



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N27 July 6, 2025

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Eternity

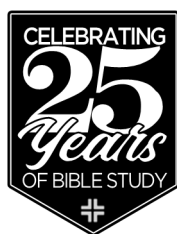
I believe all people are
loved by God and need
Jesus Christ as
their Savior.

*"For God so loved the world
that he gave His one and
only Son, that whoever be-
lieves in Him shall not perish
but have eternal life."*

John 3:16



What is
humanity's
greatest need?



PSALMS: CELEBRATING CHRIST IN GOD'S HYMNBOOK

"Psalm 94"

John 3:16 is perhaps the clearest biblical distillation of the gospel. God loves the world. To demonstrate this love, God gave his only Son. The gift of his Son prevents eternal death (perishing) and offers eternal life to all those who believe in him. The "need" of all people is salvation *from* perishing and *to* eternal life. The term "perish" as it stands in contrast to "life" means "destruction or judgment" from God. "The antithesis between life and death [perish] becomes a hostile one, and in this form it has a central place in NT religion, esp. in Paul and John. In contrast to σώζεσθαι [to save] or to ζωὴ αἰώνιος [life eternal], ἀπόλλυσθαι [perish] is definitive destruction, not merely in the sense of the extinction of physical existence, but rather of an eternal plunge into Hades and a hopeless destiny of death" (A. Oepke, "Ἀπόλλυμι" in *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, 396).

John develops this idea in vv. 17-18 by connecting "condemned" to the idea of "perishing." In v. 18 those who do not believe are "condemned already." If you do not accept the gift of God's Son through faith you stand condemned by God and will perish. This condemned state that results in perishing is the default state of all people. The good news of a Savior is offered to rescue those who believe. Before God is a Savior, he is a Judge. We can only be saved if we are utterly lost. The gospel comes on the heels of the bad news of our rightful condemnation.

So how does God's love for the guilty color our view of humanity? When I look at my neighbor, whom do I see? Do I see someone who is condemned to perish? Probably not. But what if my neighbor were a "bad neighbor"? What if my neighbor stole from me? What if my neighbor were a terrorist? Would I be justified in wanting God's wrath to fall upon such a terrible person?

This question of wanting God to judge evil is addressed often in Psalms. Many of the psalms (perhaps as many as 35) call upon

God to execute judgment. Psalm 94 begins with the doubly emphasized truth that God is a God of vengeance. God's love does not negate God's justice. Can we, who have escaped judgment, sing psalms calling for God's judgment? Do we pray blessings upon enemies (Mt 5:44), or do we ask God to "rise up" and bring judgment (Ps 94:1-3)? Or can we do both?

"It is not open to us to renounce or ignore the psalmists, part of whose function in God's economy was to make articulate the cry of 'all the righteous blood shed on earth'. ... But equally it is not open to us simply to occupy the ground on which they stood. Between our day and theirs, our calling and theirs, stands the cross. We are ministers of reconciliation, and this is a day of good tidings.

"To the question, can a Christian use these cries for vengeance as his own? The short answer must surely be No; no more than he should echo the curses of Jeremiah or the protests of Job. ... As for the men of flesh and blood who 'live as enemies of the cross of Christ' or who make themselves our enemies, our instructions are to pray not against them but for them; to turn them from the power of Satan to God; to repay their evil with good; and to choose none of their ways. 'As men in need, who may yet be rescued, they are to be loved and sought; as men who have injured us, they must be forgiven. But as men to follow or to cultivate' — and here the psalms and the New Testament speak with one voice — 'they are to be rejected utterly, as are the principalities and powers behind them.'

"If these passages in the psalms open our eyes to the depths and just deserts of evil, and to the dangers of borrowing its weapons, they have done their work. To say that theirs is not the last word on the subject is no reproach: more work first needed to be done. That work and final word belonged to Christ, and we are its inheritors" (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72 Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, 46-47).

Read Psalm 94

1 The LORD is a God who avenges.

O God who avenges, shine forth.

2 Rise up, Judge of the earth;

pay back to the proud what they deserve.

3 How long, LORD, will the wicked,

how long will the wicked be jubilant?

4 They pour out arrogant words;

all the evildoers are full of boasting.

5 They crush your people, LORD;

they oppress your inheritance.

6 They slay the widow and the foreigner;

they murder the fatherless.

7 They say, "The LORD does not see;

the God of Jacob takes no notice."

8 Take notice, you senseless ones among the people;

you fools, when will you become wise?

9 Does he who fashioned the ear not hear?

Does he who formed the eye not see?

10 Does he who disciplines nations not punish?

Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge?

11 The LORD knows all human plans;

he knows that they are futile.

12 Blessed is the one you discipline, LORD,

the one you teach from your law;

13 you grant them relief from days of trouble,

till a pit is dug for the wicked.

14 For the LORD will not reject his people;

he will never forsake his inheritance.

15 Judgment will again be founded on righteousness,

and all the upright in heart will follow it.

16 Who will rise up for me against the wicked?

Who will take a stand for me against evildoers?

17 Unless the LORD had given me help,

I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death.

18 When I said, "My foot is slipping,"

your unfailing love, LORD, supported me.

19 When anxiety was great within me,

your consolation brought me joy.

20 Can a corrupt throne be allied with you –

a throne that brings on misery by its decrees?

21 The wicked band together against the righteous

and condemn the innocent to death.

22 But the LORD has become my fortress,

and my God the rock in whom I take refuge.

23 He will repay them for their sins

and destroy them for their wickedness;

the LORD our God will destroy them.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle words that identify the main character or subject of each section of Ps 94.
- Place boxes around actions found in Ps 94.
- Draw a line connecting "notice" in v. 7 and v. 8.
- Place brackets around v. 14 showing the reason why God rescues his people.
- Double underline "unfailing love" in v. 18, highlighting God's care.
- Draw a line connecting each word used to describe evil agents (e.g., wicked, evildoers, etc.) in Ps 94.
- Double circle the actions of God in v. 23.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. How does God's vengeance (v. 1) relate to his judgment and payback (v.2)?
 2. In what ways are "the wicked" jubilant (consider vv. 4-7)?
 3. How does the psalmist belittle the senseless ones among the people (consider vv. 8-11)?
 4. How is relief (v. 13) granted to God's people (consider vv. 12-13)?
 5. What was the psalmist communicating when he said, "My foot is slipping" (v. 18)?
 6. Who helped the psalmist according to vv. 17-19? What specific help was offered?
 7. Were "the wicked" insiders, outsiders or both? Explain your answer (see vv. 5-6; 20-21)?
 8. What is the meaning of v. 22 in light of the rest of Psalm 94?
 9. Psalm 94 claims that God will repay and destroy the wicked (v. 23). What thoughts or emotions are stirred up by such claims?
 10. How does the Apostle Paul understand Psalm 94 (see 1 Cor 3:18-20)? How do you understand Psalm 94?
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Ever since the Garden of Eden (Gen 3), followers of God have had to deal with the enemies of God and the evil they express. A major challenge for believers in God is to not behave like unbelievers when unbelievers attack, mistreat or ridicule believers. An equally challenging endeavor for believers is to remain faithful to God and not abandon following him when injustice prevails. The book of Psalms records many heartfelt cries to God for deliverance from evil and for strength to endure. Many of these cries also call for God to “right the wrongs” of the evil with ultimate justice. Psalm 94 would be an example of this type of lament and call for justice. “Psalm 94 is a prayer for the LORD, the judge of the whole world, to vindicate the oppressed by destroying the oppressors. The theme is divine retribution, which is a more precise term than vengeance. The psalmist, speaking for countless believers then and now, lives in the midst of danger and destruction, but anticipates the fulfillment of the promises. Accordingly, on the one hand he exhorts the righteous to live faithfully until the judgment comes, and on the other, the wicked to realize the folly of their way. The structure of the psalm itself is easily followed: the first part is a corporate prayer for judgment on the oppressors (vv. 1-7), the second is an admonition for these senseless oppressors to come to their senses and act wisely (vv. 8-15), and the third part is an individual lament with extensive words of confidence (vv. 16-23)” (A.P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms* (90-150), vol. 3, Kregel Exegetical Library, 96).

The opening verse and the concluding verse of Psalm 94 contain a repetition of the promise of God’s justice. God will avenge (v. 1) and destroy (v. 23) the wicked. We can be doubly sure of this. In between this *inclusio* (vv. 1-3 and vv. 20-23) we have a description of evildoers (vv. 4-11) and promises of God’s blessings upon the upright in heart (vv. 12-19).

The evildoers express arrogance through speech (v. 4) and practice cruelties upon even the most vulnerable (v. 5-6). This arrogance and cruelty is sourced in the assumption that God is either incapable of or uninterested in executing justice (v. 7-11). The psalmist calls such reasoning “senseless,” a rather strong and colorful insult upon the intelligence of those who mock and reject God and his justice.

The identity of these “evildoers” stretches beyond the typical categories of God’s people versus those not his people. While evildoers would include those not of God’s people (“nations” v. 10), it is very possible that the “wicked” had representatives living among and identifying as the people of God. Who else but a “native” could abuse the “foreigner” (v.6)? A return of righteous judgment (v.15) suggests that some had become unrighteous among the people of God. The pinnacle of an internal expression of evil among the descendants of Jacob is the mention of a “corrupt throne” that brings misery through its evil decrees (v. 20). All of Israel’s kings were corrupt, and many of Judah’s sovereigns “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kgs 24:9, 19).

Most lamentable is evil that comes from those who should know better. Hypocritical injustice from insiders often stings more than injustice from outsiders who may not know better.

God’s blessings are promised for those who learn from his law (v. 12). God is a fortress, rock and refuge (v.22) for those who depend upon his help (v. 17). “The Bible clearly teaches that God will destroy all wickedness in the [final] judgment—he may intervene with judgments before then, but ultimately he will establish his righteous reign by destroying the reign of wickedness. But the Bible also teaches that God is patient, desiring that people come to repentance. And so believers must endure the destructive and oppressive works of wickedness until it is time for God to judge. They may seek to champion righteousness in the world, but they will find that their final recourse is prayer, for their comfort and hope is in the LORD. The psalm is a prayer by believers who are oppressed by wicked people in power; it is not about one social system or one country versus another. Psalm 94:11 is cited in 1 Cor 3:20; and 94:14 is used in Rom 11:1-2. This prayer is not just an Old Testament prayer; even in the New Testament prayer continues for the LORD to avenge the death of the saints (Rev 6:9-11). The fact that the righteous turn this over to God shows that they trust his righteousness in ending violence and oppression” (Ross, 109).

Sometimes the justice of God is long in coming. Some of us may never see God’s ultimate justice in our lifetime. “The repeated question ‘How long?’ is more an exclamation than a request for information, and it suggests that this oppressive situation has been going on for a long time (cf. Pss 6:3; 74:10; 80:4; 82:2; 90:13). This protracted condition required a divine remedy. It was intolerable that the wicked would be allowed to celebrate their ascendancy over the righteous, which adds a nasty element of gloating about the wrong they are perpetrating. In contrast to Ps 149:5, when the godly ones exult because of their deliverance by the Lord, here the wrong people [v. 4] are celebrating for the wrong reason” (Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, vol. 13, New American Commentary, 201).

“Though theologically sound, however, these petitions for immediate retribution are inappropriate in the mouth of the church in the present dispensation. 1) Ultimate justice occurs in the eschaton (Rev 20:11-15; cf. Isa 61:1-2 with Mt 13:30; 25:46; Lk 4:18-20; 2 Cor 6:2; 2 Thess 1:5-9), and it is appropriate to pray for the destruction of the wicked at that time of judgment and the avenging of the righteous (Lk 18:1-8; 2 Tim 4:14; Rev 6:9-10). 2) Sin and sinner are now more distinctly differentiated (cf. Eph 6:11-18), allowing the saint both to hate sin and to love the sinner. 3) The saint’s struggle is against spiritual powers of darkness, which he conquers by turning the other cheek and by praying for the forgiveness of enemies through their repentance (Mt 5:39-42, 43-48; 6:14; Lk 6:28, 35; Acts 7:60)” (B.K. Waltke, J.M. Houston, and E. Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary*, 97-98).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *avenges* “To some it may seem to be a defamation of God’s character to say that he is a God of vengeance (plural, ‘vengeances,’ probably a plural of amplification, i.e., ‘thorough vengeance’). That is because in our day vengeance implies intense hatred that is not satisfied until it ‘gets even.’ But the vengeance that belongs to God seeks not to ‘get even’ but to ‘make things even.’ It is distressing to see the wicked oppressing the innocent and the helpless. It is encouraging to know that God will bring the wicked to account – bring them to judgment, exact just retribution for the evil they have done” (S.E. Tesh & W.D. Zorn, *Psalms*, College Press, 197).

v. 1 *shine* “This opening plea is clearly a call for God’s justice to be worked out in the face of present oppression (see vv. 4–7). The idea of shining forth is probably a reference to divine appearance and, clearly, the psalmist is calling on God to manifest himself in power with the aim of restoring justice” (Jamie A. Grant, “Psalms 90–106,” in *Psalms*, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary, 388).

v. 2 *proud* “This term refers to an attitude of heart and mind, but the Hebrew mindset assumes that pride goes beyond questions of attitude to particular patterns of behavior. Normally in the Hebrew Bible, ‘the proud’ are those who by means of their wealth and power see God as an unnecessary abstraction who has absolutely no relevance in their lives (Prov 16:5; Isa 2:11–12). Equally, ‘the proud’ are often characterized as perpetrators of social injustice (e.g., see Prov 16:19), and it is a concept that is frequently associated with blatant wickedness (Job 40:11–12)” (Grant, 389).

v. 2 *pour* “The description starts with their arrogant words (v. 4). Two verbs are used in the first colon: ‘they gush forth’ and ‘they speak’ arrogantly. The two verbs may be translated separately for intensification; but they also may be taken together, the second verb may be subordinated to the first as a temporal clause, so that the verse would say that they gush forth arrogant words when they speak. The verb ‘gush forth’ can be used for any words, words of the wise (Ps. 78:2) as well as of the fool (Ps. 59:7) – here clearly of the wicked. The arrogance of their speech comes from their (naive) belief that God does not pay attention to them” (Ross, 101).

v. 6 *slay* “The wicked (v. 3) do the worst things to the weakest people, as they mercilessly attack those who have no security – the widow, the alien, and the orphan. The people they oppress are the very people for whom the Lord especially cares (cf. Deut 10:18; Pss 10:14, 18; 68:5[6]; 146:9), so the actions of the wicked explicitly reject his values. Rather than referring to an external threat by foreign powers, this likely describes the practice of oppression within the nation as the poor are crushed by the powerful” (Estes, 202).

v. 7 *see* “The oppression of the wicked is matched only by their godless arrogance. Not only do they reject God’s rules concerning the protection of the weak in society, but they are blatant in their declaration that they are able to do so because God, in their opinion, either does not see or is not paying attention. The attitude of the oppressors in Psalm 94 is very similar to the voice of the wicked in Psalm 73:11 – they assume their wickedness will go unpunished because God does not intervene. But the poet points out their folly in the following stanza. The truth is not as it appears to the wicked fools because the reality of the matter is not that God does not intervene in the events of humanity – he simply has not intervened yet” (Grant, 391).

v. 8 *senseless* “Or, ‘brutish among the people’ (kjv) or, ‘dullest ...’ (rsv). Dahood has ‘dolts,’ and JB has ‘you most stupid of men, you fools.’ ‘Dullards’ is another good option. A. A. Anderson (II, 672) suggests the paraphrase: ‘You have behaved like animals among your own people.’ In 96:7, the person is one who ‘does not know,’ a fool who does not understand (see Ps 73:22; Prov 12:1; 30:2). The ‘brutish’ person is one characterized by animal instincts which lead to a stubborn and insensitive will” (Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20, Word Biblical Commentary, 483).

v. 18 *love* “What sustained him through the trouble was the LORD’s loyal love (Ps. 23:6), meaning the way that God intervened in his life to protect him and provide for him (so ‘loyal love’ is a metonymy of cause). Then, in verse 19b the psalmist provides the effect of the loyal love – the LORD’s comforts soothed his spirit. The word ‘your comforts’ (Ps. 119:76) is then a metonymy of effect, the cause being the loyal love. It is put into the plural to intensify the idea. Because in his faithful love God intervened in his distress, his spirit was lifted from a crippling anxiety to a delightful comfort” (Ross, 106).

v. 22 *fortress* “This noun ‘refuge’ is appropriate; the word, along with its verb, has the sense of finding shelter (Ps. 7:1), either from a storm, or from wicked enemies. The LORD is the secure refuge in times of wicked oppression and corrupt government, because the faithful can pray with confidence, knowing that the LORD will never abandon them” (Ross, 107).

v. 23 *destroy* “He, the God of vindication (vv. 1–2), will repay the wicked for ‘their sins’ and ‘their wickedness’ (v. 23), i.e., their boastful words and oppressive acts (vv. 3–7). He will ‘destroy them ... destroy them.’ The repetition of the verb ‘destroy’ is reminiscent of the repetitive opening: ‘the God who avenges, O God who avenges’ (v. 1). In response to the prayer for vindication, the godly hold firm that the kingdom is the Lord’s and that he will vindicate them by destroying the wicked and removing all forms of evil from this world” (Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 717).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

When evil seems to prevail, call upon the LORD to protect and sustain you,
realizing that ultimate justice is coming from him.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

My husband has a green thumb. Not only does he tend the yard quite often, but he also grows beautiful flowers that attract butterflies and bees, as well as yummy herbs for cooking my favorite meals. He has compassion on the transplanted flower and lets it work its way into the garden. Weeds, however, are a different thing. They get the King James treatment — they're "hewn down, and cast into the fire" with zero mercy (Matthew 7:19). Weeding isn't always a fun thing to do, but it's entirely necessary if you want the good plants to grow. Like weeding, discipline is rarely fun but always necessary. We learn in Psalm 94 that God sees and hears all things. He is the judge, and He will discipline as He sees fit. At first read, that sounds like we're portraying God as harsh, but look at verse 12. The person disciplined by God is blessed. God's discipline is an expression of His love, mercy, and grace. Though it can be painful at times, God's discipline launches us into a deeper, abiding relationship with Him. What does discipline look like in your house? Are the kids running amok while you sit back and hope the switch will flip when they're 18 and turn into adults? Or are you so nit-picky, so intense, that you're constantly riding your child every moment? Proper discipline that is an expression of love and handled with grace and mercy should strengthen your relationship with your child while also growing them to be the person God created them to be. Discipline helps the good parts of our kids grow. Keep it up, parents!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Psalm 94

1. What is God called in verse 2?
2. Compare verses 7 and 11. What do you learn about God?
3. What does verse 12 say about the person the Lord disciplines?

What Do You Think?

Have you ever felt anxious?

How could verse 19 encourage you when you're feeling anxious?

What Do You Do?

God sees everything. Look around your room for 10 seconds. Write down everything you see. Now take inventory of all the things you missed.

Isn't it amazing that God sees everything!

CORE COMPETENCY: Eternity

I believe in heaven and hell and that one day Jesus will come again.

MEMORY VERSE: Galatians 5:22-23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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OUR MISSION

Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.