

Elder Encouragement to FBC, 9 August 2025

Almost 24 years ago God called Raleigh and Mary to Fellowship Bible Church to lead and participate in His plan to make Himself known in Colorado Springs and beyond.

We have observed clearly from their lives and teaching that according to God's plan they were given a passion for the truth of God's Word and proclaiming the Free Grace of God and participation in God's Mission.

Over these years they have poured out mercy, love, and truth to the people of Fellowship Bible Church.

Through their teaching and preaching we have become firmly grounded in the truth of God's Word. The people of FBC can teach and defend God's Word of Truth.

By their leadership and encouragement, our children have had unsurpassed teaching and care. Many of those who have been the youth of FBC are now young adults, strong and courageously living life on Mission to make Christ known.

Raleigh and Mary have given us a vision and passion for being a missional community and have helped us experience more of life together in Christ.

Their decision to resign from FBC brings sorrow to each of us.

We love and honor them.

They still have much to offer in the mission of bringing glory to God.

We are confident that God will bless them and their ministry as they continue to fulfill God's call on their lives.

We as elders would like to affirm that we continue to hold fast to the values of the truth of God's Word, to its teaching of Free Grace, and to our calling to participate in God's Mission.

We expect there to be emotional and logistical challenges in the weeks ahead for all of us. We ask for your prayers and patience.

We also would like you to know that we are willing to meet with any of you to answer your questions to the degree we are able to share, and to discuss future plans.

Your elders,

Greg Plett

Tim Porter

Loren Muehlius

Larry Dearing

Sandy Billings

I add a few thoughts of my own. The other elders may or may not agree with what I have to say here or with the wisdom of sharing it at this point, so please direct any questions or criticisms about what I say next specifically to me.

About ten years after Paul and Barnabus' disagreement that led to them going separate directions on God's Mission, Paul wrote a letter to the Phillipians. In Chapter 4, he addresses two women in the church who are having some kind of serious dispute. He recognizes how easy it is for the evil one, the adversary, the accuser to gain a foothold in our hearts and minds in situations like this, perhaps from his own personal experience with Barnabus and Mark. In that context, Paul writes the following in Phillipians 4:

Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

(It's a command. Paul repeats it a second time to remind us that we can always expect the Lord to act to bring about LIFE no matter how grim the circumstances might appear.)

Phil. 4:5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

(We don't have to fix the other person or the situation; the Lord is present and is at work.)

Phil. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

(Don't be anxious. Don't be distracted by fearful thoughts. God knows that we have needs of all kinds. We can ask God regarding both the general things and the specific things, but Paul adds, don't forget the thanksgiving!)

Phil. 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(That's what we need most. We need for our hearts and minds to be guarded by the peace of God. Guarded from what? Guarded from attacks by the accuser. So, what about when we're tempted to slander the other person (or even God Himself) in our hearts and minds?)

Phil. 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true [about the other person], whatever is honorable [about the other person], whatever is right [about the other person], whatever is pure [about the other person], whatever is lovely [about the other person], whatever is of good repute [about the other person], if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise [about the other person], dwell on these things.

Phil. 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

(Paul has had experience in this and has learned from it and is passing that on to us. If we listen to Paul's teaching here and follow it, not only will the peace of God guard our hearts and minds but the God of peace Himself will be with us.)

– Greg Plett