaseless sacrifice" is not what we crave! Paul Tripp explains,

*"Secretly, in our hearts, many of us want life to be a resort. A resort is a place where you are the one who is served. Your needs come first, and you only do what you want to do when you want to do it. The only demands you deal with in a resort are the demands you put on yourself. At a resort, you live with a sense of entitlement. You've paid your money, and you have the right to expect certain things. I am afraid that many of us live for comfort and bring this entitlement mentality to our parenting. We reason that we have the right to quiet, harmony, peace, and respect, and we respond in anger when we do not get it. Scripture warns us that life is far from being a resort. Life is war."*⁵

The demanding side of motherhood is what many in our society seek to avoid. A quick Google search about our culture's feelings toward motherhood explains that, while often a highly valued role, motherhood can also lead to "expectations and pressures that can impact mental well-being."⁶ Not to mention, becoming a biological mom involves significant changes and demands on the body in pregnancy, labor, delivery, and postpartum challenges. Becoming an adoptive mom requires financial sacrifice, piles of paperwork, home studies, waiting, and post-adoption challenges.

Let me offer some encouragement here. There is help to be found. Yes, the work is stretching, but you are not alone. Be teachable, seek out discipleship and godly resources. At Mount Vernon, many are eager to help you find both!

Sadly, the physical and emotional demands of motherhood aren't the only reasons some women intentionally choose to raise pets instead of humans. Some fear motherhood will take away too many of their freedoms. Others fear it will get in the way of their financial or career goals. I recently saw a bumper sticker that said, "huge financial burden on board." This is sadly not the first time I have seen this sticker! Though it's intended to be tongue-in-cheek, I bet the kids in that

family have picked up on the underlying attitude: “Unfortunately, I am a mother and I want everyone to know what cool things I gave up for this crummy job I shouldn’t have chosen!” Yikes!

To Stay at Home or Not?

If a mother chooses to stay at home for a season (for any length of time), she will occasionally (or often) feel like a social misfit in 2025. Depending on who she is talking to at the park or what form she is filling out at the doctor’s office, she can feel like her decision is taboo. For a season, working part-time or even full-time may be fitting, helpful, and absolutely appropriate. It is so important to seek godly counsel.

In the early years of our marriage, I was extremely helped by John Piper’s challenge for Christian women to take care to base these decisions *not* on secular trends or societal lifestyle expectations but with kingdom purposes in mind.⁷ His specific challenges to women helped me sort through these tough decisions with better questions in mind. Considering questions like “What will serve my husband in this season and build up our family? How can I glorify God and use my gifts creatively for ministry in this season?” was crucial to the conversations Dustin and I had with each other and friends we asked for counsel. Decision-making can’t be reduced to just going along with whatever cultural trends are around you. We can’t answer “to work or not to work” based on the choice that brings in the most income. You’ll need to have a firm grasp on the biblical perspective before you imbibe the world’s messaging on the topic.⁸

One important note to stay-at-home moms: We have our own unique idols. Do not mistakenly think that spending more time at home as a mother will remove the need for humble and deep dependency on Christ to help you keep the main thing the main thing. Stay-at-home moms might be tempted to idolize their home or education choices. They may idolize children to the detriment of their marriage. They may crowd out time for the Lord and ministry with too many activities. They may tend to squander hours without the wartime mentality Christians should embrace!

Motherhood is a Joy

Being a mother absolutely shakes up a woman’s life. But it’s also absolutely wonderful. It is costly. But it’s also incredibly rewarding. Imagine the joy of finally hearing that first cry from a newborn or hearing the judge declare, “You are now parent and child.” Consider how

a mother’s day can include reading *Winnie the Pooh* to a snuggled-up toddler or answering their little questions about our big God. Think about having a front-row seat to helping a middle schooler overcome a particular struggle, witnessing a high schooler getting baptized, siblings resolving conflict peaceably without your help, or a fun vacation that is sure to become a core memory!

Kids are often hilarious, and it’s good to stop, smile, and enjoy the laughs. I have a little book of memories that includes so many amazing one-liners. One favorite tells of a little raspy-voiced kiddo of mine who declared he was having a heart attack (he meant to say heartburn). Older kids and teens are also flexing their humor in terrific ways that really add color and fun to dinner conversations. I held an infant the other day and had forgotten how much their “air guitar solo” startle reflexes make me laugh.

There is indeed joy and laughter to be had in great measure. Of course, there are also heartbreaking times when mothers sigh or cry over their kids’ choices, diagnoses, sin, troubles, etc. There can be seasons of deep grief related to motherhood—failed adoptions, miscarriage, stillbirth, the death of a child, or rebellious children.

Being a mom is hard, but we must never forget that it is also good.⁹ I fear that, in an effort to be more vulnerable, authentic, and raw, godly women have forgotten to hold up the good of motherhood. Church, let’s hold it higher! God’s glory shines bright when we embrace and enjoy the good work he has given us to do.

I’m sure that other mothers besides me often need reminders of why motherhood is valuable on the harder days. “Defending motherhood” to weary hearts often looks like praying for and encouraging discouraged moms around us with God’s truth. All mothers will undoubtedly face a myriad of uncomfortable emotions at times. Maybe you are weary, confused, convicted, distracted, discouraged, fearful, anxious, angry, alone, etc., etc., etc.! Sometimes the kids and the hormones are raging. Mothers will undoubtedly face hours or even whole seasons of discouragement. In those times, our gentle and lowly Savior, who is also the one who holds all things together, says, “Take heart! I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33; see also Matt. 11:29 and Col. 1).

The task of motherhood can feel so gigantic that we can be tempted to think we must possess super-strength and capacity to be a mom. But in truth, it is good to be weak, because it pushes us to lean into and boast only in the strength that God supplies (2 Cor. 12:9).¹⁰

In a parenting book I read years ago, I was so helped to read, “A strong mother is not the glue that holds the family together; only a strong God can handle such a colossal task.” And one of my favorite Spurgeon quotes often comes to mind, “I have a great need for Christ; I have a great Christ for my need.”

Motherhood Is Ministry

Mothers do *good* and *holy* work. You read that right, good and holy work. Children are a gift, and the work they bring into our lives is to be received as a gift and seen as ministry. One reason motherhood needs defending in the church is that Christian moms can be tempted to feel like they are “missing out” on “real” ministry by staying home with their children. But that isn’t the case at all. Motherhood provides us with profound opportunities for “real,” God-glorifying ministry every moment of every day.

As mothers we give ourselves to the daily ministry of feeding the hungry (especially teens!) and clothing the naked (babies!). We minister the Word, telling precious souls about Jesus, day after day. We offer counsel, helping them navigate schoolwork, insecurities, and conflict. We get to use our God-given, unique gifts daily. We definitely exercise the ministry of presence, being there for them, driving them around, listening to all their words. We train them in the fear and admonition of the Lord, disciplining them and discipling them. We encourage, exhort, and even rebuke, having hard conversations (or knowing when to bite our tongues as they start spreading their wings). Sometimes (often, even), we make them not thrilled with us by saying “no” because we love them too much not to. In all this, we show our children a living picture of the loving and shepherding authority of our Heavenly Father! The work may often be ordinary, but that doesn’t make it unimportant! There is glory, and God can use it in surprising ways. Isn’t it just like God to use mustard seeds?

Motherhood is ministry. And, godly mothers must abide in Christ to be ready for this daily ministry. Meet with the Lord. Some mothering seasons can make this uniquely challenging. But don’t wither at the vine spiritually. Don’t go through a spiritual fast, even though this season is uniquely demanding. Meditate on God’s truth. Pray! Can you strategize in the intense seasons? I knew a couple whose husband regularly chose to do dishes while his exhausted wife went upstairs for a quick meeting with God. Could you listen to the audio Bible while you walk your toddler in a stroller?

If our chief aim is to know God and enjoy him forever, then motherhood should not distract from that big and very long-term goal. It should complement it. Motherhood should not make our Bibles grow dusty, our hospitality sparse, or our joy fade. Do we want to grow up to be not just older but older and godlier, should Jesus tarry? Are you a mom who hopes to one day be a godly grandmother, should your kids have kids? Are you a woman who longs to grow in being able to disciple younger Christian women? Start today becoming an older woman who knows, trusts and prays to the Lord.

Before moving on, it is important to note that *all* Christian women can and should find ways to nurture and pour into the children God has placed in our lives—in our neighborhoods, church family, and extended family. God especially made women to be nurturers and helpers. Those who are unmarried and those who are married, but unable to have children, have many God-given opportunities to be spiritual mothers. They can pour into and celebrate God’s good gift of children in their lives and churches in a way that is noticeable to those around them. Just as Rufus’ mother could pour into Paul, who was not her child, they can be encouraging, intentional, nurturing, and “motherly” to those God brings their way.

Motherhood Is Not Ultimate

Motherhood needs defending as a good gift and a valuable ministry. Christians must uphold it, but we also need to be careful not to make it into something God never intended it to be. Just as women can be Debbie Downers about motherhood, putting undue emphasis on its demands and costs, we can also let the pendulum swing too far the other way, wrapping up our identity in being a mother or in our good-but-unfulfilled desire to be one.

Being a mom is not a woman’s ultimate aim. Our chief identity is Christ-follower. The way we tend to talk about this can be misleading. A woman is *not* at her peak if someone calls her “Mom.” A woman is *not* more of a woman by bearing children. A woman’s highest purpose is *not* motherhood. All Christians must remember that their calling is to know Jesus better and become more like him day by day.

In saying that, I in no way want to downplay the sometimes excruciating pain of a good desire deferred. We should seek to know about, weep with, love on, and pray for those couples at Mount Vernon struggling through infertility and those singles longing for marriage and children.¹¹ One of the ways we serve

these brothers and sisters is by keeping mothering in its proper place, as a good, but not an ultimate gift.

Though not an ultimate calling, it bears repeating that motherhood is a precious and worthy calling! Christian moms can be confident that motherhood is important. Our children are good gifts. Being a mother to them is a good gift from a good God (Jas 1:17).

It's so easy to forget these truths and struggle as a result. A faithful church is God's kindness to us, keeping mothers grounded in Scripture, exhorting each other to think carefully and critically about the selfish or worldly teachings that can lead us away from Christ! See Hebrews 3:13. The good news of the gospel is precisely what Christian mothers need to understand to both value their calling and persevere in hope. The gospel, not motherhood, is ultimate, so the gospel must be the bedrock of all a mother seeks to do.

It is a worthy use of the church's time to pause and give attention to all the Bible teaches about the family, which includes the precious role of mothers. Furthermore, it is good for society and for our witness when the church raises up and values intentional, holy mothers whose hope is in God (1 Pt. 3:5). Ephesians 5 paints a beautiful picture of how the family is to point onlookers to the gospel. Though no earthly marriage does this perfectly, a husband (loving) and wife (submitting) reflect the relationship between Christ and His church. Children obeying their parents who are exercising loving discipline can paint a picture of the loving authority of Christ. Parents who humble themselves and apologize for their sin towards their children point kids to our collective need for a Savior. This ministry of the family preaches the gospel to those inside and outside the home.

And, because of what Jesus did in his perfect life, death and resurrection, a mother's obedience and labor, rather than being a burden, can be a deep and gospel-rooted joy.¹²

Concluding Thoughts

We live in a world where motherhood needs defending. As a church, we need to remind one another of the wonderful truth that motherhood is hard but good. It is ministry. It's not ultimate, but it is a gospel picture! Let's not assume these truths will be passed on by osmosis but intentionally work to uphold them by teaching and modeling their significance.

Mothers can grow weary in doing good. They can lose vision and hope. I'll always remember how Carolyn

Mahaney said her biggest regret in parenting was not trusting the Lord more. Oh, for grace to trust him more (even today!) in the precious, good but hard, worthy-of-defense gift and work of motherhood! Church Family, would you build up the mothers around you? In doing so, you are doing good work and helping defend motherhood, too!

- Jamie Butts

¹ In 2024, spending reached \$33.5 billion for Mother's Day, according to a google search.

² Clearly, there will be exceptions (e.g. the widow, those who have been divorced, etc.).

³ You can still access it at <https://girltalkhome.com/>. I highly recommend perusing the archived articles.

⁴ *Feminine Appeal*, pg. 32.

⁵ *Age of Opportunity*, pg. 31.

⁶ Google Search "How Does Our Culture Feel about Motherhood".

⁷ <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-challenge-to-women>

⁸ <https://zawn.substack.com/p/please-dont-become-a-stay-at-home> is an example of what we are being taught about women working at home.

⁹ Not to mention, if God gives a family a special-needs child, the work can be hard on a whole other level, as well as sadness other families might not always understand. But, I know God also gives great JOY to His children, even in these situations.

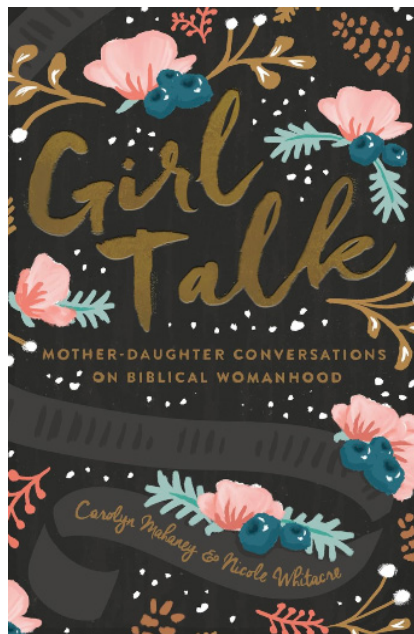
¹⁰ Kim Crandall, *Christ in the Chaos*.

¹¹ Many couples have really been defined by suffering, waiting for a long time for a positive pregnancy test that has yet to come and that might not come. Similarly, many singles we know and love long to be married and be mothers. They are trusting the Lord through the sometimes excruciating pain of a hope deferred. They persevere and cling to Christ in faith and hope, even through grief, and bless our church family as spiritual mothers and fathers, rejoicing with and partnering with MVBC parents. These church members are dear to us and show us something important about how Jesus is worthy of all trust.

¹² See Aaron's recent sermon from 6/8/25.

BOOK HIGHLIGHT

GIRL TALK: MOTHER-DAUGHTER CONVERSATIONS ON BIBLICAL



Written by Carolyn Mahaney | Recommended by Lisa Crosby

The joy of passing on the language of Biblical Womanhood is recounted by mother Carolyn Mahaney and daughter Nicole Whitacre in the book *Girl Talk: Mother-Daughter Conversations on Biblical Womanhood*. They show us that Biblical Womanhood—particularly submission, purity, and homemaking—is not outdated as the world we live in wants us to believe. In chapter after chapter, the reader will see that God has ordained the mother-daughter relationship as the relationship in which biblical womanhood is best taught. God intends for Christian mothers to demonstrate and pass along biblical womanhood, bringing honor to the gospel. It's intentional work in which we desperately need God's abundant grace to be able to “step up and begin to impart wisdom and instruction” to our daughters. This includes the early years through the teenage years and even beyond as our daughters leave home, whether married or single.

Growing up in a non-Christian home I knew nothing of biblical womanhood. It has been something I've learned more about in the last 9 years. This book challenged me to seek, with more diligence, intentionality and prayer, to model and pass on the language of biblical womanhood to our unbelieving daughter even though she is now married and living in another city. I can't wait for her to come to me. I must press in, being more consistent, intentional, and actively involved in her life as much as possible. This book also caused me to trust God more with my future as a mom. Our nest is nearly empty, but fear of failure as a mom still lurks. It is “faith toward God [that] is the foundation of effective mothering.”

Young moms, read this book while your daughters are young. Then, prayerfully seek God's wisdom for when to invite your daughter to read these pages with you. Seasoned moms, read it as a reminder of the sweetness of the mother-daughter relationship the Lord has ordained for you. Let the conversation between Carolyn and Nicole help you see areas that need growth and reorient you to present the gospel as attractive. Each season of your daughter's life will bring challenges, and in every season you will fail somehow. But, don't give up. The world seeks to strip away the language of biblical womanhood. It is for the sake of the gospel to the next generations that mothers must speak the language of biblical womanhood to our daughters.

BOOK EXCERPTS

This must be the aspiration of all mothers and daughters: the successful transfer of the qualities of biblical womanhood that sparkle with the gospel so that in the midst of this me-centered, self-focused, ungodly language of our culture, we can speak the refreshingly pure, altogether true, and saving message of Jesus Christ

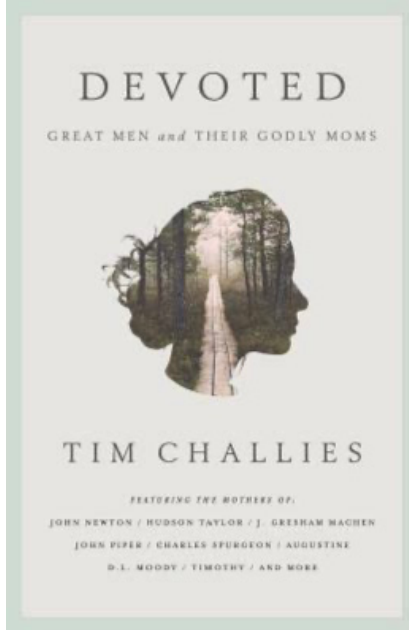
– “The Language of Biblical Womanhood” p. 27

But best of all was the friendship I forged with my mom—one that only grows stronger as the years go by.

– “Best Friends” p. 123

BOOK HIGHLIGHT

DEVOTED: GREAT MEN AND THEIR GODLY MOMS



Written by Tim Challies | Recommended by Trisha Gross

Devoted uniquely captures the stories of godly men and the mothers who have raised them. Many of us recognize prominent figures like John Piper, Charles Spurgeon, and John Newton, but are not acquainted with the women who helped shape them. Tim Challies provides a short biography of each mother and highlights godly attributes that their sons honored. He ends each chapter with personal application for mothers of today to help them glean wisdom from these historical women. Challies conveys the truth that no matter what season of life, hardship, or limitations a mother may face, the goal of every Christian mother is to raise their children to love and glorify God. He further argues that every Christian mother is fully equipped to teach their children to know God by relying on the Word.

Looking back on when I agreed to read this book, I didn't know what hardships I would face in motherhood just a few months later. Many of the mothers highlighted had very hard lives and circumstances. Many lost their husbands and were responsible to provide solely for their families. Some mothers had wayward, rebellious children who hated

God. Some had children who died before them. One figure that stood out to me was Charles Hodge's mother, Mary. Mary lost three children to disease, and then her husband when Charles was only 7 months old. She worked grueling labor to provide for her family. Despite these hardships, Mary devoted her time to her son's education and understanding of God's Word. She saw herself as solely responsible to teach her son the Scriptures, even if the circumstances were not what she had chosen. Her son Charles owed his success to his mother's suffering, prayers, and labors. This reminded me that as I parent my children in circumstances I would not have chosen, I can trust God who has chosen this path for me.

I would recommend this book to mothers in all seasons of life. Whether you have a child that you have prayed for years to come to the Lord or a newborn baby, there is encouragement for you. Each chapter is concise (Challies knew he was writing to busy mothers) and has reflection questions at the end. This book is perfect to go through with a group of women or in a one-on-one discipling relationship. *Devoted* is a must-read and will be an influential book to all mothers who desire to raise their children to know and love God.

BOOK EXCERPTS

You maybe have heard the phrase before: Behind every great man there's a great woman...sometimes the great woman is not behind the man, but before him.

– "The Hidden Strength of a Weak Mother" p. 9

We need to invite our children into those intimate moments of prayer with God, where we plead for their souls and pray for all of the ways that we want them to follow Christ for their whole life.

– "The Virtue of a Pleading Mother" p. 95

BIBLE READING PLAN

JULY

TAKE UP & READ

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message.
Take Up & Read!

July 1	Psalm 127	July 17	Jeremiah 12
July 2	Deuteronomy 28:1-14	July 18	2 Corinthians 4:7-18
July 3	Proverbs 3:1-10	July 19	Psalm 74
July 4	1 Thess. 4:1-12	July 20	Psalm 73
July 5	Ephesians 5:22-6:4	July 21	Psalm 57
July 6	Psalm 128	July 22	Psalm 58
July 7	Psalm 38	July 23	Psalm 34
July 8	Psalm 39	July 24	1 Samuel 23
July 9	2 Samuel 12:1-14	July 25	1 Peter 1:1-9
July 10	Isaiah 53	July 26	1 Samuel 24
July 11	Luke 18:9-17	July 27	Psalm 57
July 12	Psalm 32		
July 13	Psalm 38		
July 14	Psalm 73		
July 15	Psalm 72		
July 16	Job 21		

*Sermons in Bold

NEW MEMBERS



ISAAC & SAVANNAH
ANDERSON



WADE CURTIS



MADI HOPPE



TIMOTHY KIM



WADE & FAITH
LINDSEY



ISABELLA SALAS

"We must grasp once again, the idea of church membership as being
the membership of the body of Christ and as the biggest honour
which can come a man's way in this world."

MARTIN LLYOD-JONES



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