

# CHRIST CHURCH OF INDIA, DALLAS, TX

## SEPTEMBER 2024



## FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

The familiar rhythm of the school year has returned! Early morning wake-up calls, carpool chaos, and the relentless pace of classes, homework, and projects are once again upon us. But fear not, dear students and parents! This edition of Illuminate is here to offer a helping hand, packed with valuable insights and practical advice to navigate the academic grind. The theme of this edition is Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The “fear of the Lord” signifies a deep respect, reverence, and awe for God’s power and authority. We must learn fearing the Lord is not a natural thing for you and for me. We need someone to teach us what it means to fear the Lord. We need someone to model it for us. It is difficult for us to really wrap our arms around even though the concept of the fear of the Lord is commanded stated or referenced hundreds of times in both the Old and New Testament. However, be assured that the fear of the Lord keeps the fear of the world at bay.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the parents, kids and college youth who contributed their expertise and time to make this edition a success. Let's tackle the new school year together!

**Newsletter Team**

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## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

How do we attain wisdom? The first step is the fear of the Lord. “Two people may possess essentially the same knowledge,” wrote author Jerry Bridges in *The Joy of Fearing God*. “One person views this knowledge as a means of acquiring position, power, or possessions, and uses it to that end. The other person sees it as a gift from God and as a stewardship to be used to serve Him.” What makes the difference? “The fear of God must be the foundation upon which knowledge is built. It is the fear of the Lord that gives us the right perspective and prompts us to use it for the right end.”

### Fearing an All-Powerful and Loving God.

It can mean “respect” in the way a servant fears his master and serves him faithfully ([Joshua 24:14](#)). *Fear* can also mean the reverence or awe a person feels in the presence of greatness ([Isaiah 6:5](#)). The fear of the Lord is a combination of all of these.

The Bible frequently calls on believers to “fear the Lord.” Remember, fear is not bad. Fear can keep you spiritually safe. Fear of the Lord can be defined as “the continual awareness that our loving heavenly Father is watching and evaluating everything we think, say, and do” ([Matthew 12:36](#); [Psalm 139:2](#); [Jeremiah 12:3](#)).

### To have wisdom is to grow and mature

We begin to distinguish between good and evil. We can do what is right and just. We become more self-controlled. We make good judgment. We are ready to learn more and to keep growing.

### The fear of the Lord is the necessary condition for all true knowledge and wisdom.

To start learning wisdom, we need to seek a close relationship with the Lord. This is why one author defines the fear of the Lord as “a loving reverence for God that includes submission to his lordship and to the commands of his word.”

### Fear or Respect?

Some would say that fearing God is just another way of saying you should respect God. Your relationship with God should go deeper than fear. You should also grow to trust his mercy, kindness, and forgiveness. And that means fear still should have its proper place in your relationship with him. Fearing God can keep you safe when you face serious temptations.

Rev. Dr. Ninan Verghese

## FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

The scripture contains numerous verses that discuss the fear of the Lord and its connection to wisdom. The word “fear” appears 437 times, while the phrase “fear of the Lord” is mentioned 24 times. So, what makes this concept so special? What does it truly mean? The Bible doesn't seem to offer one clear specific crisp definition.

In all these verses, a common theme emerges: a person who understands what it means to fear the Lord exhibits certain behaviors and attitudes. Let's explore these one by one:

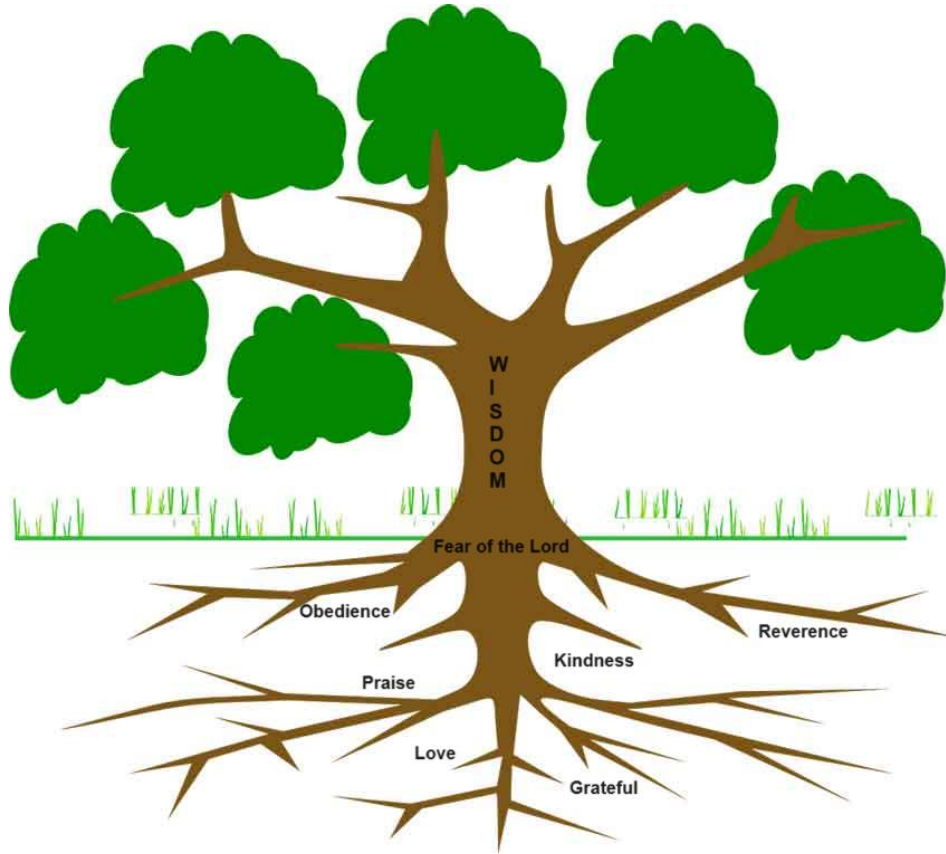
**Proverbs 8:13** says, *"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate"*. Absolutely, the fear of the Lord encourages a person to live a life aligned with moral and ethical principles. This reverence for God often leads to making choices that reflect integrity, kindness, and obedience to His teachings. It acts as a guiding principle, helping individuals avoid actions and behaviors that are considered evil or disobedient.

**Psalm 111:10** says, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endures forever"*. The fear of the Lord often leads to a life of obedience and continuous praise. When someone truly reveres God, they strive to follow His commandments and live according to His will. This deep respect and awe for God naturally result in actions that reflect His teachings and a heart that is constantly grateful and worshipful.

**Proverbs 2:5** says, *"Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God"*. The fear of the Lord is often described as the foundation for gaining true knowledge and understanding of God. This reverence and respect for God opens the door to deeper insights and wisdom that align with His teachings. This verse emphasizes that a proper reverence for God leads to a deeper, more profound understanding of His nature and will.

The fear of the Lord is the posture of the heart of one who comprehends the holiness, might, power, and majesty of the God who upholds all things. It is demonstrated by a profound love for the Lord that motivates acts of kindness and goodness, while actively striving to obey His commands and overcome sinful nature. Walking in fear of the Lord involves spending time in listening to God through His word, self-discipline in prayer, worship, daily repentance, seeking accountability, and graciously accepting godly correction.

## **FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM**



It is acknowledging our complete reliance on the Holy One, rejoicing in the salvation of our Savior, and finding comfort in the Holy Spirit. The fear of the Lord humbles us before the Almighty, even as the scarred hands of Jesus lift us up. To walk in the fear of the Lord is to be constantly aware of His presence in every moment, and by doing so, rejecting the fear of the world.

As you journey closer and deeper with the Lord, He grants wisdom that provides an elevated perspective on life, helping you discern right from wrong. This wisdom is a gift from the Holy Spirit, transforming your thinking, actions, and words. The Holy Spirit works within you, guiding you towards a life that reflects God's will and purpose.

**David Doss**

## CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS

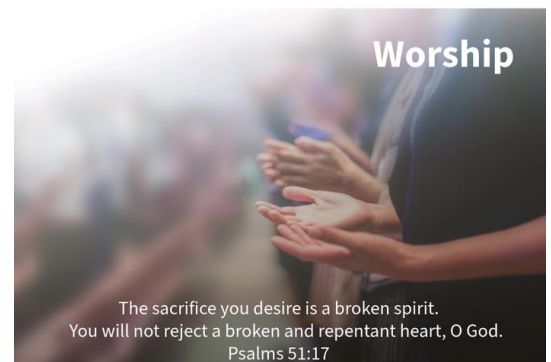
### Are You Loving, Living, and Rejoicing?

In last month's article, we discussed how and why Christians can live in Freedom, Power, and Hope in Christ. A Christian can live in Freedom because Christ has removed our punishment for our sins, which is God's Grace. A Christian can live with power because Christ has sent the Holy Spirit to live in us, which is God's Provision. We can live with Hope as Christ will come again to take us to our eternal home, and this is God's Assurance. Now that we have this confidence in Christ, we cannot live carelessly. In this article, let us focus on the three essential aspects of living meaningfully and purposefully in our Christian journey.

#### First, a Christian Should Worship God.

Worshipping God is not just attending church on a Sunday morning; it is more than that. It is loving God with heart, mind, and soul, seeking God, and thanking God for his goodness! Also, it is keeping our mind and heart only on our God, and nothing else should come between us and God. (Exodus 20:3). We should worship no other gods and keep no idols. For some Indian religions, it is easy to worship all gods! As Christians, we should only worship our God and Lord Jesus Christ, the only God worthy of worship.

Several religions, distractions, idols, and modern-day philosophies surround us today that could confuse us, saying, 'All gods are the same.' We can accept the people of other religions and show the love that Christ has shown to us. But we must be clear and firm that There is only ONE GOD. And we should **Love and Worship God First!**



#### Second, a Christian Should Live in the Fellowship of Believers.

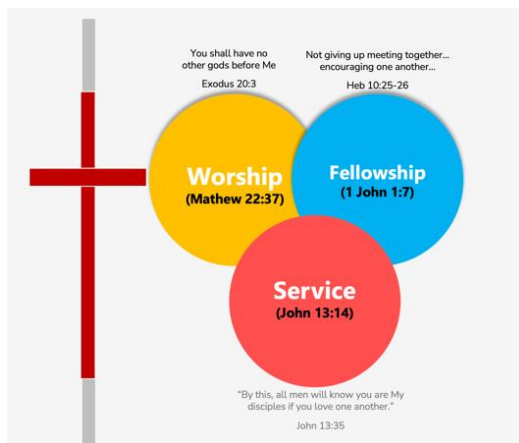
Christian living is community living. We should regularly come together in fellowship and prayer and enrich ourselves in the Word of God. We should encourage and love genuinely and humbly to serve one another. Usually, the first sign of Christians going away from faith is losing the fellowship, then they lose the Word of God, and then they lose the Worship. It starts slow; sometimes, we don't feel like going to church; sometimes, we don't feel like talking to anybody; no matter what we think or feel, we should never give up fellowship. So let us not

give up on fellowshiping with one another and opportunities like Prayer Meetings, Sunday Classes, and, more importantly, Sunday Worship. Encourage one another, pray with one another, laugh with one another, and

## CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS

cry with one another. (Romans 12:15). This is how we grow together; this is how we learn from each other. Love others unconditionally as Christ loved us. As Christians, we love God first, and then we **Love Others Unconditionally!**

**Third, a Christian Should Serve as Christ Served.** When our relationship with Christ strengthens through worship and our nurturing of the Word of God grows through Fellowship, it is easy to serve one another, both within and outside the church. We, as Christians, are called to Serve! When we go to a restaurant, we see servers (or we call them waiters!), and they are always ready to serve. You rarely see a grumpy waiter; serving brings rejoicing! Waiting here means we should always be READY to SERVE. Serve to the extent of bending our knees and washing other people's feet (John 13:14). We should also serve others without prejudice. Remember, Jesus Christ washed the feet of the disciples, including Judas's feet, knowing he was going to betray him later. We should serve humbly when we serve, not develop a name for ourselves or wait to be appreciated or recognized! We serve in the Kingdom of God; God has already recognized us as Children of God! What else do we need? Let us **Be Ready to Serve Joyfully!**



**In conclusion,** I ask these questions to myself, and I want to share them with you to ponder and evaluate our Christian Living.

1. Do you love God first? (John 14:15). When did you last pour out your heart to God in worship?
2. Do you love others unconditionally? When was the last time you encouraged someone? (Heb 10:25-26).
3. Do you have the heart to serve others without making a headline for yourself?

**Most Importantly,** we worship, fellowship, and serve, not to earn God's Grace, but we do all these in return for God's grace and love.

We cannot earn God's grace; we can only respond to his Love and grace through our Worship, Fellowship, and Service. We **give** our hearts to Worship God. We **give** our time and talents to nurture Fellowship. We **give** our resources to serve other's needs. Let us also be careful not to look down on others who don't worship, fellowship, and serve, but let us encourage one another. Let our Worship, Fellowship, and Service bring Glory to God's Name!

Ebby Emmanuel

## THIS IS THE STORY; THIS IS THE SONG

I have decided to follow Jesus – Sadhu Sundar Singh

We all know a lot of songs. But do we know the origin, circumstance, and history and life altering moments of the lyrics that made it into a song to be sung down the generations? Here's new series we are starting with this edition where we will learn about the story behind a familiar song. Hope this series helps us to understand the meaning behind the verses and how they relate to our everyday life.

Certain songs are the echoes of the human heart, longings of the soul, and passions and timeless expressions of people which may be beyond this world and dimension. Such are many songs we sing in our Churches. Specifically, many of the Hymns were written under life changing, world moving, gut-wrenching, and dimension altering circumstances of people's real lives.

One such song is the hymn titled "**I have decided to follow Jesus**". This is an old hymn penned down by an Indian. About 150 years ago, there was a great revival in Wales. As a result of this, many missionaries came to Assam, a region in north-east India to spread the gospel. Assam was comprised of hundreds of tribes who were primitive and aggressive head-hunters.

Into these hostile communities, came a group of missionaries from the American Baptist Missions spreading the message of love, peace and hope in Jesus Christ. Naturally, they were not welcomed here. One missionary succeeded in converting a man, his wife, and two children. This man's faith proved contagious, and many villagers began to accept Christianity.

Furious, the village chief summoned all the villagers. He then called the family who had first converted to renounce their faith in public or face death. Moved by the Holy Spirit, the man said: "**I have decided to follow Jesus.**" Enraged at the refusal of the man, the chief ordered his archers to arrow down the two children. As both boys lay twitching on the floor, the chief asked, "Will you deny your faith? You have lost both your children. You will lose your wife too."



## THIS IS THE STORY; THIS IS THE SONG

But the man replied: **“Though no one joins me, still I will follow.”** The chief was beside himself with fury and ordered his wife to be arrow-ed down. In a moment she joined her two children in death. Now he asked for the last time, “I will give you one more opportunity to deny your faith and live.” In the face of death, the man said the final memorable lines: **“The cross before me, the world behind me. No turning back.”**

He was shot dead like the rest of his family. But with their deaths, a miracle took place. The chief who had ordered the killings was later moved by the faith of the man. He wondered, “Why should this man, his wife and two children die for a Man who lived in a far-away land on another continent some 2,000 years ago? There must be some remarkable power behind the family’s faith, and I too want to taste that faith.” In a spontaneous confession of faith, he declared, **“I too belong to Jesus Christ!”** When the crowd heard this from the mouth of their chief, the whole village accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The song **“I have decided to follow Jesus”** is based on the last words of **Nokseng**, the man from Assam, India, as he and his family were martyred as they placed their faith in God. This song has become the song of this community of people in Assam for generations. The formation of these words into a hymn is attributed to the late Indian missionary **Sadhu Sundar Singh**, as follows.

**I have decided to follow Jesus (x3)**

**No turning back, no turning back.**

**Though none go with me, still I will follow (x3)**

**No turning back, no turning back.**

**The cross before me, the world behind me (x3)**

**No turning back, no turning back.**

**Johnny Premkumar**



## PARENT ROUND TABLE

Hello kids & Parents, here's some pearls of wisdom from few CCI parents (CA John Uncle, Jeba Emmanuel, John Clement, Nithya Solomon, Eban Rufus & Rubin) looking back at their student days. We asked them three questions going back to their student/parent life. We hope this helps you in making great choices.



### Question #1

**What spiritual practice or discipline did your parents model or teach you during your student years that has had a lasting impact on your life and continues to shape your spiritual journey today?**



During my student life, we grew up with our mom because of my dad's active duty. My mom used to get up 4:00AM almost every day and used to have personal Bible reading and prayers. Then around 4:30 AM, she used to wake us up and have combined prayers by everyone. We used to attend the weekly prayer and Bible studies on Wednesday evening at our church. We never do any homework on Saturday evenings usually. We used to have choir practice and cottage prayer meetings on Saturday evening. Rain or shine, on Sunday we all attend church services. My mom used to do her own ministry. She taught me the value of sacrificial giving. But it is painful to see how it is misusing now a days.

During my student years, my parents modeled several spiritual practices that have had a lasting impact on my life. Through both their actions and teachings, they emphasized the importance of prayer, Bible reading, and giving. From a young age, I witnessed them reading the Bible and praying daily. They were deeply involved in supporting mission organizations, aiding families in need, hosting prayer meetings focused on missionaries, and participating in medical missions—my mother was especially active in this area.



When I visited my grandparents during summer and winter vacations, I observed their dedication to prayer, including three daily prayer times with a special focus on missions and supporting various causes. Even as my grandfather's eyesight deteriorated, he continued to read the Bible with determination. These practices — prayer, Bible reading, and giving—have profoundly shaped my spiritual journey and continue to influence how I raise my own children.

## PARENT ROUND TABLE



Both my parents emphasized the importance of prayer and modeled it in their lives. One of my fondest memories growing up is our family prayer time. We would gather in the living room, start with a couple of songs, read a chapter from the Bible, and close with prayer. Everyone participated and took turns praying. This practice helped me seek God first and depend on Him for everything in my life. While I didn't fully appreciate it at the time, looking back, it provided a sense of safety and security that I now value deeply. This tradition has continued in my own household, bringing our family together before God.

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Our Parents are the only ones who genuinely wants everything better for us. I thank God for such parents in my life. Though my generation are traditional Christian, and my parents surrendered their life for Christ in 1983. I still remember we used to have morning prayer and night prayer before supper. My sister and I must memorize bible verses daily. Most of the days my memory verse would be Psalms 23:1. spiritual practices or disciplines modeled by their parents during their formative years have a profound and lasting impact. Such practices often instill a sense of grounding, purpose, and connection to something greater, guiding us throughout our spiritual journeys.

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One key spiritual practice I learned from my mom as a child is Bible study and journaling. During my childhood days, I have always seen my mom taking notes during sermons. She would always be the last one to leave church after a Bible study because she would stay back to talk to the preacher on any questions or ambiguous passages in the Bible. She was committed to understanding the Bible within its historical, cultural, and literary context and discovering what God's Word meant in every life situation. Though it was so annoying as a kid to wait even longer after a long Bible study, I understood that the Bible needs to be studied, not just read. This habit continues to shape my spiritual journey for better or worse. Oftentimes, I'm stuck with certain verses and feel frustrated without proper explanation. At the same time, God reminds me that there is joy in investing time and effort to understand God's word.



## PARENT ROUND TABLE

### **Prayer Before Any New Beginning**

My parents always prayed before starting anything new—whether it was a school year, a new job, or even a family trip. They sought God’s guidance and blessing for every new endeavor. This instilled in me the habit of seeking God’s direction and relying on Him in all new ventures, reminding me that every beginning is an opportunity to trust in God’s plan.



### **Hospitality and Generosity**

My parents frequently welcomed people into our home, whether it was for fellowship, hosting Bible studies, or offering a meal to someone in need. They also practiced generosity in giving to the church and those less fortunate. This developed in me the value of being warm and welcoming to others, and it taught me to view my resources as opportunities to bless and serve others, fostering a spirit of generosity in my own life.

### **Personal Devotion Time**

My parents consistently maintained their own personal Bible reading and Prayer time. This inspired me to prioritize personal devotion, which has become a vital part of my spiritual growth.

### **Faith in Action**

My Parents emphasized living out faith through acts of kindness, justice, and service to others. This gradually imparted in me the belief that true faith is demonstrated through actions, leading me to engage in social justice and service.


### **Intercessory Prayer**

My parents were committed to praying for others, maintaining a list of prayer needs. This helped me understand the significance of intercessory prayer, fostering a compassionate heart for others.

## PARENT ROUND TABLE

### Question #2

**Looking back on your student days, what one discipline or habit has proven to be the most instrumental in shaping your success, resilience, and overall well-being in studies?**



During my entire studies from elementary school to college days I never got any special tutoring on any subjects. During my primary classes I lost the National Merritt Scholarship Exam, only in general knowledge for only a couple of very hard questions. It was very tragic as well as challenging. When I was in junior high, I got the same selection to appear in the exam. Just to make my general knowledge stronger I used to read three national newspapers from page to page and write it down. As we know, there was no internet, Google search or even good library to refer. That was the hardest challenge I faced at that time. As I was growing up and preparing for competitive tests and interviews, my eldest brother was my mentor and trainer. Success in my life gave me more disappointments and rejection, isolation, denial, agony, regarding admissions and appointments. The painful reality is I experienced all these from our own communities.

Looking back on my student days, I believe that prayer and maintaining a positive attitude were the most instrumental in shaping my success, resilience, and overall well-being in my studies. I wasn't initially a standout student, but I found strength and encouragement in certain Bible verses that continue to inspire me today, such as James 1:5, Psalm 16:8, Psalm 27:14, and Psalm 62:5-6. I attribute my growth and achievements to God's grace and the mindset I cultivated through these practices.



Giving first priority to God, obeying and honoring your parents (Ephesians 6) which is the first commandment made my life a success. I'm thankful to God and my parents for helping me stay on track.

## PARENT ROUND TABLE



Prayer and God's word have been instrumental in shaping my success, resilience, and overall well-being. I had the privilege of studying in Christian schools and colleges, surrounded by Christian teachers and friends who encouraged me to study God's word. Most of my school and all of my college days were spent in hostels, where I learned to depend on God while away from my family. Daily devotional time and journaling prayer requests and God's promises are habits I developed during high school and college, which I still follow. These practices have helped me rely on God and His word to face life's challenges and find encouragement during difficult times.

To be honest, I often struggled with keeping routines during my student days. As someone who used to get distracted so easily, I always had to plan my schedules ahead of time on what to read each day and force myself to stick to the planned schedule, and that is how I became good at planning for SMART short- and long-term goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. To this day, detailed planning and the ability to transform initial ambiguous ideas into concrete plans and actionable tasks are some of my strengths that have helped me to achieve my career goals.



### **Trust in God's Plan**

I consistently reminded myself to trust in God's plan and timing, especially during challenging or stressful periods. This trust helped me stay resilient and hopeful, allowing me to approach obstacles with faith and perseverance, knowing that God was in control.

## PARENT ROUND TABLE

### Question #3

**What strategies do/did you employ as a parent to effectively regulate and balance your child's exposure to electronic devices, social media, and movies, ensuring a healthy and positive impact on their physical, emotional, and mental well-being?**



When I started living in Dallas, I personally studied many of the TV SHOWS and tried to find out what was the message they are trying to implement. How it affects our lives. What I found was, it is creeping in our lives very slowly. Back in India in 70s or 80s we hardly had a radio to listen football and cricket game. Middle of 70s we started purchasing TVs. On Sundays all attractive TV shows started o Sundays, including games. Yes, I strongly and firmly believe that modern electronics devices, social media, affects our emotional and mental well-being. Just for one example I used to listen one radio channel on the way to work. Every single day they used to bring some highly educated (so called) guests to challenge my beliefs system. The more we advance forward, the more we face adverse in the wrong ways, completely broken down and lost.

When the kids were younger, we established clear boundaries for when they could use electronics and when they needed to focus on schoolwork. Importantly, we avoided using their favorite things as incentives to get them to stop using the electronic devices or TV.

In cases where they encountered movies or books that we didn't initially agree with, we would have discussions about the storyline, language, and characters, comparing them to our family values and biblical principles. This approach helped them understand and reflect on the content critically.



Additionally, both of my children were actively involved in sports and band throughout their school years. These activities provided a structured schedule and kept them engaged in healthy, enriching experiences that supported their emotional, mental, and physical well-being.



To answer this I question myself, as a parent are we setting a right example to our child? With ever improving technology it is impossible to avoid technology in our everyday life, but we can discipline ourselves to be its master rather than controlled by it. For our child we had Set Clear Boundaries and Rules, We Encouraged Screen-Free Activities, we tried to Model Healthy Behavior, Encouraged Social Interaction more, We were Flexible and Adaptable. Balancing digital exposure requires ongoing effort, communication, and flexibility, but with these strategies, you can help foster a healthy relationship with technology for your child.

## PARENT ROUND TABLE

As parents, we are not perfect, but we have tried to establish healthy boundaries such as:



- No electronics, games, or movies during weekdays.
- No social media until high school, to ensure they understood the responsibilities and consequences.
- Establishing phone boundaries, such as keeping phones away from the bed and not using them while talking to people.
- Encouraging the use of paper books instead of electronic gadgets, e.g., reading the Bible.
- Reminding them that what we feed our minds directly influences our behavior and

character.

- Following the same advice in our own lives by setting boundaries and using technology to connect with family and friends

- Spending time outdoors for walks and fresh air.

While we may not have always succeeded perfectly, our goal has been to create a balanced and healthy environment with God's help!

As parents of a 4-year-old, Rufus and I are just getting started with the concept of restricting screen time for our daughter. We might not have learned all the tricks yet, but for now we don't encourage the usage of personal gadgets such as a phone or iPad; instead, we insist she watch her shows on TV, so it's more of a family affair than it being her personal viewing time. Also, we try to restrict her TV time to a maximum of 2 hours each day, and we always encourage her to earn her TV time by doing simple chores around the house. The other important change we had to make was to restrict our own screen times. We were called out by our 4-year-old for the hypocrisy when we first tried to limit her screen time while not caring about adults' screen times.



### Creating Device-Free Spaces and Times

Set specific times and areas in your home as device-free, such as during meals, family time, and bedtime. This helps promote quality interactions and a balanced lifestyle. This practice encourages mindful engagement with family and personal growth, fostering deeper connections and intentional living.

*Thank You Parents for your insightful thoughts. Surely there's lot of take aways.*

## FUEL FOR YOUR SOUL

Hey middle and high schoolers, listen up! Your seniors, who have been in your shoes and emerged victorious, are here to share some words of encouragement and advice.



Here is a verse from the Word of God for us to be encouraged this school year. “Let perseverance finish its work so you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If you lack wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.” James 1:4-6 - **from Bernice David**

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As we enter another school year, let's commit our plans to God and let God establish His plans for us! I wish you all a wonderful year!

“All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives. Commit your works to the Lord, And your plans will be established.” Proverbs 16:2-3 - **from Chris Mathew**



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I want to encourage you all through the following Bible Verse:

“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time, he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.” -1 Peter 5:5 - **from Jeremy Premkumar**



## FUEL FOR YOUR SOUL

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. - Phil. 4:6 - **from Joshua David**

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Wishing you all a wonderful school year! Let us trust in God as we step into another school year! Let God be our strength and guide!

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” - Joshua 1:9 - **from Ethan Emmanuel**

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“Nothing is as significant as you make it out to be when you’re in school. There may be moments when you get so stressed about grades or what others think that you can’t focus on anything else. But it’s only after your school life ends that you realize it wasn’t as big of a deal as it felt. I’m not saying that grades don’t matter; just don’t let it overtake your entire life. Have some hobbies and fun. Also, don’t compare yourself to others. And if other people start comparing you, ignore them. It’s your life, not theirs, so make Godly choices based on how you want to live. At the end of the day, the time you spend in school is only a small fraction of your life, so relax and use the opportunities God has blessed you with in a way that doesn’t harm you. Work hard but do what feels right for you according to the Word of God.”



**Thank You seniors for your encouraging words**

## LIFE @ CCI

### Vacation Bible School – Camp Firelight



## LIFE @ CCI



# Illuminate

Back to School 2024

## LIFE @ CCI

*First Fruits – Praise God from whom all blessings flow*



## PRAYING FOR MISSIONS

Our church meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month to pray for various missions. There could be few questions that could come to mind. Why do we pray for missions? How could we as a small gathering pray for so many missions? Would our prayer make an impact to the missions? Here are some insights into why we should pray and how such prayers can impact our church, missions and missionaries.

**Spiritual Empowerment:** Prayer brings spiritual strength and empowerment to missionaries, enabling them to overcome challenges and share the Gospel effectively.

**Guidance and Wisdom:** Prayer helps missionaries discern God's will and direction, making wise decisions in their ministry.

**Protection and Safety:** Prayer provides protection from harm, danger, and spiritual attacks, ensuring missionaries' safety and well-being.

**Fruitfulness and Impact:** Prayer leads to a fruitful and impactful ministry, as God works through missionaries to transform lives and communities.

**Unity and Collaboration:** Praying for missions fosters unity among believers, promoting collaboration and support for God's global work.

**Faith and Trust:** Praying for missions cultivates faith and trust in God's sovereignty, provision, and guidance.

**World Evangelization:** Prayer accelerates world evangelization, as God answers prayers and opens doors for the Gospel to reach new people and places.

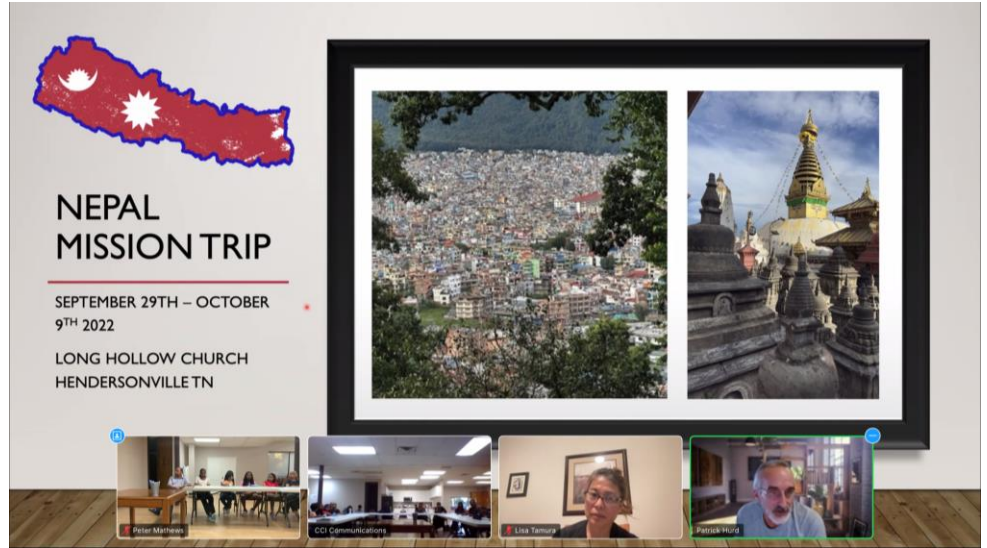
**Encouragement and Perseverance:** Prayer encourages missionaries, helping them persevere through challenges and remain committed to their calling.

Remember, prayer is the fuel for effective missions. By praying, you partner with God and missionaries to advance His Kingdom worldwide.



## PRAYING FOR MISSIONS

In August, we came together in prayer with Mr. Patrick and Ms. Lisa, colleagues of our member Sasi Chellappan. Patrick is a member of Long Hollow Church in TN. He recently went on a mission trip to Nepal and shared his experiences from the Nepal mission field. The mission field where the Church's missionaries work is called Gauriphanta. Jared and Michelle, a missionary couple, are working among the people in this village along with local evangelists. Nepal presents many challenges for proclaiming the gospel. Openly preaching is not allowed, and anyone known to have accepted Jesus would be ex-communicated from the community. Evangelists also face opposition from both the community and the authorities. During his mission trip, they had to tell people that they were just hiking around the village and not preaching. Despite the challenges, God was with them on the trip, and they were able to share the gospel personally with 373 people, out of which 139 accepted Jesus. Let us remember this Nepal mission and its missionaries (**Jared, Michelle & their kids**) in our daily prayers. Please join us in praying for missions on the 3rd Friday of every month.



**20**  
SEP  
7:00 PM  
**MISSIONS PRAYER**  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

**WEDNESDAYS**  
9:00 PM  
**CORPORATE PRAYER**  
ZOOM

**18**  
OCT  
7:00 PM  
**MISSIONS PRAYER**  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

**SATURDAYS**  
10:00 AM  
**FASTING PRAYER**  
ZOOM  
6:30 PM  
**FAMILY PRAYER**  
ZOOM OR MEMBER HOME

## BACK TO SCHOOL REPORT

### *Light the Fire for a New Beginning*

Flip the calendar, it's August, and one big routine is starting ... school! After a long summer of sleep and fun, many students don't know how to feel. While many are jumping up and down with supplies ready and backpacks packed, not everyone is excited about the upcoming school year. School can bring a lot of stress and anxiety for many people, but if they know that God is always with them, they'll be fine. So, let's see what some students from our church think about the new school year; let's dive in!

First up, we have 3rd grader **Santrina**. She seems really excited to make new acquaintances and learn more about more subjects this year in school. **Santrina** also stated that, "... when I was nervous to go to school, God helped me to meet my teacher and not be afraid." She feels confident knowing that God is in her life. Her main goals are to be vigorous and healthy, listen to the teacher, and to learn more academically. She also wants to get good grades. If she were to give an advice to someone about the new school year, she would say, " 'It's okay,' 'I will help you,' and 'you can do it!' "Now that's very uplifting!

Next down the line, we have 6th grader **Nevan** who is willing to give his answers. As Nevan is going to middle school, he is obviously thinking of his heap of schoolwork. But thinking about VBS's theme verse, Psalm 56:3, he says it has changed his perspective on going to school. He goes on to say, "It has [Psalms 56:3 has helped him], because I know that wherever I go, whatever I do, there is always someone watching over me," and he has confidence on taking on his first year of middle school. Now that is powerful! He wants to be a proficient scholar with high grades and has a strategy to breakdown his homework: by dividing it between different days. That is good thinking there! And if he were to help a worried friend about school, he would tell them, " 'That someone is always watching over them no matter where they are and what they do.' "

Up next, we have **Joshua** who is going to 7th grade. In his next year of middle school, Joshua wants to get good grades, caring friends, and nice teachers. He thinks that Psalm 56:3 has changed his perspective as he says, "... whenever I am afraid of a test or an exam I put my trust in the Lord." He also goes on to say that he prays to God every day, so he is confident about the next school year. It is very important to pray every day. He thinks it would be a bit difficult turning in all his work on the due date, but he thinks he can overcome that by setting up a time to do his work every day. And if he were to give advice to a stressed friend, Joshua says that he would tell them to pray to God and read the Bible, recommending Psalm 56:3. That would help a student who is anxious!

## BACK TO SCHOOL REPORT

Now, we have an incoming college student, **Joann**, who is ready with more answers to some of our questions. Like anyone who would be going to college, Joann is expecting a lot of change. She is also anticipating a lot of harder classes and responsibilities. She also says that Psalms 56:3 from VBS helps her stay on the bright side rather than thinking about whatever makes her anxious. In her first year of college, she wants to learn as much as she can grasp and always put in effort. When she was asked about her biggest challenge, she said this: “My biggest challenge will be to not overwhelm myself. I just need to put my trust in God’s plan.” That is a good way to solve problems. And she says that the best advice that she can give anyone is to always plan ahead.

Finally, we have **Bernice**, who is moving on to her next year of college. Like most other students moving on to higher grades, Bernice is expecting a lot of homework and new activities. She also says, “even with all the work I would like to keep meditating on the word of God daily so that I may remain grounded in my faith.” That is something that is important and everyone can work on. She says that even though she was stressed about her next year, she knew that she could trust in God. Bernice’s goals are to excel in her academics and building a closer relationship with God. When looking at a challenge for her, Bernice thinks that her long shifts and midterms are going to be burdensome, but she thinks that preparing comprehensively and trusting God can lead her to success. But to give advice to an anxious friend, she says that she would recommend the verse Proverbs 21:31(read it if you have time!). She says that the verse talks about how even if you prepare, God is the one who leads us to victory!

So, as we can all see, most people are expecting a lot more homework and responsibilities over the next school year. But by putting their faith in God, everyone’s confident that they can take on the new academic year. While some are wanting good friends and teachers and others are expecting better grades, everyone are remembering Psalms 56:3 so that they can push and excel through school. But to anyone who is anxious or is struggling in school, just take the advice from our great scholars! For example, read the Bible, pray, prepare beforehand, remember that God is always watching over you, and that you can do it! This is **Ryan Zachariah Isaac**, signing off!

**Mast. Ryan Isaac**

*If you would like to contribute to Kid’s Corner, please reach out Mrs. Cynthia John.*



## WHO? WHEN? WHAT? WHY?

As we journey together spiritually, it is imperative that we dig deep into the word. This series is aimed to encourage all of us to share our thoughts to deepen and strengthen each other. It will feature one verse each from Old and New Testament with a question about the verse. You can send your views by email or submit the form.

### Old Testament

#### Proverbs 26:4-5 New International Version (NIV)

4 **Do not answer a fool** according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him.

5 **Answer a fool** according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.

**Well, verse 4 tells not to answer but verse 5 says otherwise. Why? Should we answer or not?**

Email [newsletter@ccidallas.org](mailto:newsletter@ccidallas.org) or submit here <https://forms.gle/6cejGA5AP6DNh9jD9>

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### New Testament

#### Mark 4 12-14 New International Version (NIV)

12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.

13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, **because it was not the season for figs.**

14 Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

**It was not the season for figs. Why then did Jesus curse the fig tree?**

Email [newsletter@ccidallas.org](mailto:newsletter@ccidallas.org) or submit here <https://forms.gle/T7YrEp4WibNE9BkCA>

*Know of any curious bible verse which can be featured here? Please send it thru email to [newsletter@ccidallas.org](mailto:newsletter@ccidallas.org)*



# Illuminate

Back to School 2024

## TRIVIA CORNER

### Trivia #1

BTL has gone digital. Below is the link for Trivia 1. Starting with this edition, we have simplified it with multiple choice answers. Trivia answers and Leader board will be published via email to all members.

### Grade 3-5

<https://forms.gle/WKdThGDy4NKp4mpg6>

### Grade 6-Youth

<https://forms.gle/ScknzP3771wx64Bg9>

### Rules of BTL

Right answer - 10 points | 5 Early birds - 10 bonus points | First all correct - 25 bonus points

Quiz links will be online till Oct 10<sup>th</sup> , 23:59 PM



[newsletter@ccidallas.org](mailto:newsletter@ccidallas.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**13**

SEP

7:00 PM

**YFF GATHERING**

PRAVEEN & LILY'S HOME

**20**

SEP

7:00 PM

**MISSIONS PRAYER**

FELLOWSHIP HALL

**11**

OCT

7:00 PM

**YFF GATHERING**

JERIN & JANCY'S HOME

**18**

OCT

7:00 PM

**MISSIONS PRAYER**

FELLOWSHIP HALL

SUNDAYS

9:00 AM

**WORSHIP SERVICE**

SANCTUARY

11:00 AM

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

CLASSROOMS

**BIBLE STUDY**

FELLOWSHIP HALL

WEDNESDAYS

9:00 PM

**CORPORATE PRAYER**

ZOOM

SATURDAYS

10:00 AM

**FASTING PRAYER**

ZOOM

6:30 PM

**FAMILY PRAYER**

ZOOM OR MEMBER HOME