

THE BRAVE SPARROW QUARTERLY

VIGILANCE

ISSUE 3, JULY 2024



FEATURES:

WALK WITH GOD

PREPARE THE WAY

REMNANT

THE ATTENTIVE WAY BY EDDIE TAYLOR

9 DESCRIPTIONS OF DWELLERS

FEAR OF THE LORD

BIBLE STUDY: RIGHTEOUSNESS

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“
*The salvation of the righteous
is from the LORD;
he is their stronghold in
the time of trouble.*

Psalm 37:39

”

NOTE FROM ADRIENNE

In this third issue of *Vigilance*, the recurring theme is righteousness. I'll be honest. I am intimidated by this subject. It's multifaceted, easily misunderstood, and often bogged down in religious jargon—three reasons to avoid writing about it. But I couldn't shake it. Righteousness is a key component to preparing as the bride of Christ. As always, God has gone before us, making the way. He is so gracious. Let me summarize: God made a way for us, his way is perfect (right), and now, we prepare the way for him. What an honor!

The guest contributor this quarter is Eddie Taylor. He has shared an excerpt from his devotional, *The Way of Wisdom: A Journey Through the Book of Proverbs*. Get this book! I've never witnessed the pastoral gifting so effortlessly demonstrated than when Eddie is talking, regardless of whether he's preaching, or writing, or in casual conversation over BBQ. Wisdom oozes from his being because he seeks the Lord and devours his word.

Eddie and his wife, Beth, are ministry mentors of mine and the dearest friends. They live and breathe Jesus. The fruit of their lives is massive! And it just keeps multiplying. They will join me again next quarter as we share prayerful impressions for the church in general and for the new year.

To HIM who is able!
Adrienne

What to Expect in Vigilance

Vigilance is a quarterly release. Each issue will contain articles, teachings, prophetic content, and a Bible study. Some material will be from guest contributors, and the rest will be new or revised material from Brave Sparrow. The features are aimed at watching and waiting for Jesus' return and being a readied bride. Thank you for reading.



WALKING WITH GOD

BY ADRIENNE SCOTT, JULY 2024

Righteousness has been a standard from the beginning. God is right—he's perfect (Psalm 18:10). We are made in his image and, therefore, made to be righteous. At salvation, Jesus becomes our righteousness, and as we press in to know him more we continue to transform into his image (2 Corinthians 3:17). Righteous living interlocks with other qualities of God. I like to think of each aspect of God's nature cheering on the others. Can you picture that? Righteousness is cheering us into the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord rooting for us to dive deep into holiness. All of God's nature compels us to maturity—to know him and be found in him (Philippians 3:9). To become more and more like Jesus is the joy of following, of walking with him.

Righteousness can be studied from many perspectives, but for this article, we will start with Noah and what it means to walk with God.

Followers of Jesus, people who walk with God, seek his righteousness. To be precise, *hunger and thirst* for it. Listen to Jesus' instructions.

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.* Matthew 5

Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness. Matthew 6:33

We are made right through Jesus the moment we believe and confess him as our savior, but we spend the rest of our lives learning from him and seeking his ways. I know I say this often, but let me say it again. Following Jesus is a daily choice. I will keep saying it because it's foundational for being ready for the days leading up to Jesus' return and for his actual coming. I personally find it helpful to begin my days with a confession of faith. It goes something like this. *Jesus, thank you for saving me. I say yes to you again. I've got to know you more. Or, I love you, Jesus. I can't do today without you.*

Noah is a good example of daily choosing God. In Matthew 24, as Jesus was answering questions from the disciples, he made mention of Noah. Take a few minutes to read these verses.

But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Matthew 24:36-44

In other words, be vigilant.

Let's now consider a few passages describing the *days of Noah*. It was pretty grave.

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:5

And the Lord regretted that he made man on the earth and it grieved him to his heart. Genesis 6:6

Yikes! Those are heavy comments. They may carry even more weight because of the sin and wickedness we see on the earth today. I don't think it's a stretch to say we are in days *as the days of Noah*.

But!

There was hope. God found Noah. God found a righteous man in the earth who *walked with him*. Noah walked with God like his great-grandfather, Enoch (Genesis 5:21-14). It was through Noah's willingness to listen and obey that God did a saving work.

Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Genesis 6:8

Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. Genesis 6:9

Noah walked with God ””

It's the same for us. There is hope, a *hope of glory*, as Paul states it (Colossians 1:27). When God finds righteous people on the earth, he finds something to partner with and to fulfill his covenant with (Proverbs 29:2). That's why the pursuit of righteousness and being transformed into Jesus' image is crucial as we prepare for his return. Jesus made a way, and when we walk with him, it is certain glory.

In a day and time when wickedness is great on the earth, God is looking for the righteous. He's looking for a people to shut in with, like Noah and his family on the ark. He's looking for people that will walk with him to the ends of the earth. He's looking for a devoted people for his glory to rise and shine on. Wow! Don't you want to be that people? It exceeds earthly riches, promotion, and reputation! Everything outside of the kingdom of heaven is fading, friends. But God's glory isn't going anywhere, and it's so much better.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WALK WITH GOD TODAY?

To walk with God is two-sided. To follow Jesus is to turn away from the world and to stay in his stride.

We, the church in general (individually and collectively), have been entertained and conformed to the world for too long. It can't continue. To have one foot in the world is to be hindered in walking with God. To have one foot in the world is to be *unaware* (Matthew 24:39) of God's movement and his coming. I do not want to be found with one foot in the world when Jesus comes for his bride. I don't want you or any of his church to be found in that scenario. It makes me shudder! I long for the church to be unified in love towards each other as we walk with God wholeheartedly. *Both* feet. As God searches the earth for loyal hearts to his own, may we be found hot on his heels. May we be found leaning on him (Song of Solomon 8:5).

HOW CULTURE INFLUENCES OUR WALK

In his book on Jesus' Parable of the Sower, Bob Sorge writes about the beasts of culture that trample a heart, making it hard and resistant to the Word of God and, ultimately, succumbing to unbelief. No one alive is immune to the beasts of culture. They're everywhere. Sorge writes,

Some cultural beasts include ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, CNN, HBO, Univision, Netflix, Hulu, Discovery Plus, Apple TV, Disney, YouTube, Amazon Prime, Peacock, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Google, Audible, Kindle, podcasts, novels, magazines, radio, etc. When you watch a news anchor on news outlets such as CNN or FOX, set a guard around your heart because you're likely to get trampled. When you allow yourself to watch a movie, you might want to brace yourself because your heart is probably going to get trampled (regardless of the rating.) Many shows blaspheme Jesus' beautiful name or contain violence, sexual content, or expletives. When we consume this kind of content, our hearts get trampled.

Sorge goes on to teach how to break up fallow ground (trampled hearts.) Most importantly, saying the preemptive measure that guards our hearts and keeps them soft is to wash them with the water of the word. That is a deliberate choice.

What I would add to Sorge's insight is to be aware of deception in both blatant and subtle ways*. The days before us will be full of deception (Matthew 24:24, 1 Timothy 3:1-5: 4:1-4, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, etc). We can't allow any space in our hearts for wickedness. Being a vigilant bride looks like devouring the Word of God and letting it lead us (Psalm 43:3). A vigilant bride is sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leadership, hungry for righteousness, and fleeing from evil.

The question that needs an answer is, will we walk with God in this hour?

God is looking for a readied bride who will walk with him. He longs for a righteous people full of the hope of glory. Friends, *let's press in to know him. Let's press hard to know him because his coming is as sure as the dawn* (Hosea 6:3).

*See page 10

Let's look a little closer at blatant and subtle deceptions. There are more types. Like, unbelief is a deception that would fall into a different category. For today, let's start with these opposites.

Blatant Deception

Sin is everywhere, and we know it. We can't be lazy with it. If we are being entertained by the ways of the world in any form, we have to wake up and break off the stupor. Maybe there was a day when editing out the bad content was okay. At least it was an effort. But I'm boldly saying those days are over. Being entertained with worldly treasures is trampling our hearts. Vigilance protects the soil of the heart at all costs. We have to stop playing with sin.

Subtle Deception

The slight perversions that appear as sheep but are wolves instead. The kingdom of darkness will counterfeit everything light. It will twist anything to give it the appearance of good. We must proceed with caution as we live in the world. I watched a thirty-second clip of an interview recently with a well-known voice. It was so close to the truth. It sounded so wise, except it was not rooted in the Word of God. It did not point people to Jesus. It pointed people to themselves, which is idolatry.

Here are a few red flags to watch for with subtle deceptions. They signal to us "use discernment here." What would you add?

- Social Media/Celebrities that profess Jesus/Christianity but post and promote sin. Without judging, practice discernment.
- Social Media and other influences that profess Jesus but are preaching a different gospel. Use discernment. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other perversions of Christianity are not the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Good advice that isn't rooted in Jesus and the narrow way. If it leads to self, run to the Word of God and find the better way. If it leads to another idol, run to the Word of God and find the better way.

I've got good news! We have a comforter and helper! The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. Befriend him!

“

*Blessed are those who
hunger and thirst
for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied*

Matthew 5:6

”

PREPARE THE WAY

BY ADRIENNE SCOTT, JULY 2024

God is looking for righteousness in this generation. Not just a man, like he found with Noah, but a bride for his son, Jesus. A collective, pure, blameless bride that will walk with him until the end. A people that will build or be an ark for him to shut in with, to seal, and to fulfill his covenant with.

Jesus is not looking for a surprise bride. He's looking for a bride who has been making herself ready, who is vigilant with love and holiness. The bride Jesus desires will have evened out the high and low places and will be steadily walking on the highway of holiness.

Only a prepared bride can prepare the way for Jesus.

Following are three passages from the Bible about God's presence, holiness, and preparedness. Each is so good on its own, but connecting them gives us a better, collective view of what the Bible says about preparing the way.

HOW DO WE PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE COMING OF JESUS?

1. Settle for Nothing Less than God's Presence.

Psalm 84 — *Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion, vs 5*

We are called to dwell in God's presence and to be a dwelling place for his presence. As a bride and bridegroom vow to do life together, the church resolves to do life with/in Christ. The psalmist writes that he would rather be a doorkeeper in God's house than be a king in wicked places. Wow!

“ Jesus is not looking for a surprise bride. He's looking for a bride who has been making herself ready, who is vigilant with love...”

That means no coveting. We forfeit our rights to what the world offers. We no longer compare our lives with those vowed to the world. We no longer compete for the treasures of the world or with its kings. We forfeit our rights to what the world has to offer and bind, as in put a ring on it, ourselves to our heavenly bridegroom—Jesus and his kingdom.

This vow is strict and narrow, but it's not without reward.

- We find a home in his presence, vs 3
- One day in his presence is better than a thousand elsewhere, vs 10
- We go from strength to strength, vs 7
- The Lord is our sun and shield, and he gives grace and glory, vs 11

2. Walk on the Way of Holiness.

Isaiah 35 — *And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness...the redeemed shall walk there, vs 8-9*

The Way of Holiness has been prepared for us. Isn't that amazing? The way to being a ready bride has already been laid. And the way we prepare for Jesus' return has already been cut for us. All we have to do is enter through the *door of sheep*. It is Jesus—he is *the way, and the truth, and the life* (John 10:6-7, 14:6). The fear of the Lord, the parameters of life set for us, shuts in life and shuts out darkness.

This way is narrow and holy, but it's not without reward.

- We will see the glory of the Lord, vs 1-2
- There is strength and healing for the weak and fearful, vs 3-7
- The way is foolproof, vs 8
- No lions or ravenous beasts on the way, vs 9
- There is everlasting joy and gladness, vs 10

3. Our Worship Prepares the Way for the Lord.

Isaiah 40/Luke 3 — *In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the even ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain, vs 3-4*

The Way of Holiness is a steady, level, devoted way. We could even say it's mature. As we prepare the way for the Lord, we will take on its boundaries. We mature and call others to mature in Christ as we do. The process, this preparation, looks a lot like worship.

Every deficiency (valley) will be raised to the standard. Every idol and high place (mountain) will be leveled out to the standard—having no other gods before God (Exodus 20:3). John the Baptist was a set-a-part voice preparing a way for Jesus. Likewise, we are now the voices in the dry and weary land preparing a way for his return. In the same way a woman's poured out worship prepared Jesus for his burial (Mark 12:3-9), our extravagant adoration and devotion prepare him and us for the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9).

Our worship, bowed down devotion to God, prepares us to be led in the way of everlasting way (Psalm 139:24). We have to, or maybe I should say we *get to* be a voice for others to hear the good news.

Preparing a way for Jesus is costly, but it's not without rewards.

- We are pointing people to Jesus, John 1:29
- The glory of the Lord will be revealed, Isaiah 40:5
- We will see the glory of the Lord / the salvation of the Lord, vs Isaiah 40:5, Luke 3:6
- Everything else is fading, but God's Word and way stands forever, vs Isaiah 40:7-8

The devoted life that prepares the way for Jesus is a life of righteousness. It is the choice to bring every low and high place in our lives to the steady, faithful standard God has prepared. We settle for nothing less than his presence. We walk on the Way of Holiness, the narrow way prepared for us. As we worship, our adoration and devotion point people to Jesus. Yes. Worship is pricey. But we were the joy set before Jesus as he endured the cross. And now, Jesus is the joy set before us as we endure the days of his coming.

Prepare the way of the Lord.

REMNANT

There is a remnant waiting
Watching for you, Jesus
We have not forgotten
Our first love

Can you hear our voice declaring
You are God and you are good
Can you hear the song we're singing
Hallelujah

There is an army
Forming in the valley
We have not forgotten
Our champion

Can you hear our voice declaring
You are God and you are good
Can you hear the song we're singing
Hallelujah

2016, Adrienne Scott

THE ATTENTIVE WAY

BY EDDIE TAYLOR

*An excerpt from *Wisdom's Way: A Devotional Journey Through the Book of Proverbs* by Eddie Taylor.

DAY FIVE: THE ATTENTIVE WAY

Read Proverbs 5

*My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
Lend your ear to my understanding...* Proverbs 5:1, NKJV

There are no two ways about it: relationships take work. Relationships can be complicated because people's lives are messy.

Relationships can be painful, and you might be tempted to build walls to insulate yourself from pain. Be very careful...the walls you build to guard you from pain will also keep love out. Is there a better way? Yes, we can safely navigate relationships by paying attention. Proverbs chapter 5 calls us to pay attention in two ways.

First, pay attention to your boundaries (Proverbs 5:3-14). There are unscrupulous people who are out to destroy relationships. Be on guard!

Secondly, pay attention to your spouse (Proverbs 5:15-20). Solomon uses the word enraptured to describe the magnitude of attention we should give our spouse. Why don't we discipline ourselves to give our spouse this kind of focused attention? It is costly. You must *pay* attention.

This can be painful but understand this: there is always pain in life. You cannot escape it.

 *Is there a better way?
Yes, we can safely navigate
relationships by paying attention.*

*And you mourn at last, When your flesh and your body are consumed,
And say: "How I have hated instruction, And my heart despised
correction!"* Proverbs 5:11-12, NKJV

There is always pain in life. There is the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. Pay attention. No one regrets wise discipline. No one.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you as you read Proverbs 5?
2. How is the Holy Spirit highlighting Jesus in this verse or passage?
3. How are you going to apply this truth or truths to your life and relationships?
4. Shape today's reading and reflection into a prayer.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to not be a hearer only of the word but a doer. (James 1:22)

**Wisdom's Way: A Devotional Journey Through the Book of Proverbs* can be purchased from the store at www.taylorministry.com

Bio:

Pastor Eddie Taylor is a leader to leaders, ordained pastor, author, and conference speaker. Eddie and his wife, Beth are the co-founders of the Taylor Ministry Group. The Taylor Ministry Group is a trans-local ministry focused on preparing the church of today for tomorrow's world. They also co-founded the ministry network, Family Discipleship Ministries (FDM). He has also served on several ministry leadership teams and currently serves on the Lead Team for Lee Grady's Mordecai Project. Eddie loves life & leads with his wife of 35 years, Beth. They have three sons, two daughters-in-law, one incredible granddaughter and a chihuahua.

For more information visit www.taylorministry.com

9 Descriptions of Dwellers

According to Psalm 15

Intro: David begins by asking the Lord, *Who shall dwell on your holy hill?* He proceeds to give nine descriptions. As we take a look, let's remember that David, despite his failures, was a man after God's heart and burned for the Lord's presence.

1 Righteous

O Lord...Who shall dwell on your holy hill?, vs 1

He who walks blamelessly and does what is right, vs 2

2 Truth Lovers

who speaks truth in his heart, vs 2

3 Guarded Tongues

who does not slander with his tongue, vs 3

4 Good & Safe Neighbor

who does no evil to his neighbor, vs 3

5 Honoring Friend

who does not take up reproach against his friend, vs 3

6 Keeps Good Company

in who eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord, vs 4

7 Steady

who swears to his own heart and does not change, vs 4

8 Giving (or Honest)

who does not put out his money at interest, vs 5

9 Virtuous

who does not take a bribe against the innocent, vs 5

Outro: David concludes that he who does these things—those who dwell on the holy hill of the Lord—*will never be moved*.

NOT AS MAN SEES

*a Cry for Leaders
to Be After God's Heart*

ADRIENNE SCOTT
BRAVE SPARROW PUBLISHING

For the church to be light in deep darkness, we need to be after the heart of God. We need leaders who will fearlessly pursue God's heart and equip others to do the same. *Not As Man Sees* is a cry for leaders in the kingdom of God to revisit an ancient, unshakable, tried and true approach to leadership. This is the standard God seeks, *The Lord seeks for a man after his own heart—For the Lord sees not as man sees, man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.* 1 Samuel 13 & 16.

To purchase or download *Not As Man Sees* by Adrienne Scott, visit bave-sparrow.com

FEAR OF THE LORD

BY ADRIENNE SCOTT, EXCERPT FROM *NOT AS MAN SEES*

I woke up one morning to the fear of the Lord pulling me out of sleep into an upright position. It was awful. In hindsight, it was awesome, but in the moment, it was awful. I knew exactly what I was experiencing, and within seconds I understood why it was so present in the room. A conversation I had participated in the night before was no good. In the thickness of this holy fear, I felt the heart of the Lord impress on me, "That type of attitude ruins lives. Be far from it."

I will never forget that morning. I will never forget the weight of God's wisdom laying on my thoughts and heart. It saved me from disaster. Since then, the fear of the Lord has been a welcomed companion of mine.

I'm learning that the fear of the Lord is not only weighty but also full of wonder. The same God who split the sea so his people could escape captivity is the same God who cursed the fig tree that wasn't producing fruit. The same God who made barren women give birth is the same God who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of the outcry against them. The same God who woke me from slumber and said to be far from sin is the same God who restored my dead marriage.

The fear of the Lord is as wonderful as it is weighty. I treasure the fear of the Lord, and I want to keep growing in it as long as I'm alive. I don't want to walk, talk, teach, or lead without clinging to it. The fear of the Lord sets the boundaries of God's wisdom and holiness in our lives. When we are after God's heart, we will be living within its parameters.

What is the Fear of the Lord?

As with the other chapters, I want to give a working definition for us to use as we talk about this subject. Let's start with breaking down the phrase.

The word for "fear" is *yare* in Hebrew, and God is the most common object of the verb. Although it can denote a sense of terror, especially if you're an enemy of God, to those who see God rightly, *yare* is a sense of awe and worship, or wonder. The second part of the phrase is "the LORD." This is the proper name of God, Jehovah or Yahweh, also seen as Adonai. It means "existing one, the one

who gives existence or life, and everlasting.” If you do a study on the names of God, Jehovah is the root of many of his names. For example, Jehovah Jireh means “Lord our provider” and Jehovah Rapha means “Lord our healer.”

I know the word *fear* often triggers negative connotations that can be hard to move past. In an effort to see the fear of the Lord as a protective, positive part of life, here is another way to look at it. The fear of the Lord is awe (weight and wonder) with the giver of existence. We have to remember that the LORD, the self-existing one, is holy. He is set apart from everything we know. There is nothing like him. No thing comes close to a comparison. That’s not only wonderful, but it is also weighty.

We will talk more about holiness in the next section. For now, the weight that accompanies the fear of the Lord is actually covenantal in nature (Deuteronomy 10:12-13; Deuteronomy 17:14-20). As with any covenant, there are many benefits and blessings. But there are also repercussions when breached. Inside the kingdom of God is a treasure of everlasting, incorruptible goodness. Everything outside of God’s protection is fading and failing. It is sin—death to be precise (Romans 6). The parameters that the fear of the Lord sets into place are for our safety and good. That’s covenant. Ultimately, it is saving us from God’s severity, according to Romans 11:22. The fear of the Lord may be uncomfortable at times, but I’d rather experience him in that way than not know him. That’s a severity I cannot endure.

So, I propose this working definition of the fear of the Lord. The set parameters for our lives that allow us to experience the fullness of the LORD. When we live within the fear of the Lord, we are living within his ways in both weight and wonder.

Aspects of the Fear of the Lord

1. The Fear of the Lord is a Function of the Holy Spirit

Understanding that the fear of the Lord is a function of the Holy Spirit is crucial. Let’s look at Isaiah 11.

Then shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him, and the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. Isaiah 11:1-2

This is a prophecy describing the coming Messiah which is fulfilled in Jesus. It describes his leadership—his perfect leadership—that is in community with the Spirit as we talked about in the last chapter. There are seven functions listed here of the Spirit, one of which is the fear of the Lord. Remember that the Holy Spirit is sent to us as a helper. He helps us stay in community with God. The next verse says,

And [the Messiah's] delight will be in the fear of the Lord. vs 3

Isaiah goes on to say he will lead in righteousness, equality, authority, and faithfulness (vs 3-5). As leaders pursuing God's heart, we will find these qualities, including the desire *and* need for the functions of the Spirit. If Jesus' delight was in the fear of the Lord, ours should be too.

2. The Fear of the Lord is the Acquisition of Wisdom

Solomon's proverb is probably the most familiar connection between the fear of the Lord and wisdom.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is insight. Proverbs 9:10

But it's not the only time we see it. Besides being repeated in the book of Proverbs, this connection is also found in Job 28, Psalm 111, and even Isaiah 33.

According to these passages, when we stay within the set parameters of the fear of the Lord, we acquire wisdom. Wisdom is a set-apart aspect of God and his kingdom. In both Hebrew and Greek, the words for "wisdom" denote the capacity to not only understand something but also act accordingly. In other words, wisdom isn't only knowledge, but also the application of knowledge. Application separates wisdom from knowledge. J.I. Packer writes this about wisdom,

"Wisdom is the power to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it. Wisdom is, in fact, the practical side of moral goodness. As such, it is found in its fullness only in God. He alone is naturally and entirely, and invariably wise."

Wisdom is from God. He founded the earth by wisdom (Proverbs 3:19-20), he is the only wise God (Romans 16:25-27), and all wisdom belongs to him (Daniel 2:20). The covenantal boundary line is only the beginning of the deep riches of wisdom (Romans 11:33). There is a treasure to collect. Solomon repeats the phrase/idea *Get wisdom, get understanding* (Proverbs 4 & 16). James also tells us if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives generously (James 1:5).

One last perspective on wisdom. Jesus says,

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who builds his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds beat on the house, but it did not fall. Matthew 7:24-25

That's what we want, leaders! The strong foundation of wisdom, of listening and obeying will set the church apart in the days ahead of us. We need wisdom to navigate life. We need wisdom to disciple others, and it is only found as we *delight in the fear of the Lord*.

3. The Fear of the Lord Completes Holiness

If the fear of the Lord sets the parameters for our lives, holiness moves us far away from flirting with what's on the other side of God's boundary line. It is a place of fascination with him to the point of transformation. Briefly, let's remember who we are talking about and what holiness has to do with it.

To be holy is to be pure, set apart, and distinct. So that means holiness is the very essence of God. The first three commandments given to Moses are about the nature of God. They distinguish him from all the other gods, idols, and names. He is holy. The rest of the commandments are about conducting ourselves in a manner that keeps us separate from other gods and idols. In Leviticus, God gives the command, *You must be holy for I am holy* (Leviticus 11:44-45, See also Ezekiel 44:23).

This command is repeated throughout scripture, including 1 Peter 1:14-16, *...do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy*.

Paul gives a similar charge, but notice how he ties it to the fear of God,

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. 2 Corinthians 7:1

Our holiness comes through Jesus. It's not a work we could accomplish. However, the devotion we have to our new, clean, sanctified selves is a choice of holiness—to *bring holiness to completion*. I believe the pursuit of holiness is important for two reasons. We are made in the image of God who is holy, and his dwelling place is holy.

The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ assure a way back to living in God's image. We are washed clean and made new in him. In Psalm 24, David writes about the what, why, and how of God's presence.

Who can ascend God's holy hill? Who can stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands, a pure heart, and does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. Psalm 24:3-5

To dwell with God, we must be holy. In the new covenant, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). The distinction between God's temple and the world is the fear of the Lord. It keeps us in holiness and poised toward our glorious future. As we talked about in Chapter 1, we are being prepared as the pure bride of Christ, a holy city for God to dwell with his people forever!¹⁹

I never get tired of saying this. God's desire from the beginning has been to be with us. To walk and talk and commune with us generation after generation after generation. It's the whole point. The way back to that dwelling is through holiness, *Such is the generation of those who seek him, who see the face of the God of Jacob* (Psalm 24:5-6).

4 Aspects of the Fear of the Lord

- The fear of the Lord is a function of the Holy Spirit
- The fear of the Lord is the acquisition of wisdom
- The fear of the Lord completes holiness
- The fear of the Lord is friendship with God

4. The Fear of the Lord is Friendship with God

In a cluster of psalms, David pinpoints the desire and need for the fear of the Lord. Psalms 24, 25, 26, and 27 each have pieces to a whole thought, in my opinion. You can read them separately and gain so much. But when you read them together, a fuller picture can be seen.

We just looked at Psalm 24. In Psalm 26, David continues in devotion to God's way and to his presence, *I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells* (vs 8). And we know in Psalm 27 he avows, *one thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...*(vs 4).

In the middle of these Psalms, David makes an incredible declaration as he cries out to know the path and truth of God. Take note, also, of the generational blessing.

Who is the man who fears the LORD?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land...The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. Psalm 25:12-14

David, a man after God's heart, leaves us with keys to the kingdom. *The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him*—with those who pursue, draw near and nearer to him. The LORD's secret is with those who have their eyes fixed on him, who refuse other loves, who long for his presence. We've got to get to his heart.

Last Thought

As men and women after God's heart and as leaders in the church, it is essential that we shed off (get to our simplest form) every reason we've become bored with God, bored with the kingdom of heaven, and have let the doubt and disbelief of the world keep us in a stupor. How can we be bored with the Everlasting? Why would we settle for unholy, lifeless counterfeits when the giver of life knows us by name?

The friendship of the Lord is
with those who fear him
Psalm 25

I don't think we can live within the parameters that the fear of the Lord sets into place without first embracing authenticity, humility, and devotion. They prepare and mature us to the state where we willingly say *I want to live in the wonder and weight of the Lord. I want to be set apart from everything else. Nothing else will do.*

The heart of man sees boundary lines as restrictions and limitations and seeks his own way, freedom, and path. But as pursuers of God's heart, we will embrace the fear of the Lord because it draws us into the depths of God's vast, pure, glorious life. This is the place we become effective leaders and equippers to other disciples. If for no other reason than it is this place, the deepness of God's heart, that we begin to look like him—where we carry his glory. This is when the lineage of God's kingdom is the life we invite others to join. It's no longer about us and a legacy. It's about generation after generation after generation living in the heritage that Jesus provided for us.

Leaders, are we living in the inheritance set apart for us? Are we living in the fear of the Lord? Is our life set apart from the world as holy? *Jesus, make known to us the weight and wonder of who you are even more. We want to be your friends!*

Take a minute to meditate on the following psalm. Make it a prayer.

The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

*The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance*

You make known to me the path of life

in your presence there is fullness of joy

at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16:5-6

Righteousness

A 7 - DAY STUDY PROMPT



BRAVE
SPARROW

RIGHTEOUSNESS

“Righteousness” and its counterpart, “righteous,” appear 540 times in 520 verses of the Bible.* There is not enough space here to record each one. But I do want to provide a few prompts for studying righteousness.

Righteousness is a pretty big deal in the kingdom of heaven. Starting with, it is the nature of God and the standard he calls us to live by. Thankfully, Jesus provides the way of righteousness for us. As Isaiah wrote, *all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf...* (vs 64:6). But it doesn't end there. Accompanying righteousness are many, many promises and provisions that enrich our walk with God.

Following are seven breakdowns based on recurring themes I found in the Hebrew and Greek words for righteousness. There are plenty more themes and treasures for you to find. I made myself stop at 7. I pray these prompts will spur you to seek and to soak in all 520 verses. Righteousness is so good.

* according to Google.

* All biblical references are from the ESV Translation.

1 Righteousness and God

Psalm 33:4-5

For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.

Psalm 11:7

For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.

Psalm 50:6

The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge!

John 17:25-26

O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

John 16:7-11

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

2 Righteousness and Jesus

Jeremiah 23:6 & 33:16

In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

Isaiah 64:6

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf...

Isaiah 61:3

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me...to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

Romans 3:21-26

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

3 Righteousness and Walking with God

Genesis 6:9

*Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation.
Noah walked with God.*

Genesis 15:6

*And [Abraham] believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as
righteousness.*

Psalms 24:3-5

*Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy
place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his
soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.*

*He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of
his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the
face of the God of Jacob*

Psalms 37:5-6

*Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring
forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.*

Proverbs 4:18

*But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines
brighter and brighter until full day.*

Romans 1:16-17

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for
salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is
written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

4 Righteousness and Hunger

Psalms 119:40

Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life.

Psalms 17:15

As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied

Proverbs 10:3

The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry.

Matthew 6:31-33

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ...Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Proverbs 16:8

Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.

5 Righteousness and Fruitfulness

Proverbs 11:28 & 30

Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf...the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.

Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.

Proverbs 8:20-21

I will walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.

James 5:13-18

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

Philippians 1:9-11

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

6 Righteousness and Peace

Psalms 85:10-13

Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.

Isaiah 32:17

And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

James 3:18

And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Hebrews 12:11

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Isaiah 9:7

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

7 Righteousness and the Future

Psalms 9:8, also 96:13, 98:9

But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice, and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness.

Psalms 37:37&39

Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace...The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.

Acts 17:30-31

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

2 Timothy 4:8

Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Revelation 19:11

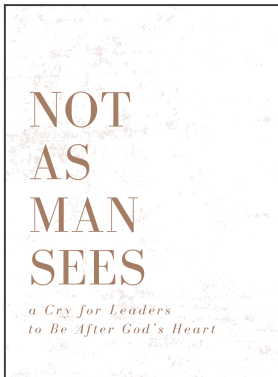
Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.



BRAVE SPARROW

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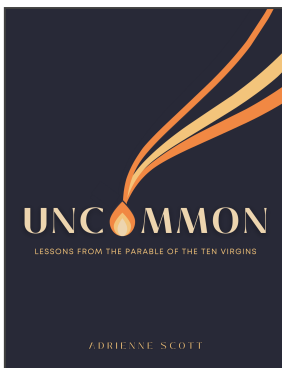
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Not As Man Sees: A Cry for Leaders to Be After God's Heart

by Adrienne Scott

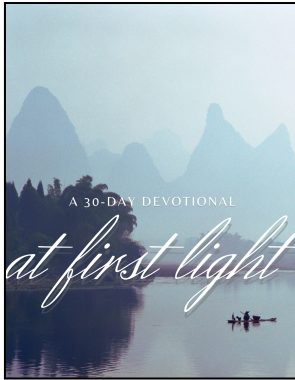
For the church to be light in deep darkness, we need to be after the heart of God. We need leaders who will fearlessly pursue God's heart and equip others to do the same. *Not As Man Sees* is a cry for leaders in the kingdom of God to revisit an ancient, unshakable, tried and true approach to leadership. This is the standard God seeks, *The Lord seeks for a man after his own heart—For the Lord sees not as man sees, man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.* 1 Samuel 13 & 16.



Uncommon: Lessons from the Parable of the Ten Virgins

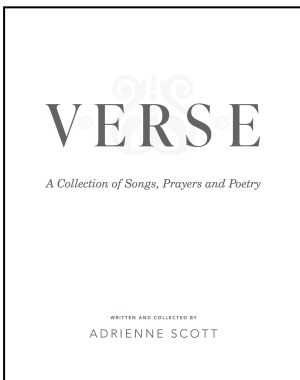
by Adrienne Scott

Uncommon is a study on getting ready and staying ready as disciples of Jesus as we wait for his return. In kingdom life, the oil that gives light to our lamps is an uncommon commodity in the world. It is to know Jesus. These lessons look closely at what distracts us from buying oil, how to buy oil, and how to help others buy oil.



At First Light: A 30-Day Devotional
by Adrienne Scott

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This coffee table book is full of song lyrics, prayers, poetry, and stories I have written over twenty years. These pieces are like mile markers on a discipleship journey. Intertwined with the beauty and brokenness of life is the everlasting hope found in Jesus.



For more information about Adrienne Scott and Brave Sparrow Publishing, visit brave-sparrow.com