

# Campus Chronicles

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## In This Issue

*A Sweet and Bitter Providence* | 2  
Book Review by Andrew Johnson

*The Power of Singing* | 3  
By Kelly Hayes

*Success Is a Journey* | 4  
By Joel Thompson

*This Week in Church History* | 5  
With Pastor Charlie

*Epic Reading* | 6  
With Pastor Ron



## Discernment

By Cassandra Friday

Discernment is one of those qualities that all should strive for in life. However, Christians have a responsibility to strive for this characteristic more than others. Why is that? First, Christians have the Holy Spirit indwelling, which gives them the ability to achieve greater discernment in their lives. Plus, Christians are called to a higher standard of living; they are called to live their lives according to what the Bible teaches. In order to do this successfully, Christians need to practice discernment in all areas of their life, and on a daily basis.

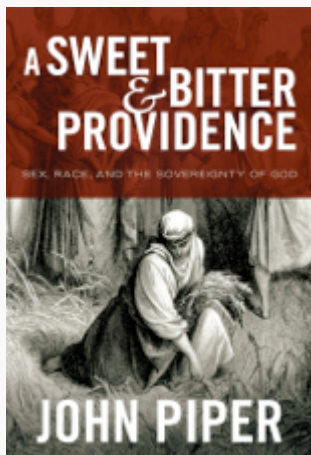
Discernment can be defined as “the act or process of exhibiting keen insight and good judgment.” It makes sense that God would desire Christians to practice good judgment in their lives. Christians should desire this also, especially when the Oxford American Dictionary adds the following of discernment, “(in Christian contexts) perception with a view to obtaining spiritual direction and understanding.” Applying discernment in daily life is simply a logical outcome of being a Christian. God explicitly tells us through Proverbs 3:21, “My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; they will be life for you...”

King Solomon, at the beginning of his reign, is a great example of how important discernment is to God. When the Lord came to Solomon in a dream, He told Solomon to “Ask for whatever you want me to give you” (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon pleased the Lord by asking for “a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong” (1 Kings 3:9). In fact, God was so pleased by Solomon’s request that His response was “I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings” (1 Kings 3:12-13). To this day, King Solomon is still known as the wisest man to ever live on the earth. What a legacy to live up to and strive for!

Practicing discernment in daily life not only helps Christians to live the way they are called to live, but it also pleases God in the process. So, how does one acquire discernment in his or her daily life? The apostle Paul provides us with an excellent guideline: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:8-9). When we think on the things of God and read His word (learn) it leads us along the path of spiritual discernment. Sometimes discernment is given as a gift, as with Solomon; other times, it is learned through diligent study and practice. Either way, discernment is an essential part of the Christian walk.

## Book Review: A Sweet and Bitter Providence

By Andrew Johnson



*A Sweet and Bitter Providence*, John Piper's latest work, is a brief survey of the book of Ruth. Though Piper draws out several distinct themes (i.e. sexual purity, biblical manhood and womanhood, and ethnic diversity), the core theme that Piper highlights is the sovereignty of God not only in history but also in the lives of individuals like Naomi and Ruth.

The story of Ruth takes place during the time of the Judges. This was a period in Israel's history marked by a cycle of falling away, repentance, and deliverance. During a famine in the land of Israel, Elimelech, with his wife Naomi, and their two sons, sojourned from Bethlehem to Moab. There the sons each married Moabite wives: Orpah and Ruth. While in Moab, Naomi's husband and two sons died, leaving her and her two foreign daughters-in-law widowed. Eventually, the famine lifted and Naomi returned to Bethlehem, accompanied only by Ruth. When she arrived in Bethlehem, Naomi announced, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty" (Ruth 1:20-21).

Right away, many of us would want to kindly rebuke Naomi and assure her that she is mistaken. However, what Piper wants the reader to understand is that Naomi's theology here is spot-on. "Naomi is unshaken and sure about three things: God exists, God is sovereign, and God has afflicted her." Naomi's problem was not her theology, it was her short-sightedness. "Just as surely as God brought the famine, God took it away. Naomi could see that. But she could not see all that God was doing." What Naomi could not see was that even in the "bitter providence" she had experienced, God was plotting for her good and His glory.

Naomi's daughter-in-law Ruth would meet Boaz, who was related to Elimelech. They would get married and so Elimelech's land would be redeemed. Though Naomi returned to Bethlehem "empty," by the end of the story her husband's land had been redeemed and she was blessed with a grandson—a grandson whose lineage would ultimately lead to the coming of Messiah. "The book of Ruth wants to teach us that God's purpose for his people is to connect us to something far greater than ourselves. God wants us to know that when we follow him, our lives always mean more than we think they do. Naomi had no idea in the land of Moab that God was making her the ancestor of the Messiah."

The core message of *A Sweet and Bitter Providence* is this:

Life is not a straight line leading from one blessing to the next and then finally to heaven. Life is a winding and troubled road. Switchback after switchback. And the point of biblical stories...[like Ruth]...is to help us feel in our bones (not just know in our heads) that God is for us in all these strange turns. God is not just showing up after the trouble and cleaning it up. He is plotting the course and managing the troubles with far-reaching purposes for our good and for the glory of Jesus Christ."

This is an excellent book, demonstrating how theology and real-life intersect. *A Sweet and Bitter Providence* is a small book (145 pages) packed with profound insights and is available in PDF format for free at <http://desiringgod.org>.

## The Power of Singing

By Kelly Hayes

Let me take you to August 2008 in Jamaica. Imagine an extremely warm day with smothering humidity. My mission teammates and I had been going to different places throughout the week and on this day we were at West Haven, an orphanage for disabled children located up in the hills outside of Montego Bay. It was whole day outside in that hot summer weather.

Upon our arrival, we were welcomed by children at the gate who were smiling from ear to ear and shouting with excitement. We were ready. Ready to spend a day with them playing, singing, and helping in any way that we could.

We weren't exactly sure what to expect and got little direction when we arrived. One thing we were told though was to leave our things, even our water bottles, on the bus so that we would ensure that they made it home with us. On the bus, we took off to our destination.

The day started off well. As soon as we walked in, excited kids surrounded us. We began to play games, swing on swings, sing, and help around the orphanage. I went out back and helped take laundry off the line and was soon joined by Jason, a 25-year old disabled orphan who smiled and laughed as I passed him folded laundry. He was my helper and probably the happiest person to be able to help with laundry that I've ever seen. Things were going well.



Jason, 25



West Haven Disabled Children's Home, Jamaica

The afternoon arrived and the sun was bright and hot. With the bus gone and our water with it, we started to wear down. We needed water. When the bus finally got back, we drank some cold water that was so refreshing to our dehydrated bodies. After we were fueled up with water and PB&J sandwiches, we went back in ready to go, or so I thought.

The effects of the sun were still plaguing me. My energy had been drained, and I simply wanted to leave. I sat on a rock and watched the kids play some cricket. As I sat, I prayed. I needed the Lord's strength, and I knew He heard me when the sweet sound of singing reached my ears and touched my heart. It was one of my teammates singing of Jesus' love to the little children. I will never forget the power that filled me. Those words reminded me that I was there to love on those children, to show them the love of Christ, and not to be a bump on a log. The singing brought energy back into my tired body and inspired me to go to an area of the orphanage I had not yet visited.

I walked over to the porch, not sure exactly what to do, but that was okay, I had the Lord with me. Soon I was singing and was accompanied by clapping and humming from the boys. William couldn't talk, but he hummed. I sang "Jesus Loves Me" and he was humming and nodding his head with a big smile on his face. He was worshiping the Lord, and it was amazing to be a part of the experience.

There is something powerful about singing that can rejuvenate the soul, bring joy, and touch the hearts of many. That day I received much joy just by seeing the joy William evidenced through 'singing' about the love of Jesus. It will stay with me always. Anyone can praise the Lord through song, even those who can't talk. "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; break forth in song, rejoice and sing praise" (Psalm 98:4, NKJV). Never stop singing about the love of Jesus.

# Success is a Journey

By Joel Thompson

Today, more and more of us are on the hunt for what we believe to be “success.” As we toil through our days, chasing the almighty dollar and looking for what our culture and society deem “successful,” we soon come to the realization that money, although, a great and often much needed tool, is only a small fraction of what “true” success is.

It’s been said, “success is a progressive realization of a worthwhile dream or goal.” For those of us here at EPIC, success can be construed as a B.A. in Ministerial Studies or perhaps an A.A. in Christian counseling. Maybe it’s just getting that much-needed “A” on a school exam. Just remember... success is a *progressive* journey toward an ultimate goal. Therefore, learn to enjoy every moment of it along the way, never forgetting that our ultimate goal is to be with Him.

However, many of us are so focused on the end result that we truly forget to appreciate all the experiences along the way that helps to define who we become once we’ve reached our “final destination.” I am completely convinced that God only gives us what we can endure to test our undying faith and trust in Him. As we travel on our journey in life, we must always remember to keep our eyes, hearts, minds, bodies, and souls focused on God the Almighty. He gave us our first breath to be able to experience this wonderful journey. We need to be on bended knee daily and give thanks for all the lessons in life that we are so blessed to encounter.

I’m sure that there are some who may be reading this who may have fulfilled a dream or goal, only to find it a rather lack luster experience. Once you arrived, you realized that your ultimate destination was not as you had envisioned it along the way. However, you still pursued it with power, purpose and passion; then continued to enjoy the journey. That’s how we must be in our journey to serve Him. We must pursue Him with all our mind, heart, and strength.

As we all continue on our personal journey to our vision of “success,” we need to remember that our “ultimate destination” is to be with God. So, let’s make it the best, most fulfilling and loving journey that could ever be. This is the true meaning of “success” and being with God our ultimate destination.



Photo taken by Andrew Johnson

## THIS WEEK IN CHURCH HISTORY *With Pastor Charlie*

[April 11, 1506:](#) Construction began on the Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome, taking 120 years to complete.

[April 12:](#)

1204 - The Christian (Roman Catholic) armies of the Fourth Crusade captured and plundered the Christian (Eastern Orthodox) city of Constantinople.

1914 - After an 11-day convention in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Pentecostal pastors from around America formed the *Assemblies of God* denomination, which today numbers over 51 million people worldwide.

[April 13:](#)

1059 - Pope Nicholas II decreed that all future popes could only be elected by the Church's Cardinals.

1598 - King Henry IV of France issued the *Edict of Nantes*, granting Protestants a large measure of religious freedom. (The Edict remained in effect for 87 years.)

1743 - Birth (in Virginia) of Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and the third President of the United States.

[April 14:](#)

73 - According to Jewish historian Josephus, on this day 967 Jewish zealots committed mass suicide within the fortress of Masada on this last night before the walls were breached by the attacking Roman Tenth Legion. (Two women and five children survived by hiding in a cistern, and were later released unharmed by the Romans.)

1614 - In Virginia, Pocahontas, daughter of chief Powhatan, married planter John Rolfe.

1853 - Harriet Tubman began her *Underground Railroad*, helping slaves escape to freedom in northern states and in Canada.

1865 - On Good Friday, President Abraham Lincoln was shot in the head by actor John Wilkes Booth. The President died on Easter morning at 7:22 AM.

1906 - The famous *Azusa Street Revival*, out of which the modern Pentecostal movement spread world-wide, began when the services led by black evangelist William J. Seymour moved into the building at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles.

[April 15, 1892 -](#) Birthdate of Corrie ten Boom, the Dutch devotional author whose family was arrested by the Gestapo during WWII for hiding Jewish refugees in their home. Corrie's experience with the Nazis was depicted in the 1971 film *The Hiding Place*.

[April 16, 1862:](#) Slavery was abolished in Washington, DC.

[April 17, 1521:](#) Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Catholic Church for refusing to recant his "heretical" writings.



Martin Luther



Harriet Tubman

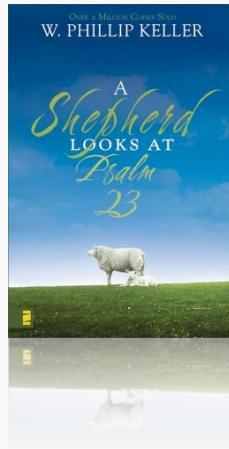
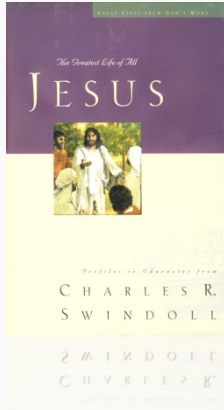


Corrie ten Boom



William J. Seymour

## Get Your Hands on Some Epic Reading!



It's hard to think about reading any other books when you're pouring through textbooks. However, we'd thought you'd like to know the books your professors are enjoying. We begin this series with:

My recommendations are a current series By Dr. Chuck Swindoll on, *Great Characters of the Bible*. I especially enjoyed: *Jesus*; *Paul*; *Elijah*, and *David*. Also, the classic *A Shepherd looks at the 23rd Psalm* by J. Phillip Keller. In *Jesus*, Ron Harden

### Volunteer Opportunity!

Want to be a part of history? *From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Bible in America* is here to Bayside Church April 8 – May 15, and they need your help! We're expecting a huge turnout, which means 7,600 volunteer hours; that breaks down into 3,800 volunteers serving in 2-hour shifts. They need 10-15 volunteers for each time slot. <http://www.deadseascrollsexhibit.com/volunteers/>



### Inside the World of Teenagers.

Come hear the latest research on adolescent development, family and social systems, and the rapidly-changing environment that every teen faces. The speaker is Dr. Chap Clark, Ph.D., Vice Provost and Professor of Youth, Family, and Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary. This forum is specifically intended to help parents and educators gain insight into a teenager's journey and develop more authentic and effective relationships with the teenagers in their lives. When: Saturday, May 1, 2010, 9:30 AM-1:00 PM (check-in begins at 9 AM), at: First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, Cost: \$25. Online Registration Deadline: April 29 (walk-in registration also available; arrive early) Childcare is available birth through 5th grade by reservation only (\$6 per child/\$12 per family). Childcare reservations must be made by April 26; click [here](#) to register online. More Information: Contact Bridget Nolan at (510) 848-6252 ext. 293 or at [bridgetn@fpckerkeley.org](mailto:bridgetn@fpckerkeley.org).



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