

# The West End Herald

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC



**Is Something Wrong With Me  
If I Don't Feel God's Presence  
In My Suffering?**



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**January 26, 2025**

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I think there are several answers to that question. The first answer is this: potentially, there could be something wrong, and that in two different ways.

One way something could be wrong has to do with the biological and biochemical aspects of suffering. Part of the biochemical result of particular kinds of suffering comes because we are what they call “psychosomatic unities.” We’re not a spirit on one side and a body on the other; we are body and spirit united together. As a result, what happens in our bodies does actually affect our spirits.

Most people, when they get the flu, feel worse emotionally than when they’re well. So, there may be instances when we need to be conscious that physical suffering may have a spiritual effect on our lives, and there is something wrong with us, but it’s not something that’s wrong with our spirits.

I think this is particularly important for us to understand in our later years. What happens physically to people can have alarming effects on what they seem to become. As Christians, it’s important to understand the impact that the disintegration of our bodies can have both on our mental conditions and even on our spiritual sense of things. So that is one element: there could possibly be something wrong with us at the medical level, at the physical level.

The second thing to say is that God has given us at least one book in the Scriptures that speaks so often to the question, How do true believers respond when they’re suffering? The book of Psalms is full of descriptions of true believers—and some eminent believers—who, when they have suffered, have felt that God is absent from them.

So, is there something wrong with the psalmists? No, they are reacting to a world that is not the way it should be. And since it is God’s world, there’s always a temptation to wonder if God has become the way we didn’t expect Him to be.

When that happens, almost inevitably—and you see this in the Psalms—the psalmists turn in on themselves. They begin to read God and His presence in terms of their own feelings and inner conditions. What you notice in the progress of the Psalms is that, invisibly, but really, the Spirit begins to drag them out of that turning into themselves, where they feel the

Why are you  
cast down,  
O my soul,  
and why  
are you  
in turmoil  
within me?  
Hope in  
God; for I  
shall again  
praise him,  
my salvation  
and my God.  
My soul is  
cast down  
within me;  
therefore I  
remember  
you . . .  
Psalm 42:5–6



# The Life Ethic: *Where Does It Come From?*

The Bible establishes that human life is sacred in Genesis 1:27:

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

To be created in the likeness of God means that each human bears His image and with it, a value beyond our unique characteristics or individual attributes. Nothing else in God's created order has the distinction of reflecting His image; it's a privileged status reserved only for humankind.

This is a bit of a mystery as God's image in us isn't something tangible we can see, taste or feel; yet it establishes our significance and worth at the highest level. The Bible says we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). From the miracle of life in the womb to the body's ability to regenerate cells and tissue for healing, we see God's amazing fingerprint at work. Humans are breathtaking creatures embodying a touch of the Creator Himself and reflected in the wonder of human life.

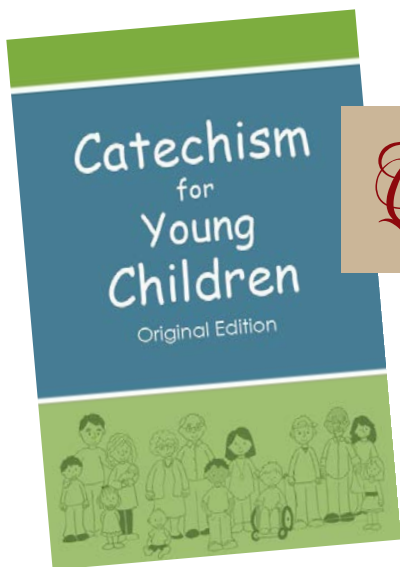
Contrary to cultural messages, our value isn't determined by our ethnicity, race or gender; nor by our age, ability or location. It's our divine membership in the human family that sets each of us apart as sacred. Men, women and children (including preborn children in the womb) should be respected, regardless of their mental capacity, physical ability, or social position. Some people may not exhibit attributes of God or behave in ways that recognize their own value yet their intrinsic worth remains.

The concept of human dignity comes from the sanctity of human life. Since humans are made in God's image, we hold a distinctive status that sets us apart. Human dignity is bestowed upon us by God. It's not based on our ability to care for ourselves or competence to complete the task. Dignity is not a concept that can be forfeited, so being dependent on others cannot cause us to lose our dignity.

Our failure to recognize and honor human dignity is apparent in phrases like "quality of life." Dependency is viewed as the ultimate weakness and as a result, some people would rather die than continue living if it means living with a disability. This attitude increases pressure for the acceptance of physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia instead of providing a compassionate response to those who are disabled or face a terminal illness.

A common fear among the disabled or terminally ill is that of becoming a burden. We help restore human dignity through our witness of caring for each other, especially in our times of dependence and need. The sanctity ethic reminds us that God is ultimately sovereign over the affairs of our lives, including our frailty and infirmity. ♦

*from Focus on the Family*

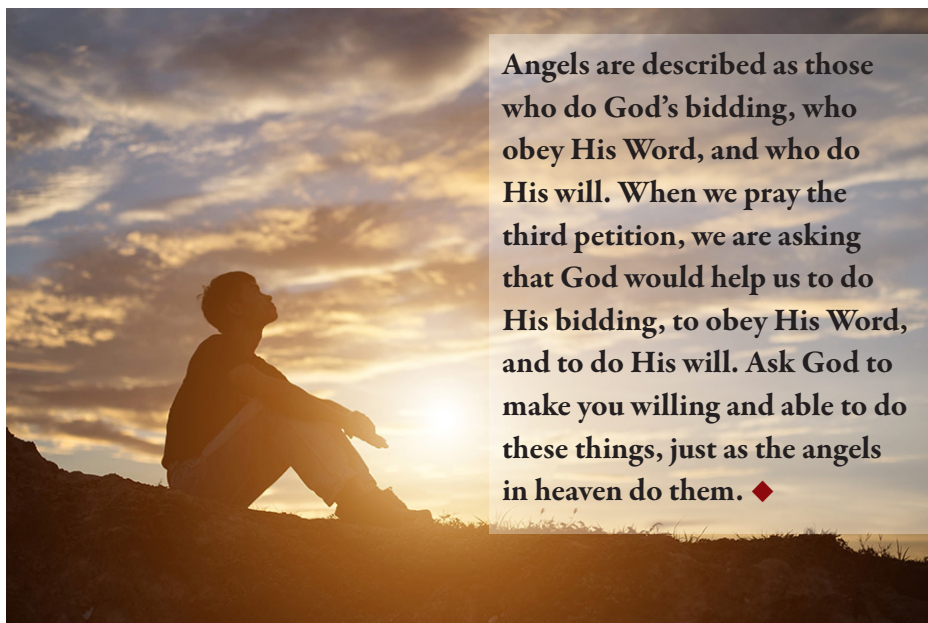


## *Question 115:*

What do we pray for in the third petition?

## *Answer:*

That men on earth may serve God as the angels do in heaven.



**Angels are described as those who do God's bidding, who obey His Word, and who do His will. When we pray the third petition, we are asking that God would help us to do His bidding, to obey His Word, and to do His will. Ask God to make you willing and able to do these things, just as the angels in heaven do them. ♦**

*From the Lips of Little Ones*, Jeff Kingswood



at the corner of

# River & Rhett

**Please pray for these upcoming Mission Trips in 2025:**

**HONDURAS**

January 31–February 5

**LIBERIA**

April 3–May 1

**PERU**

July 11–18

**Baby Shower for  
Anna Phillips Shaw**  
Saturday, January 18



# JANUARY & FEBRUARY

*birthdays*



- 27 Billy Kirby
- 28 Margot Hughes
- 30 Cindy Olsen, Ruby Thompson, Cheryl Traynham
- 31 Josh Lyon, Katey McGuirt
- Feb 1 Duncan Therrell

For you formed  
my inward parts;  
you knitted me  
together in my  
mother's womb.



# This Week

## MORNING SERMON

*Rev. Benjamin Kappers*

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Matthew 5:1–12

## EVENING SERMON

*Rev. Zachary Groff*

THE CHURCH OF GOOD CHEER

2 Corinthians 9:1–15

## Sunday, January 26

- 8:30 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 9:55 A.M. Children's Chapel (*Sanctuary*)
- 10:00 A.M. Sunday School
- 11:00 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 5:00 P.M. Missionary Prayer Band (*Chapel*)
- 5:30 P.M. Season of Prayer (*Chapel*)
- 6:00 P.M. EVENING WORSHIP

## Monday, January 27

- 6:30 A.M. Men's Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 9:30 A.M. Rafiki Bible Study (*Conference Room*)

## Tuesday, January 28

- 10:00 A.M. WIC Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)

## Wednesday, January 29

- 5:30 P.M. CE Committee (*Conference Room*)
- 5:30 P.M. FAMILY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP SUPPER (*Gym*)
- 6:15 P.M. Hope Choir (K4–K5); Covenant Choir (Grades 1–6); Youth Choir (Grades 7–12)
- 6:45 P.M. Missions Moment (*Gym*)
- 7:00 P.M. CAT Kids (Ages 3–Grade 4); Covenant Kids (Grades 5–8)
- 7:00 P.M. Jr. & Sr. High Bible Studies
- 7:00 P.M. Adult Prayer Meeting & Bible Study (*Gym*)
- 7:30 P.M. Chancel Choir

## Thursday, January 30

- 4:00 P.M. Media Committee (*Zoom*)

## Friday, January 31

- 12:00 P.M. Men's Luncheon and Bible Study (*Gym*)
- 1:30 P.M. Mission to Main

# Upcoming Events

[spcgreenville.org/calendar](http://spcgreenville.org/calendar)

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>February 7</b>  | Friday Night Alive      |
| <b>February 8</b>  | WIC Prayer Breakfast    |
| <b>February 9</b>  | Membership Class Begins |
| <b>February 9</b>  | Baptism Sunday          |
| <b>February 10</b> | Diaconate Meeting       |
| <b>February 10</b> | Session Meeting         |
| <b>February 12</b> | Sports Moment           |
| <b>March 7-8</b>   | WIC Ladies Conference   |

## NEVER ENOUGH



**PLACE:**  
Second Presbyterian Church

**COST:** \$25  
Dinner Friday night/Lunch Saturday

**SPEAKER:** Sarah Ivill  
Author, Bible Scholar, Teacher

**TOPIC:** Never Enough  
Confronting Lies about Appearance and  
Achievement with Gospel Hope

**REGISTRATION:**  
[spcgreenville.org/signup](http://spcgreenville.org/signup)

Deadline: February 14

For Ladies High School and Above  
No Nursery Provided  
Nursing babies welcome  
For more information, contact Susan Harmon

**Ladies Spring Conference**  
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH March 7-8, 2025



# Announcements

## Ladies Bible Study

There will be an informal organizational meeting on Tuesday, January 28, at 10:00 A.M. in the Fellowship Hall. This Bible Study will normally meet on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. For more information, please contact Ramona White.

## Sunday Flowers Roster

We are creating our flower roster for 2025. Below are some open dates. If you would like to place flowers in the Sanctuary for one of these open dates, please contact Judy Bishop.

February 16, 23	June 1, 29	October 12
March 9, 30	August 3, 24, 31	November 2, 16, 30
May 4, 18	September 28	January 11, 18, 25 (2026)

## Wednesday Night Meals

There has not been a price increase in many years, and with the higher food and labor costs, it has been determined to raise the Wednesday evening meals to these new amounts:

Type:	Current Rate:	New Rate:
Child	\$3	\$4
Adult	\$5	\$7
Family	\$18	\$25

This will go into effect on Wednesday February 5. Look for signs by the coffee table. You can pay online or a box is available for cash payments.

## Friday Night Alive

All singles are invited to the Phillips Home for a meal, fellowship, and teaching time on Friday, February 7, beginning at 6:00 P.M. Please contact Sharon Phillips if you need a ride or have questions.

## WIC Ladies Prayer Breakfast

This annual event will be held in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, February 8, at 10:00 A.M. No sign up is needed. Food will be provided.

## Wedding Shower

All ladies are invited to a bridal shower for Charlotte Therrell on February 15. We will meet at 10:30 A.M. in the Fellowship Hall. Charlotte is registered at [theknot.com](http://theknot.com).

## Death of a Church Member

Kirby Kee passed into the presence of His Savior early Saturday morning, January 18. A Memorial Service will be held on Friday, January 24, at 2:00 P.M.



# Membership Class

This no-obligation class meets for eight weeks. It is open to anyone interested in learning more about our beliefs or joining our church. Gather with others and our minister, Dr. Phillips, as we explore together our church distinctives.

**Date:** Sundays beginning February 9  
**Time:** 10:00 A.M.  
**Place:** Room C-209  
**Teacher:** Dr. Richard Phillips

- ❖ The “Solas” of the Reformation
- ❖ The Doctrines of Grace
- ❖ Law and the Gospel
- ❖ Covenant Theology
- ❖ Reformed Worship
- ❖ Membership Vows
- ❖ Church History (with RE Melton Duncan)

**March 30, April 6**

Session Membership Interviews

**April 13, 2025**

Welcome Luncheon for New Members  
& Church Family

Register: [spcgreenville.org/signup](http://spcgreenville.org/signup)

absence of God, and He drags them into the reality of God's omnipresence. He shows them the evidences of God's presence, the blessings that God has given to them in the past, and especially His promises that He will never leave us and He will never, ever forsake us.

When we are with people who are experiencing this feeling of the absence of God, one way we can help draw them out of the condition that Martin Luther used to speak about as naturally being incurvatus in se, where we instinctively turn in ourselves, is to point them to these promises. The Word of God helps us to turn out of ourselves to the promises of God, and especially to the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ that He will never leave us and He will never forsake us.

Looking back, there is a word in the little letter of James that I think is very helpful for Christians, and it's James' promise, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8). That's a promise that He will keep. And you must, in that sense, turn away from your sense of God's absence to His promise: "You draw near to Me, and whether you feel it or not, I will draw near to you."

I think most of us begin to discover that as we are drawn out of ourselves to God's promise, we are re-stabilized to become more sensitive to the fact that He really is with us. As we cling to His promise, our eyes open to begin to see the different ways in which He has been with us.

So, I think that's a great principle for us. Our tendency is to turn in on ourselves, and the Word turns us out of ourselves to the promises of God and to the presence of Christ with us, and this particular promise: He will never leave us and He will never forsake us. ♦

Dr. Sinclair B. Ferguson is a Ligonier Ministries teaching fellow, vice-chairman of Ligonier Ministries, and Chancellor's Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary. He is featured teacher for several Ligonier teaching series, including Union with Christ. He is author of many books, including *The Whole Christ*, *Maturity*, and *Devoted to God's Church*.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. James 4:7-8

