



Season 13: Episode 11 | Kristen Deede Johnson | What Does It Mean To Live Out Your Faith?

Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanna la Fleur. I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode.

Today, Kristen Deede Johnson will be interviewed by CBS Ambassador, Reverend Dr. Andrew Stirling. Dr. Kristen Deede Johnson is the 11th principal of Wycliffe College, part of Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto. She came to Wycliffe College from Western Theological Seminary, an evangelical and ecumenical seminary in Holland, Michigan, where she was Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs, as well as G.W. and Edna Haworth Professor of Educational Ministries and Leadership.

After completing her undergraduate studies at the University of Virginia, she pursued graduate studies at St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews in St. Andrews, Scotland, where she earned a PhD in Theology. As an administrative leader in the theological area of education, Dr. Johnson has significant experience in such areas as strategic planning, developing and implementing academic and external programs in ways that both serve the mission of the seminary and the needs of the church, as well as she has been establishing centers and recruiting faculty to enhance the impact of the institution. She's widely published by both popular and academic publishers and a sought after thought leader on radio and podcasts.

So, enjoy this rich conversation.

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Andrew Stirling: Kristen, I'm so delighted that you could join us as a guest on Scripture Untangled.

I have wanted to have this conversation with you ever since I attended your installation at Wycliffe College, and I've thought what a wonderful opportunity for us to be able to have a conversation about your faith and your life and the views that you have on the future of the college and the church.

To help our audience frame who you are, please tell us something about your background in the faith and how you moved particularly freely between an Episcopalian and a Reformed background.

Kristen Deede Johnson: Thank you.

Well, it's an honor to be here. I appreciate the invitation. I'm looking forward to the conversation.

There's some background about me that may be helpful. I grew up primarily outside of Washington, D.C. in the United States in a family that was minimally churchgoing, I would say, or for a stretch was when I was quite young and then stopped attending church. So, my journey towards faith was really through friends who brought me with their families to church beginning in grade five.

I was actually living in London for a couple of years. And then back in the Washington, D.C. area, a friend invited me to her local Episcopal church youth group, and I started going and eventually had a kind of more significant faith experience where I sensed I was beginning to know God more fully and very committed to a life of faith and Scripture and churchgoing, probably from age 14 onwards. So that was in an Episcopal church setting with, I'd say, sort of an evangelical ethos.

In my university years, probably went a little more away from the Anglican tradition, a little more sort of college parachurch ministry and a local non-denominational church. And then after university, for reasons I can go into, I ended up returning to the

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Episcopal church with some conviction and intentionality and really sensed a calling somehow to being a part of the Episcopal church, which is the name of the Anglican Church of Canada in the U.S. context.

Andrew Stirling: That's helpful to our guests, to our viewers, yes.

Kristen Deede Johnson: Then ended up in the U.K. for graduate school in Scotland and was part of the Scottish Episcopal church there while I was studying Trinitarian theology and really invited through the Scottish context into probably a more traditionally Reformed perspective. Well, I should nuance that. Maybe not more traditionally Reformed.

For those following with nuance, maybe a Barthian or Torrance perspective on the Reformed tradition. I know that's a very specific branch. I saw a lot of compatibility, you know, these traditions that have roots in the Reformation, where God is central, the Bible understood as a primary source of revelation pointing to Jesus Christ or, you know, the Word pointing to the Word made flesh, very central.

And there are pockets of the Reformed tradition that are very intentional about things like along the Christian calendar and being attentive to how we worship liturgically and also sacramentally. So, all of those I sensed I could hold together so that when I ended up meeting my husband, who was ordained in the Dutch Reformed tradition, I felt like I could make that move with him. And we ended up getting our first positions, both of us at Hope College, which is a liberal arts college in the United States, part of the Dutch Reformed world.

And that's where we made our home for about 20 years. And then at some point, I moved to Western Theological Seminary, which is a seminary, part of that same church family. And then from there, I felt very grateful to be returning to the Anglican tradition with this move to Wycliffe, in part because of that sense I had in my early 20s, that I was rooted in the Anglican tradition for a reason and that God had something for me in a calling there.

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So, this feels sort of like the long fulfillment of that sense that I had way back when.

Andrew Stirling: Kristin, if I could just sort of return to some of the things that you've said and sort of revisit them a little bit, because I know this would be helpful for our audience. I mean, you originally studied, if I'm correct, political theory, and that was your academic pursuit.

How did you shift from studying political theory to studying theology, as you said, at St. Andrews? I mean, what happened to you spiritually, personally, convictionally, between those moments?

Kristen Deede Johnson: Oh, thank you for asking. You know, as I mentioned, grew up largely in the Washington, D.C. area with a couple of rounds overseas because of my father's employment. So, I think, you know, one of my mentors said a lot of scholarship is veiled autobiography, and I think you can see that in the things I've studied, you know, growing up in Washington, D.C. There's a lot of politics in the air.

And then, you know, trying to intersect that as a new Christian with faith and a sense of calling and what am I called to, categories like what is God's will for your life, you know, not categories I grew up with, you know, that sort of introduced into my life as a teenager and then a university student.

So, I did a lot of wrestling, and I would say simultaneously being very involved in youth ministry and college ministry and watching all of us really wrestle with what does it mean to follow Jesus Christ? You know, how do we really do that? What does that mean in our personal lives? What does that mean for what we study, for what we want to do with our work? How do we offer that to God? And it seemed like there were barriers, like there was sincere desire, but we didn't always have the categories or know how to live fully as disciples.

And so that, looking back, I think that question or those questions, like what does it mean? What is God asking of us as followers of Jesus Christ? And how do we get there? And what are some of the things that get in the way? I'd say that's the thread

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through my whole journey as a scholar. I never intended to be an academic. I just kept asking questions, and that led me into further study, into relationships with academics in a mentoring way, and then further study, and then ultimately into theological education. Where I had the privilege of asking those questions, you know, on behalf of the church, on behalf of seminaries, you know, who are we trying to form as students, and who are they trying to form and be a part of God's work in parishes and churches?

So, the shift doesn't feel as dramatic to me, because I think the earliest questions were me trying to understand layers of how politics and culture shape us, the places we live shape us, the cultural moments in which we live. These do have a shaping influence on us as Christians.

So, trying to become aware of that, to see that, because it's hard. People talk about culture as, you know, if you're a fish living in water, you don't know about water, you just live in it, right? So, like we live in certain cultures, but they're not inherently compatible with the Kingdom of God, nor do I believe they're incompatible. So doing that discernment wrestling work as part of our discipleship, that was really significant to me to come to understand.

And probably what propelled me into graduate school was thinking, okay, I may be called into ministry, I believe I need to better understand these cultural layers, because all the people I'll be ministering with, you know, how are we being shaped by culture as we try to live out our faith, and how do we live faithfully?

Andrew Stirling: I think, Kristen, one thing that you mentioned earlier on was that you, in your graduate studies, you concentrated on the Trinity. And I think, you know, as someone, as you know, like myself, who's been steeped in writing and reading about the Trinity, a lot of our lay people would go, I mean, the Trinity, why would the Trinity be important? Now, I don't need the discourse on all of Trinitarian theology, but why the Trinity and the Who of the Trinity? Just for the lay person, Kristen, help us with that.

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Kristen Deede Johnson: Oh, love that question.

Yeah, I think for me, honestly, people sometimes say, I don't know if you've heard the joke about seminary being cemetery where your faith goes to die, or, you know, studying theology is the worst thing you could do as a Christian. For me, it was the absolute opposite. You know, having gone to a public university where we didn't have confessional theology, I could study religion and Christianity and other religious traditions.

But moving on to a graduate school where we were studying Christian theology and Trinitarian theology, absolutely, the Spirit used that to enliven my faith and to invite me into a much, I think, deeper and richer experience of God's grace than I'd ever had before.

So if the first chapter I was just describing of my study was sort of thinking about culture and how that shapes us, I'd say chapter two, as or more significant, was discovering the importance of theology and how all of our assumptions about how we grow in our faith, you know, books like *The Pursuit of Holiness* were kind of, you know, big for a stretch in my early Christian life. And that, I think I could use that book.

I don't mean to single that out in a harmful way, but it put a lot of the onus on me. I was a type A person from Washington, D.C., which is the type A area, and then I became a Christian. I felt like, what am I going to do for God to change the world? And I really felt burdened.

Some for good, but ultimately, I think unhelpfully and really unfaithfully to what Scripture teaches us, which is that God is the primary One at work in the world. This is God's world. God longs for the reconciliation of the whole world.

Jesus Christ came for that. He will return again to bring it fully and in between; Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit continue to be at work.

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And when I enter in as a disciple and in ministry, I am participating in the work that God is doing. But I'm not the one primarily responsible for that work. That just took so much weight off my shoulders in a helpful way, because I was already experiencing some burnout.

Because it just seemed like, I don't know, I mean, I don't want to... For some people, this can be quite motivating, but you may be the only Bible people ever read was kind of a common sentiment at the time. I think the idea was, take your witness seriously. And I appreciate that intention.

But to me, it just changed everything to realize God longs for everyone to know Him even more than I do. And to trust that the Holy Spirit is doing everything God can to make God known and invites me to be a part of that, sometimes has to work in spite of me, because I may mess up and say or do the wrong thing. It's just putting all of that into a Trinitarian framework.

And maybe even more fundamentally, I should have started here, understanding from Paul and other places like John Calvin, you know, that I am beloved in Christ. I am adopted. I am in union with Christ by the Holy Spirit before I do anything for God.

You know, and that's the beginning. From there, I can offer everything I have. But it's not because I work for God.

It's because I'm beloved and adopted and as part of this family that I get to be a part of we together, guided by God.

Andrew Stirling: I've just been reading *The Reformed Pastor* by Richard Baxter. And I mean, it is just the most amazing book.

And he talks about that very thing. I mean, it is not for us to have to worry or to be concerned about whether or not we initiate the Kingdom or bring about the Kingdom. We rely on God.

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We rely on Christ. We minister in that power. And it's the most refreshing book that I've read. And it's for our audience. It's about four to 500 years old. I mean, it's just an ancient wisdom as well.

You are in a rather unique position because you're the first principal of Wycliffe College who is a layperson and not ordained. What do you bring, Kristen, as a layperson to being a principal of a theological college? And how do you sort of identify with those who are specifically seeking ordination in the Anglican Church primarily, but also, as we know from Wycliffe, beyond the Anglican Church? So, what do you uniquely bring from your perspective as a layperson?

Kristen Deede Johnson: I think these ongoing questions that I've shared about what does, I guess I'd put it this way, deep formation in Christ look like for all of us as we're trying to live out our faith, as we're trying to respond to the grace God has given us? That's always been my driving question. We didn't use formation language a couple of decades ago.

But now that that's more common, I realize, oh, that's what I was after. What does it mean to be formed as Christians and live out our faith, live out our calling, understand our work as part of our discipleship, understand our community involvement? I think all of those lenses, I do think a lay perspective is helpful. I mean, certainly pastors are wrestling with that as well, and hopefully wrestling with that on behalf of the laity and their ministries.

And at the same time, calling can feel a bit different to those who are called into, say, ordained ministry, and the rest of us trying to figure out how is all of our life a calling? As Paul puts in Romans 12, we want to offer all of our lives as living sacrifices. And what does that mean? And how does discipleship intersect with that? So, I'm really quite passionate, as you can tell, that theology matters for that and theological formation. And I'm also really wanting to cultivate a vision of discipleship.

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I know that's not everyone's default language, but a vision of the Christian life where our churches are helping all of us, whether ordained or not, offer our lives to God and figure out how to live intentionally in pursuit of the kingdom of God, as Jesus would put it, and Matthew, other places as well. So, and I do think you hear these stereotypes. They're not always helpful, but there can be.

I just had a conversation on Sunday after I preached to a local church with a woman saying, you know, I spent decades not understanding how my faith mattered to my work. And, you know, wanting a church that can help her make those connections. And there are, you know, books about this and others in the faith and work movement that are really trying to address this.

But, you know, if most of our lives are spent outside of the church walls, you know, wanting to make sure we're really being attentive to that in ministry and that our clergy are bringing that lens of how are we equipping and shaping and inviting into that deep formation. So that's some of what I hope to bring, as well as, you know, those cultural layers. You know, it's a really complicated time politically and culturally.

So, I think my roots studying that, I hope also would be something that we're wrestling with at Wycliffe and trying to help the church wrestle with, that I think we're all struggling with, you know, ordinarily.

Andrew Stirling: Christine, you sometimes use the image, and I've seen this in a couple of things that you've both said and written, of the image of a growing tree to describe the ministry of the church. And that certainly captures the imagination.

How precisely does that represent God's work in our midst? And what is, who is this growing tree of which you speak?

Kristen Deede Johnson: I do love tree imagery from the Bible. It's true. So, I appreciate you bringing it.

Andrew Stirling: There's quite a lot of it. Yes, got it.

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Kristen Deede Johnson: Yeah, I mean, once you start to see it, your eyes think, oh yeah, from the opening pages of Genesis, you know, to Psalm 1, to the closing pages of Revelation, the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

I mean, this is a thread all throughout our text. And as one who has thought a lot about discipleship, there can be go-to discipleship verses, right? You know, make disciples of all nations and seek first the Kingdom of God. And certainly, I uphold those verses.

But I have started to wonder if some of these verses around trees might be a helpful complement to our conceptions of discipleship.

And part of that is because trees, and I think the plural, I would say, captures sort of the calling of the Christian life, you know, more than the singular tree, because so you are called into the people of God, the family of God, you know, with deep roots in the living waters of Christ, so that we're ultimately and always sustained by the work of God, stronger together in that calling to reconciliation that we have within the body of Christ, that places like Ephesians speak to Christ is the one who broke down the dividing walls between all of us.

But it takes some work, you know, so these sort of, you can think of our roots, you know, underground, you know, sort of working together to figure out how to be united in the body.

And ultimately, the branches, you know, the fruit, offering life-giving oxygen, you know, taking in the coming, I said, offering life-giving oxygen to the world, offering beauty, offering shade, play. The *Book of Jonah* tells us the difference between life and death sometimes, right? Shade and not shade. So, you know, as I think about what is the calling of God's people in the wider world, wouldn't it be amazing if we were known as trees that offered life and beauty to the world and by God's grace? I mean, because it's slow work too.

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I think the other thing about trees in terms of God's work is they typically take a long time. And so that sort of hero mentality, the save the day mentality I spoke about earlier, kind of slowing down and recognizing we need to be deeply rooted in God, united to one another, really rooted and attentive to a local place, and then allowing God through time to offer life and beauty through us, through our witness. And I hope in ways that really can offer the abundant life that God promises through Christ to our local communities in the wider world.

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Andrew Stirling: It's a great image. It's a great image and it captured my imagination when you first spoke about it.

Your professional background, and you've alluded to this already, Kristen, was formed in the crucible of the American church, the U.S. church. What do you see,

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having been in Canada just a while, the differences and the similarities between the church in the United States and the ecclesiology and the practice of the church in Canada?

So, differences and similarities. What do you see?

Kristen Deede Johnson: I do want to engage this question with humility, recognizing that I have not been here very long. And I have mostly, because we moved here, I moved here with the family, including teenage children. We've been trying to become deeply rooted in our local church for their sake.

And then I am occasionally able to visit other churches. So, I still have a lot to learn and a lot of places I'd love to visit. So, overall, you know, there is something about the Canadian context with its, you know, historic ties to England that shaped the Anglican church in some ways in its place in society that would be different than the United States, which did try to have a sort of non-established church.

Now, I know it's, it's complicated in Canada. It's certainly not the same as England. There were always a lot of other traditions here.

And I think in helpful ways, right, iron sharpening iron with these sorts of differing denominations, you know, coming alongside of each other and finding their way. But you know that is a difference. And I think in the, well, I don't want to get, in the U.S. context, it's so, especially right now, there are so many differing narratives about "what is the heritage of the United States in relation to Christianity."

And my understanding would be that it was not at one time a Christian nation, though there were a lot of Christian influences. And so, you have interesting relationships with civil religion and the role of ritual and things like that, that developed in the U.S. that would be slightly different than the Canadian context. Let me move on to similarities.

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There can be narratives of decline in the church, and there are pockets, yes, that are declining in both the U.S. and Canada in terms of numbers, and possibly also influence. And at the same time, in both settings, there are places where the church is really thriving.

And in Toronto, you have this, you know, amazing international, multicultural city where you have pockets of churches that are really growing and representing Christians from all over the world and traditions that are represented.

And the U.S. has that equivalent too. You know, in my previous seminary, we were doing a lot with the Spanish-speaking church because while our sort of more historic denomination was in decline, the Latino, Latina church was growing and thriving all around us without the same access to theological education.

And so, we thought, oh my goodness, we would love to learn from you, your vibrant forms of faith, and how and why your church is growing.

And maybe we can share some of what we've learned, you know, through our formal education. And so, I love those kinds of partnerships where we really think, what can we learn from each other?

And Wycliffe, you know, also I think with its Anglican heritage and yet now is serving students from so many different denominations and traditions and really learning with and from each other as we're trying to think about what is the place of Christianity in a pluralistic setting in the midst of complicated political and cultural realities.

Andrew Stirling: It's interesting.

I mean, in asking the question, I had a little voice in my head at the time going, well, look, you know, the U.S. church is not homogeneous, and the Canadian church is not homogeneous. And from coast to coast to coast in this country, there really is a huge variety. But as you've mentioned, Toronto maybe is just a part of an ecosystem of the church that is highly pluralistic and very diverse.

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And maybe that is one of the great characteristics in our North American context now that we all face. We are, though, and I mean, you've again alluded to this, there are pockets of growth and we're witnessing somewhat a revival amongst young people in the life of the church. What do you see as the future of the church, Kristen, in terms of Jesus Christ and how He transforms the world and how young people have a place within that?

Kristen Deede Johnson: It does seem to be, despite all the sobering parts of our world today, some sense of hopefulness.

And you hear these, you know, these stories and studies and, you know, that especially in the younger generation, you know, a lot was coming out of England over the summer, you know, kind of this potential return to church. And I think, you know, from my studies of culture and culture understood really sociologically, what is it supposed to do? You know, if we live together, there's this layer called culture. It's really, I believe, you know, intended to invite people into a system of meaning and moral order.

It enables you to find your way together as a people in a structured society. Always complications because we live this side of the fall. I think one of the, I'm very shaped by a sociologist named Peter Berger, and he wrote among a number of books, one called *The Sacred Canopy*, and said, you know, when you look historically at societies, there was always a sacred canopy holding them together.

It might have been the Greek gods or the Roman gods. I mean, it wasn't a specifically Christian reflection, but then you did have, you know, the rise of, theocratic states that would have oriented around, you know, a capital G God. He said, you know, we're really living in unprecedented times in sort of this modern era where we're trying to see, can we make it without a sense of the sacred and this system of sort of meaning that it's supposed to invite people into?

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And I think that some of what you're naming, I think that, you know, the younger generation from what we're hearing, from what I'm seeing, the conversations I'm having is looking for some kind of meaning.

And that is supposed to be what the Christian story invites us into, right? That there is a redemption history. There is a story of God, you know, the Kingdom of God. It may not be visible to the naked eye, but there is this layer going on of God at work and God in Christ through the Spirit, reconciling the world and calling us into that and then giving us meaning as we live here each day, as we are in turn invited to love God and neighbor and seek the Kingdom justice and righteousness.

So, I think if churches can, you know, be a part of that, invite people into that. I could talk a lot about identity and anxiety and political tribalism. I'll pause there, but I think that is another layer that people, there's a lack of identity that's built into the modern era.

And I think, again, Christianity is supposed to give us this beautiful identity as beloved children of God, part of the family of God. So, if we can embrace that and invite people into it, I think there's a lot of reasons to be hopeful.

Andrew Stirling: Yeah, I do too, actually, Kristen.

And I ran into one of your students at the Lester Randall Preaching Fellowship this last fall here in Toronto. And we had a deep conversation about her, her education, about what she was doing. But we were also talking about, as you rightly mentioned, the sense of meaning and how the Christian faith in a very uncertain world where many of the things that people have tried to hitch their star to have let them down.

Their leaders have had feet of clay. The culture has not delivered the justice and righteousness of which we speak in the same way. And the secular culture has actually led to sort of a banality that leaves people wanting for something.

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And she was saying, at Wycliffe, she's working through that, that this is a major part of her life and her formation and her struggle, it was most impressive. Our time is slowly coming to an end, I'm afraid. And there's so much more I'd like to talk to you about.

But just on a personal note, there are two things. First of all, I know you place a high premium on devotion, and spiritual practices that keep you and your family, your husband, and your children grounded. What are those? I mean, what's the devotional life of Kristen Deede Johnson like?

Kristen Deede Johnson: Thank you for asking.

And before our time ends, I do want to thank you for wearing your Wycliffe College tie today.

Andrew Stirling: You're very welcome.

Kristen Deede Johnson: And I think Wycliffe is part of the answer here because I do love the rhythm of morning and evening prayer.

Now, with my family life, I'm not always able to get there every morning and evening. Wycliffe does still offer that in sort of the Anglican tradition. One of the things I said to students at orientation is, you know, Christians have been kind of you could say, wrestling with what does prayer look like kind of from the beginning.

Some of our earliest Christian documents post-Jesus, you have this sort of, you know, pray at these hours of the day and do this in light of this. And you see this thread that it was never just theoretical. It was never just, Jesus the Messiah or not.

It was always connected with, okay, what does this mean for worship and for prayer and for how we sort of orient our lives around Jesus Christ? And different traditions have different answers for that or different ways of probing that. And so, I think my first wave of my Christian life was pretty individualistic. It was sort of the quiet time culture and era.

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So, I was very committed to daily times of reading the Bible and praying. And I did that quite religiously, no pun intended, you know, for many years. And God brought a lot of fruit through that.

And I think it also took some time to recognize why corporate worship matters. You know, why the things we do together in the family of God matter, and how things like Sabbath keeping, which is important to me, that include a time of corporate worship where we're all together. Because the truest reality is that we're the people of God, you know, centered around God. And our time together in church is supposed to give us a glimpse of that, a reminder of that, nourish us, and then I think send us out into the world in our callings, you know, to continue to seek God's Kingdom.

You know, so I do think Sabbath, to the extent I know for people in ministry, you can't always keep your Sabbath on a Sunday, but, you know, for the rest of us, having something where worship is a part of it. But then things like, you know, being in God's creation, hikes and lakes and, you know, the ways that the Spirit can nourish us through beauty, I've increasingly become aware of how important that is to me. So that's something I'm trying to be intentional about.

Winter can make it more challenging, but the snow is beautiful. And so...

Andrew Stirling: I'm glad you find that. That's good.

Kristen Deede Johnson: Yeah, so for me, it's some, I mean, even like meals around the table, the gift of food together and shared fellowship, that also took, was a little bit of a journey for me to be able to embrace that as a spiritual practice. So, to me, the ideal is some interweaving of, you know, my own times of prayer and Scripture reading with a community gathering of prayer and worship with some sense of engagement with God's world and its beauty.

Andrew Stirling: That's wonderful.

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I mean, the picture you paint is one really almost of the sovereignty of God in the sense that, you know, in worship corporately, in your devotion life personally, and the things that you do in nature and around the table, all of these are a sense of God's presence and God's love and so on.

One of the last questions, actually the final question I ask of all my guests, Kristen, is what can we pray for you? Our audience always wants to do this. You know, we have, as I mentioned before, you know, a deep tradition within the Bible Society, of course, of Biblical reading.

We have the daily reading guides, but people also want to pray for somebody and pray for something. So, they read Scripture and they pray. This day, what do you want our audience to pray for, Kristen?

Kristen Deede Johnson: Thank you. Such a generous question.

We've talked about reasons to be hopeful, and I also at the same time feel the weight, hopefully placed within the picture of God at work, but you have some weight around the challenges facing us in the church, in culture, and in what does Wycliffe need, what do we need to prepare our students for, what do we need to be inviting our students into, and how do we need to be partnering with local churches, clergy, retired and otherwise, to learn from, you know, those who really are on the ground.

So I think probably wisdom would be the singular word to capture all of that, you know, the wisdom to know, you know, what does deep formation look like within the walls of Wycliffe, and who and how do we partner beyond, so that we're all in this work together, in the challenges, retaining the hope, and preparing for the future, you know, that God may be calling us to.

So, wisdom, and then if you would, also my family, you know, it is a big transition for teenage children to move to a new place, and so, you know, which we trust and know God is with us, but I would love prayers for that ongoing transition.

Scripture Untangled

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Andrew Stirling: Well, Kristen, be assured of that, and of all our prayers for you, both for wisdom and for your family, and you have a very important task to play within the Kingdom of God here in Canada and have a wonderful and a unique position to be able to serve our Lord in a very meaningful way. So, we are truly grateful for your presence, and we wish you God's blessings on all that you do and thank you so much for this time together.

It has been a delight. God bless you, and thanks, Kristen.

Kristen Deede Johnson: Thank you. God bless you as well.