



Byron Brown
Senior Pastor

Adam Wuthnow
Associate Pastor

John Johnson
Worship & Administrative Pastor

Matt Pullen
Student Pastor

Debbie Jolly
Church Secretary

Carolyn Johnson
Administrative Assistant

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF INVERNESS

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First Baptist Church of Inverness
550 Pleasant Grove Road
Inverness, FL 34452



October 2025

FOLLOWING GOD PRAYERFULLY AND PASSIONATELY!

The Great Ambition

It is easy to get distracted by what does not matter.

The church in Corinth was facing numerous obstacles, and Paul was concerned that they might lose sight of their mission to know Christ and make Him known. As with every church since then, there were struggles both within the church and the pressures coming against them from the world around them. Yet Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 5 help us keep the main thing the main thing:

2 Corinthians 5:6-10 ^{NASB} ⁶ Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight— ⁸ we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. ⁹ Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

For Paul, living or dying is not the issue. In fact, the “here and now” is small potatoes compared to the “not yet.” There is much more coming that revolves around being present with the Lord! To L.I.V.E. (Live In View of Eternity) means that we are living our daily lives in the continual recognition of what is yet to come. If we do not, we will waste our lives on the meaningless. Because of our higher calling, we cannot settle for the worldly bells and whistles. We must discipline our lives to live for Him. This grand ambition changes everything! Now our priorities, attitude, decisions, desires, schedule... everything!... uses the filter of His Kingdom coming! Life on earth is temporary, and eternal life is... well... eternal.

So, why do we focus on following God prayerfully and passionately?
Because we ***have as our ambition to be pleasing to Him.***

Why are we connected to one another in the Body of Christ?
Because we ***have as our ambition to be pleasing to Him.***

Why are we worshiping together in unity of heart and mind?
Because we ***have as our ambition to be pleasing to Him.***

Why are we serving for the glory of God?
Because we ***have as our ambition to be pleasing to Him.***

Why are we growing in the faith?
Because we ***have as our ambition to be pleasing to Him.***

Why are we seeking to share the good news with others?
Because we ***have as our ambition to be pleasing to Him.***
Our lives are not just for now but for eternity. And those around us need Him desperately!

Now, more than ever, is a good time to confirm that our ambition is true: ***to please Him!***

By His Grace!

Pastor Byron

Contact Pastor Byron at byron@fbcinverness.com

Worship Ministry



The Top Eight Signs of an Emotionally Unhealthy Christian

I recently came across this article by Pete Scazzero, who led New Life Fellowship Church for 26 years, and co-founded Emotionally Healthy Discipleship, a ministry-transforming church culture that seeks to enable and multiply deeply changed leaders and disciples for the sake of Jesus’ mission in the world. Isn’t that our mission as well?

I was given this great point of wisdom many years ago, *“You cannot lead where you have not already been”*. This basically states that you lead from the front, not by pushing from the rear... You also cannot lead anyone into a healthy relationship with Christ (Discipling) if you yourself are unhealthy in your relationship with Christ...

Pete speaks to this mission much better than I ever could, so I will leave His words here for you to digest...

A number of years ago I had to face the fact that I would never grow *spiritually* beyond my level of health *emotionally*. I had many unhealthy patterns of thought and behavior that had dug ruts in my soul, and they were wreaking havoc in my personal life and in the church I was leading.

The reality was that my discipleship and spirituality had not touched a number of deep internal wounds and sin patterns. I was stuck at an immature level of spiritual and emotional development. And my way of living the Christian life was not transforming the deep places in my life.

In short order, here are the top eight signs that I was an emotionally *unhealthy* Christian:

1. Using God to Run from God

I tended to create a great deal of “God-activity” in order to avoid difficult areas in my life God wants to change. I know I’m in trouble when I . . .

- Pray about God doing my will, not about me surrendering to his will
- Demonstrate “Christian behaviors” so significant people think well of me
- Use biblical truth to judge and devalue others
- Make pronouncements like, “The Lord told me I should do this,” when the truth is, “I *think* the Lord told me to do this”
- Use Scripture to justify my sinful patterns instead of evaluating them under God’s lordship

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Birthdays

Kathy Kunze	10/2	Roger Biron	10/13	Rob Ramos	10/20
Jessie Shelton	10/2	Debbie Jolly	10/13	Tommy Edwards	10/21
Cassidy Swartzfager	10/2	Julie Moomaw	10/13	Charlie Barnes	10/22
Betty White	10/4	Delores Kelly	10/14	John Johnson	10/24
Steve Weaver	10/6	Mike Locklear	10/15	Ed Staten	10/24
Jessy Cernich	10/7	Megan De Noma	10/16	Cassy Cerny	10/26
Susan Wilson	10/7	Lauren Maxson	10/17	Nida Hale	10/26
Liam Bowser	10/8	Lois Wear	10/18	Faye Hoff	10/27
Brielle Lamb	10/8	Fellicia Yerkey	10/18	Adeline De Noma	10/28
Brantley Steed	10/9	Cookie Cortez	10/19	Judy Lidtke	10/28
Patti Strain	10/9	Matthias De Noma	10/19	Ray Morrison	10/28
Jodie Bartell	10/10	Rohini DeSilva	10/20	Debbie Wheatley	10/28
Tristin Rowe	10/10	Ayden Mansfield	10/20	Samantha Bitters	10/29

Thank You Notes

Thank you for the donations given to Grace Christian School to help with financial assistance for field trips. Your generosity in helping make our first field trip possible was greatly appreciated.

Becca Wylupek, Administrator
Grace Christian School

Thank you for all the prayers, phone calls, cards and every expression of sympathy in the loss of my sister, Dee Williams. She loved the church and missed it so much after she moved. She loved working with the seniors. An extra special thank you for the monetary donations in her name.

Brenda and Jim Taylor and Family.

Dear First Baptist Church of Inverness,
Thank you for your \$100.00 donation that you made on 8/25/2025 for the Stuff the Bus donation. Every act of your generosity helps us further our mission to support the Citrus County School District and to enhance the quality of education for present and future generations.
Your support of our students is greatly appreciated. We are grateful to know that the impact on the students and teachers of Citrus county comes from the generosity of donors like you.

Sincerely,
Shaunda Burdette, Executive Director
Citrus County Education Foundation

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE OCC PACKING PARTY

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22ND

TIME: 2:00 PM DAYTIME PARTY
6:00 PM EVENING PARTY

LOCATION: FELLOWSHIP HALL

JOIN US AS WE PACK BOXES TO BRING JOY AND THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS TO CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD.

BRING YOUR FILLED BOXES AND EXTRA ITEMS TO PACK MORE BOXES.

CONTACT SANDY WATSON FOR MORE INFORMATION AT 863-261-3119 OR WATSONSANDY48@GMAIL.COM

SUGGESTED DONATION: SHIPPING COST OF \$10.00 PER BOX. IF YOU WOULD LIKE, YOU MAY PRE-PAY SHIPPING COSTS ONLINE (WHERE YOU WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO FOLLOW YOUR BOX AND SEE WHAT COUNTRY IT GOES TO). TO PRE-PAY SHIPPING COSTS, PLEASE GO TO: <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/label-options>

Welcome To The Family

New Church Member
Chris Maxson

Memorials & Honors

In Memory of Dee Williams
For: Maguire State Mission Offering
From: Larry & Sherry White

In Memory of Mary Argo
For: Operation Christmas Child
From: Larry & Sherry White

In Memory of Mrs. Mary Pearl Luff
For: GCS Field Trips
From: Vikki Castel Croft

In Memory of Pam Harrell
For: Operation Christmas Child
From: Larry & Sherry White
From: Betty Kidwell

In Memory of Bob Turner
For: Operation Christmas Child
From: Larry & Sherry White
For: General Offering
From: Albert & Marilyn Jordan

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2. Ignoring Anger, Sadness, and Fear

Like most Christians, I was taught that almost all feelings are unreliable and not to be trusted. It is true that some Christians follow their feelings in an unhealthy, unbiblical way. It is more common, however, to encounter Christians who do not believe they have permission to admit their feelings or express them openly. This applies especially to such “difficult” feelings as fear, sadness, shame, anger, hurt, and pain. And yet, how can we listen to what God is saying and evaluate what is going on inside when we cut ourselves off from our emotions?

3. Denying the Impact of the Past on the Present

For years, I was under the delusion that because I accepted Jesus, my old life was no longer in me. My past before Christ was painful. I wanted to forget it. I never wanted to look back. Life was so much better now that Jesus was with me. I thought I was free.

But I will never forget the first time we made a genogram—a diagram outlining some of the patterns of our families. It revealed that our marriage bore a striking resemblance to that of our parents’. Even though we had been committed Christians for almost twenty years, our ways of relating mirrored much more our family of origin than the way God intended for his new family in Christ.

The work of growing in Christ actually demands we go back in order to break free from unhealthy and destructive patterns that prevent us from loving ourselves and others as God designed.

4. Doing for God Instead of Being with God

Work *for* God that is not nourished by a deep interior life *with* God will eventually be contaminated by other things such as ego, power, needing approval from others, and buying into the wrong ideas of success and the mistaken belief that we can’t fail. We become “human doings” not “human beings.” Our experiential sense of worth and validation gradually shifts from God’s unconditional love for us in Christ to our works and performance. Our activity for God can only properly flow from a life *with* God.

5. Spiritualizing Away Conflict

Perhaps one of the most destructive myths alive in the Christian community today is the belief that smoothing over disagreements or “sweeping them under the rug” is part of what it means to follow Jesus. Jesus shows us that healthy Christians do not avoid conflict. His life was filled with it! He was in regular conflict with the religious leaders, the crowds, the disciples—even his own family. Out of a desire to bring true peace, Jesus disrupted the false peace all around him. He refused to spiritualize conflict avoidance.

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6. Covering Over Brokenness, Weakness, and Failure

The pressure to present an image of ourselves as strong and spiritually “together” hovers over most of us. We feel guilty for not measuring up, for not making the grade. We forget that not one of us is perfect and that we are all sinners.

The Bible does not spin the flaws and weaknesses of its heroes. Moses was a murderer. Hosea’s wife was a prostitute. Peter rebuked God! Noah got drunk. Jonah was a racist. Jacob was a liar. John Mark deserted Paul. Elijah burned out. Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal. Thomas doubted. Moses had a temper. Timothy had ulcers. And all these people send the same message: that every human being on earth, regardless of their gifts and strengths, is weak, vulnerable, and dependent on God and others.

7. Living Without Limits

I was taught that good Christians constantly give and tend to the needs of others. I wasn’t supposed to say no to requests for help because that would be selfish. The core spiritual issue here relates to our limits and our humanity. We are not God. We cannot serve everyone in need.

Why don’t we take appropriate care of ourselves? Why are so many Christians, frantic, exhausted, overloaded, and hurried? Few Christians make the connection between love of self and love of others. As Parker Palmer said, “Self-care is never a selfish act—it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others.”⁶

8. Judging Other People’s Spiritual Journey

This has always been one of the greatest dangers in Christianity. Sadly, we often turn our differences into moral superiority or virtues. By failing to let others be themselves before God and move at their own pace, we inevitably project onto them our own discomfort with their choice to live life differently than we do. Like Jesus said, unless I first take the log out of my own eye, knowing that I have huge blind spots, I am dangerous. I must see the extensive damage sin has done to every part of who I am—emotion, intellect, body, will, and spirit—before I can attempt to remove the speck from the eye of another (Matthew 7:1–5).

God, as I look over this list, the only thing I can say is, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Thank you that I stand before you in the righteousness of Jesus, in his perfect record and performance, not my own. I ask that you would not simply heal the symptoms of what is not right in my life, but that you would surgically remove all that is in me that does not belong to you. As I think about what I have read, Lord, pour light over the things that are hidden. May I see clearly as you hold me tenderly.

In Jesus’ name, amen.

This article is excerpted from Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Pete Scazzero

For more information about Pete and Emotionally Healthy Discipleship go to www.emotionallyhealthy.org or follow him on Facebook or Twitter @petescazzero

Contact Pastor John at john@fbcinverness.com

SBC Messengers

We will be voting on Messengers for the Southern Baptist Convention at the Quarterly Business Meeting on Wednesday, October 15th. Please contact Pastor Byron at byron@fbcinverness.com if you are interested in being a messenger.

Nature Coast Baptist Association Annual Meeting

2025 ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Advancing the Gospel Together

Mark your calendars for an amazing evening of worship, celebration and the Word.

October 21 - Sign In: 5:15 PM - Start 6:00 PM

Speaker: Paul Purvis, Lead Pastor
Mission Hills Church Temple Terrace

FIRST BAPTIST, INVERNESS

550 Pleasant Grove Rd. - Inverness, FL 34450



Ministry of Warmth



Greetings from the Ministry of Warmth!

Psalm 100:2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs. (NIV)

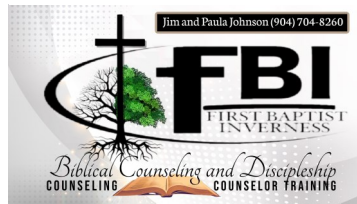
Come and join us as we knit and crochet items for the Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes and for local ministries, reaching others with God’s love.

Some items we make are hats, hair scrunchies, headbands, bracelets, and washcloths. The hats can also be made using looms.

Also, we have the knitting needles, crochet hooks, looms, and yarn available. We thank God for His generous provision to our ministry.

We meet every Thursday afternoon 2:00—4:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. For more information or questions, please contact Willie Howe at 352-726-1252.

Biblical Counseling



Salvation

What does the word “salvation” mean to you? It may imply ideas of deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and dependability. It is a word, the great inclusive word of the Gospel, gathering onto itself all the redemptive acts and processes, such as justification, redemption, grace, propitiation, imputation, forgiveness, sanctification, and glorification.

As Romans 1:16 (ESV) states, “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.” We can think of salvation in three tenses: have been saved, are being saved, and will be saved.

First, as Christians, we *have been saved* from the guilt and penalty of sin (Luke 7:50; 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; Eph 2:5, 8; 2 Tim 1:9) and are secure. Jesus told the woman who washed His feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 7:47-50).

Second, we *are being saved* from the habit and slavery of sin (Rom 6:14; 8:2; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 2:19-20; Phil 1:19; 2:12-13; 2 Thess 2:13). Christians, true believers, are a new person. Their old self has gone away, and their new self has been reborn in Christ Jesus. We have a new identity in Christ in His death and resurrection, showing the work of the Holy Spirit.

And third, we Christians *will be saved* at the Lord’s return, from all bodily infirmities that are the result of sin and God’s curse upon the sinful world (Rom 8:18-23; 1 Cor 15:42-44), and brought into entire conformity to Christ (Rom 13:11; Heb 10:36; 1 Pet 1:5; 1 John 3:2). The whole creation of our Lord has been groaning since the first sin that corrupted it. We look forward to the day when Christ returns. We eagerly await our adoption as sons and daughters, the redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23). And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good (Rom 8:28).

Our salvation is not based on any good work we might do in an attempt to earn eternal life. Paul understood that salvation is a gift from God through Jesus Christ. Good works demonstrate inner faith (Eph 2:10; James 2:21-22). Additionally, faith in Christ is not merely an intellectual acknowledgment that God exists. Faith involves understanding the Gospel as a fact (1 Cor 15:1-4).

Salvation also involves repentance, which means turning away from our sins. Repentance isn't just feeling sorry for our sins; Paul taught and believed that both repentance and faith are needed for a person to be saved (Acts 20:20-21). Jesus taught that we must repent when He said, “Unless you repent, you too will all perish” (Luke 13:3; 24:46-47; Mark 1:15). We can agree that a person must exercise faith and repentance to receive the eternal reward of heaven.

Salvation comes by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, not by our own works (Rom 3:27-28; 4:1-8; 6:23; Eph 2:8). The divine order is: first salvation, followed by works (Eph 2:9-10; Titus 3:5-8). Without our true belief and faith in the great work of Christ our Savior on the Cross, His death for our sins and His resurrection are essential for our salvation. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice (Heb 9:11-15). Because of His sacrifice, we receive the “righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). In addition, Christ’s resurrection means we will also be raised on the day of our Lord. Accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior is essential for our salvation. There is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12).

Do you question your salvation or salvation by faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Would you like assistance in addressing your doubt? Please reach out to our counseling services:

Jim and Paula Johnson, (904) 704-8260/(904) 860-0986/john525136@gmail.com,
Pastor Byron Brown (352) 726-1252/byron@fbcinverness.com

Book Review

No God But One, Allah or Jesus?: A Former Muslim Investigates the Evidence for Islam and Christianity. By Nabeel Qureshi. Zondervan, 2016.

In a world of 8 Billion people, over more than half identify themselves as either a Christian or a Muslim. Both religions have over 2 billion adherents. With technology and advancements in communication and travel, the world has brought together countries which have historically been separated by geopolitical divides.

Another challenge is the increasing immigration from middle eastern nations into Western countries such as Europe, Canada, Australia, and the United States. In these western countries, many have given up on faith and family. The average family size in Europe is 2.2, whereas in the Middle East it is 6.2. While many nations in the Middle East have remained officially Islamic, European nations have tended toward secularism. In France, one in ten are now Muslim. Germany and the UK are very close to similar numbers. The scenario in the United States and Canada is not far removed from that of Europe. Islam is growing.

Christianity is growing, but Islam is growing faster. So, it has become increasingly more likely today that you will encounter a Muslim in America than you would have 50 years ago. Nabeel Qureshi, who has since gone to be with the Lord, converted from Islam to Christianity. He spent years studying and lovingly engaging with Muslims. In this book, Nabeel examines the claims, differences, and evidences of both Islam and Christianity in order to lay out which is correct.

While this book serves as a great textbook on the differences in worldviews, Nabeel’s main desire with this book is not just for it to be a textbook, but an earnest evangelistic appeal to Muslims to turn to Christ.

I recommend this book as great way to lovingly to talk to your neighbors about Christ.

Contact Pastor Adam at adam@fbcinverness.com

Mission Dignity Offering



Sunday, October 12th

Mission:Dignity® honors retirement-aged Southern Baptist ministers, workers and widows struggling to meet basic needs through advocacy and financial assistance. Mission:Dignity is the heart of GuideStone® and has been at the center of their work since they started more than 100 years ago. Please pray about the amount you will give. The envelopes will be in the bulletin on Sunday, October 12th.

Women's Ministry



Four Corner Sisters
a ministry of First Baptist Church, Inverness

While reading my very favoritist devotion book, I was challenged to consider all the people and things I am thankful for. Thanksgiving has its own month so I realize I'm a bit early with this theme. Let's choose this extra month to show our gratitude, as well.

From the ABC's Brunch there was enough money given to purchase every single book that was on their list. Thank you! So many people are being blessed by your generosity.

For the 2 young ladies who sang and played the piano so we could worship, thank you Sophia and Kayla. Again, thank you, Sophia for sharing your new book with us! May God continue to bless you as you write more books.

Thank you to the library ladies for sharing from your hearts about the ministry that the library has. It is not just a room with books. So much comes to life in the books on those shelves. Thank you Sherry, Sherry, and Tiffany.

For the Women's Ministry Team – Tiffany, Gayle, Kim, Amber, Linda, Karen, Taylor, Sandy, Cheri, and Tina – thank you for your servant hearts and the many hours you work to make events reflect God in so many ways.

There are even some men who come alongside us to help with technology and setup of the room. We very much appreciate their assistance. Thank you Matt D and John J.

October 17 is the fulfillment of a dream the team has had for a few years. The relationship of mother and son has not been celebrated and we want to change that. All sons, bring your mothers! Mothers invite your sons – even those who live a distance away. Come join us at 6 PM in the Fellowship Hall for some food, lots of games, and a chance for mothers and sons to interact with each other. As always there is a sign-up either online in the church planning center app or in the lobby.

Our Celebration Luncheon will be November 15. Mark your calendars! Let Tiffany or Jana know if you'd like to be a hostess of a table or check-out the Women's Ministry area in the lobby.

"I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. 1:4

"I thank my God for every remembrance of you." Phil. 1:3

I am thankful for you. Who are you thankful for? Then, go tell them.

Pastor Appreciation Month



October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Please take the time to thank our pastors and their families for their tireless dedication and faithfulness to our Lord and to First Baptist Church of Inverness. If you would like to donate to the Mission:Dignity Offering, it would be greatly appreciated.

Embrace Grace



We are excited to announce the launch of a new women's ministry, Embrace Grace, beginning October 1. This 12-week program provides emotional, practical, and spiritual support for single pregnant women, sharing with them the hope of God's love and grace.

The ministry is made possible through women volunteers who feel called to walk alongside and encourage these brave young women. As part of the program, our church family will also have the opportunity to bless them by hosting a baby shower—an event that both celebrates their choice for life and helps provide for their babies' needs.

Embrace Grace meets on Wednesday from 6:00—7:00 pm in Room 165. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Sandy Norrid at 704-962-2612. Keep an eye out for more details on the baby shower, volunteer opportunities, gift ideas, and other ways to get involved!

Mailbox Bible Club



Report for August 2025

The Mailbox Bible Club continues to seek God's plan for our ministry. Our student enrollment is maintaining at 196 and we have several locations that are rapidly increasing their participation.

We mailed 319 lessons in July and awarded 11 certificates to students who completed a series of lessons.

We are continuing to see our student numbers increase in several prison units. This is usually a result of several of our students getting together for Bible study and then they continue to refer new students.

Our praise report for this month is from a new student who happened to find a one of our lessons at the water fountain. She wrote us and said she would like to enroll in our courses. We pray for each of our mailings and we ask God to direct the lessons to the person or persons He decides. We always rejoice when we hear about an 'unusual' delivery of a lesson.

Please continue to pray for our ministry.