

From Section 1: Living in Christ in a Life of Notice

"Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.." Psalm 16:1

Dealing with Expectations

"She took her place in the seat that was to symbolize her role—a high bench facing the congregation, where everyone could notice the least flicker of expression. Sarah had been prepared for this exposed position every Sunday of her childhood... but it was different to her, herself, the Minister's Wife. Other women could yawn or furtively twitch a numbed foot in the cold of a January morning in an unheated building. Never she. Others could have weekday lapses—snarl at stupid tradesmen or admit to simple fatigue—but when the minister's wife showed human frailties, it was the subject of conversation."

-- describing Sarah Edwards, the seventeen-year-old wife of pastor Jonathan Edwards, July 1727

Have you struggled with ministry expectations for your husband, yourself and your family? Do you ever feel everyone's eyes are on you, like Sarah Edwards did? Has the Princess of Wow wanted to make an appearance at your church? Are the expectations you feel coming from within you or are they coming from the church itself?

Usually, they originate from a variety of sources. Sometimes we can THINK they are coming from others, when really, like in my case, many came from my own heart. Wherever they come from, expectations have a terrible way of putting us on the defensive among the very people God is calling us to give our hearts to in love.

Let's look at common sources of expectations and some practical suggestions for coping with each.

Church Expectations

1. Church Expectations from What the Last Pastor (and Family) Did (or Didn't Do)

You aren't the only one coming to a ministry situation with baggage. Your church is, too. Everyone except perhaps a brand-new Christian has probably been in a church before. It might be the church where your husband is pastoring, or it may be a totally different church. The point is, there is a past with a pastor in it. It is quite natural for church members to wonder what will be the same and what will be different about your husband, in terms of how he will pastor them, and in terms of how he and his family will interact with the church.

You can expect comparisons. Some of these will be favorable, but some of them may not be. Many might FEEL unfavorable, but actually are mainly just innocent, out-loud observations. Some may be tinged with disappointment or even defensiveness from those who miss the previous pastor. Others may be pinning future hopes of change that your husband may bring. Many will probably be mildly curious and broadly supportive.

Ideas to Think about

One of the best ways to meet these expectations is to expect them. See their comments as opportunities to understand these people and how to pray for them. Somehow reminding myself that this is to be expected helps keep me from being defensive. God is calling my husband to feed the sheep. These comments are a way for us to know what they are hungry for. Some will need to gently have their appetites changed in the process. Others might be ready for what your husband is already planning to put in their food buckets.

I've also found it helpful to think of a loving response to comments ahead of time. If someone has specific ideas for my husband, I politely encourage them to talk to him directly about them. Pray that God would prepare you give you and your husband meet their expectations by a steady focus on loving the members but giving your hearts to Him first of all. This is God's church. He will help your husband set a course and a pace that is best.

2. Church Expectations for Friendship

With there being only one pastor and family and often many members, the odds are not in your favor to be everyone's best friend. Sometimes, the odds aren't even in favor of remembering everyone's name! Finding out that the pastor and his wife have friends can be very hard for some in your church. So hard, that some people advise not to make friends within your church. We even had one case where a woman left the church because I wasn't her friend! But... only one in 30+ years.

Ideas to Think about

Mark and I have both found friends within the church but have been careful in choosing them and in not flaunting them—no social media selfies with the besties, etc. He has encouraged these friendships, not just because we need friends, but also because he felt it is good for the church to let his pastor and family be people. And it would be better to expose and gently confront the sin of friendship envy is actually better for the congregation, even though it can be harder on us. Again, looking to the heart helps. People who are envious are sinning, yes, and that needs to be confessed and addressed. But often it is struggle with loneliness or feeling worthless, also. There are ways we can use their expressed expectations to actually minister to their hearts with the love of Jesus.

3. Church Expectations for Behavior

Sometimes expectations for our behavior are as "simple" as cultural differences. I remember one woman telling me when they moved to a church in the deep South from having been in the north, that it was a big deal to some of the older ladies if she didn't wear pantyhose. They didn't think it was proper to wear a dress without them. Some churches might expect your husband to always wear a suit and tie and you to be dressed in your finest. Others may think you're showing off if you dress up. Some churches think their pastor's family should never drink, even if Scripture allows it in moderation. What if you or your husband enjoy a glass of wine occasionally? Other churches think dancing of any kind, even something that is as tame as square dancing, should never be allowed. What will you do if your daughter gets asked to prom? In some churches, it is a big deal whether you homeschool or send your kids to public or private school.

Ideas to Think about

Expectations from the church for your behavior can't be addressed with a blanket disregard or regard. Here are three biblical ideas that are helpful in weighing our response to church members' expectations:

- Romans 14:19-21:

"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

- 1 Corinthians 9:19-23:

"I have become all things to all men, so that I may save some."

- 1 Timothy 3:4:

"He must manage his own family well."

The first biblical truth helps us consider whether our behavior will actually be harmful to others' spiritual good. The second biblical truth helps us consider whether our behavior will impact someone else's ability to receive the gospel. And the third biblical truth helps us think through whether our behavior is important for the good management of our family.

Not wearing pantyhose in the deep South might not bother as many older women as it used to, but wearing them might help me look more presentable, and oddly enough, open a door that could lead to a gospel conversation with one of the women who still care about that very much. (I've seen odder things happen!)

Choosing public school over homeschool might be a stumbling block for some of the families at your church, but your husband knows you and your kids best. Sometimes, homeschooling strains family relationships in unhelpful ways. Sometimes, a wife isn't a great fit to be their kids' teacher, either because of her abilities or their needs.

Managing your family in the best way for them often includes choosing something that might be difficult for certain church members. Drinking wine might be troubling to so many at your church that you never do it at home or around church members, but you might do it in moderation when you're on vacation in Florida.

These three principles:

- (1) What is good for God's people,
- (2) What commends the gospel, and
- (3) What is good for our family are what have helped us find the path of love through many gray areas of behavior expectations.

4. Church Expectations for Discipleship

I have no idea what the demographics are like at your church, but in our church we have a lot of younger people and few older people. Many of those younger people would love a Titus two-like relationship with an older godly man or woman, but the odds are not in their favor. There are so few to go around. Add in the hope that not just any older godly woman, but that the pastor's wife might be available to disciple you, and the potential for disappointment, envy, and even anger goes up. This is the discipleship version of friendship envy that I mentioned before. And for some reason, because it has to do with growing in the Lord, and that's what the pastor is being paid to do, there can be a bit of an expectation that we should be available to spend time with them like this in a small group setting or even in a one-to-one relationship.

This has been one of the hardest expectations that pastors' wives at our church have experienced. Sometimes it's hard because we really want to disciple the person making the request. Oh, how we want to see them grow, and would love to be a regular part of that! But schedule or other constraints make it impossible. Other times, it's hard because the person's expectation is that because our husbands are pastors, we SHOULD be available to disciple them, forgetting that we are a finite family who can only give so much.

Ideas to Think about

As hard and even as hurtful sometimes it can be to say no to someone who wants you to disciple them, it is a wonderful opportunity to disciple them – – just not HOW they thought they would be disciplined. It's a great opportunity to encourage them in their desire to grow but point them to someone on staff who can connect them with someone who has time to disciple them or a small group to join. Pray with

them right then and there, asking God to provide someone for them to meet with. That shows you care.

But this is also a great opportunity to help them understand your very real limits. Often, I offer to meet with them once. Even these single meetings can be such sweet times. I take time to get to know them better and pray for them. I thank them for asking me to disciple them but explain that supporting Mark and caring for the kids/other commitments already in place are all that Mark and I feel I have capacity for, right now.

Sometimes, this answer is understood and appreciated readily. But other times, the immediate response is not so pleasant. It might even be many years later before understanding clicks in. I remember one teenage girl being very upset with me for wanting me to disciple her when I had just had our first child. She did not understand why I didn't have time for her during our daughter's naptime. But do you know, years later when she had HER first child, she came back and apologized. She understood that nap times were not necessarily free times but more like sanity times for a new young mother like me. The Lord used me to disciple that teenage girl, just not in the way she expected... and not in the time frame I expected. God never wastes anything!

Another solution we found was to ditch the sit-down-and-study-the-Bible disciple time for join-me-along-in-life informal approach. In particularly busy seasons of life, this was all I could offer. More distractions, but also sometimes the double benefit of giving the person a view into your life even as you are talking about spiritual things.

5. Church Expectations for Hospitality

In some churches, there is a high expectation that a pastor and his family would either have you over for dinner or you will go to their house for dinner. This might be with or without your children. While pastors and their families are most definitely called to be hospitable, a pastor is also called to manage his family well. If your church is small, this kind of hospitality might be really possible. But if your church is large, you could have people over for dinner or you be over at someone's house most every night of the week. And that's not managing your family well.

Ideas to Think about

We've learned that different seasons of our lives allow for different amounts of hospitality at our house or over someone else's house. And while people don't like to be turned down for dinner and they most certainly like to be asked to dinner our house and sometimes wonder why we have it ask them over) this is another way that our husbands and as alongside them get to teach the church how to care well for their pastor's family by allowing them to be finite.

We also learned to structure our calendar to allow for having people over regularly or going over someone's house. And we've learned that different sized events create different atmospheres of hospitality. And most importantly, different seasons in life tend towards different kinds of hospitality.

When we were first at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, we would have an open house so that most of our small membership could come through the house and enjoy a little time of fellowship with us. Later on, we had a mix of members and visitors over after the morning service. Now we are empty-nesters. Just a couple of "old people." Mark likes/needs to take a nap after the morning service if he's preached, so hospitality usually comes on other nights of the week. In the past few years, my chronic illness has put a much tighter limit on when and how we can be hospitable. My hospital bed is in our dining room! Talk about cramping your style! We have people in our home very rarely for a meal these days, but we might invite them out to eat!

Look at your schedule. Consider your season and your family's needs. Decide out how best to be hospitable within those limits. And overall, spread love and patience with those who would love to get to know you better and yet might not understand why it can't be tonight, and in our case, why it might not ever be at all.

6. Church Expectations for Your Children

Perhaps there is no area charged with more feeling, dare I say angst, than the expectations the congregation might have for your children. Whether it's just basically expecting them to never misbehave, or far worse, to be saved and godly little junior saints from an early age, there can be so much pressure on you and your kids.

I know of one pastor's wife who dreaded going to church with her toddler son. His terrible two phase was more like World War Three. She was doing a great job addressing his behavior, and on the way to winning the "war." But, the battles were constant and very vocal. Those close to their family knew the courageous, consistent fight that was going on. But unfortunately, much of the congregation only witnessed the behavior. It looked to many like the pastor and his wife were not doing a good job managing their household because of their son's behavior, though they were doing a stellar job.

Even if your kids are not in a "little monster" phase, you can feel the "best behavior" pressure. I know we did. On top of that, some church members may have an invalid expectation that pastor's kids should be saved and baptized from an early age or the pastor-dad is a failure. Sometimes, it can be so hard to protect your kids from hypocrisy, bitterness towards the church, and even false conversion.

Ideas to Think about

This was one of the hardest areas for us as our kids were growing up. And we must be far from alone in this, for there's some reason why people have a category for pastors kids' behavior that breaks out when they hit high school or after they leave home in college. Jessica Thompson has written an excellent book called *How to Help Your Anxious Teen* that you might want to look at. And it doesn't matter if your child is a teenager or not. The concepts are really helpful for loving your children and helping them not feel so much pressure at church, regardless of their age. Barnabas Piper has written a book called *The Pastor's Kid* that is also really good for understanding the pressures pastors' kids feel and how to help them cope with them.

Dealing with church members' expectations for your kids will very likely not be much fun, but they are filled with opportunities to teach others about what it means to care well for your kids and to raise them that they might be true believers not just great men occurs men occurs mimics or even worse mockers of the church. (See "Helping Your Husband Care Well for the Kids" for more.)

7. Church Expectations for You in the Ministry

Some churches are used to the pastor's wife always standing next your husband greeting people at the exit the service or always sitting in the front pew during the service. Others might be used to the pastor's wife always preparing meals for funerals or leading the women's missionary union. And there's always the classics: playing piano and doing children's ministry. Yet others might expect your husband to be available day and night no matter what for hospital visitation or phone call, regardless of what's going on within your family or other obligations.

Ideas to Think about

Like the expectation for discipleship, this can be some of the most difficult expectations to navigate. They seem to be directly connected to why they are paying your husband to be their pastor. Somehow,

it's easy to forget that they're not paying you to be a second staff member. They become mixed up with good gifts a pastor's wife gave them in service alongside her husband with perks they can count on from her.

As you run into these ministry expectations, you and your husband can talk them through and decide what to do about them. You might not be used to standing next to your husband at the door of and service, but together you might decide to start to do that. It's a great way to meet people and it shows people used to that something familiar. As were playing piano, you might have the skill but it's not a good fit for your family except for on the rare occasion. In making meals for funerals might be completely out of the question.

Yep, and I bet you know what I'm about to say next... Dealing with these expectations are not going to be fun but they are filled with great opportunities to teach them about what a pastor's wife is called to do: support her husband. You can help them learn that your husband and you work together to figure out how you can best support him/your family, and best serve the church as a regular church member. Tell them that you'll get back to them, that you need to talk to your husband first so that together you can make the best decision for your family.

Sometimes their expectation might lead you to doing something you would have never dreamt of doing and it bears wonderful fruit. Sometimes, you come back to them with a "no" which isn't always met with understanding or appreciation. Ask God for grace to keep on loving! But also, use their request for leadership to say thank you that they would ask you to assume such a leadership role in your church.

8. Church Expectations for Your Husband

There are definite, biblical expectations for your husband if he's called to be a pastor or elder. We'll talk a lot more about those in the next chapter. Basically though, a pastor/elder is to be a godly man who cares well for your family while also preaching God's Word and equipping God's people.

Now that sounds straightforward. But of course, the truth is not only will living out those three requirements look different from family to family and guide a guy and church to church, but there are a lot more jobs and a lot more expectations that come with every ministry situation. Some of these are apparent even during the pastoral search interviews. Others of these are lurking in the dark waiting to be found out once you get there.

Ideas to Think about

Before You Are Called:

There is no time where expectations run so high as at the beginning of a ministry, so the more you can find out these expectations before your husband agrees to the position, the better it can be for both your family and the church.

Speak to the former pastor and his family. Ask him what expectations the church had. Get into describe his regular work week and responsibilities. Speak to people who run key ministries in the church find out what their expectations are. Speak to the people most excited that you might be coming and what their hopes are. But also try to find out what those least excited are concerned about and might be negatively expecting. Expectations can be fickle. They can be too big. Or too fast. Or too slow. Just not the right things. But knowing them can be very helpful. You help the church and your family make a better decision on whether calling you is a good fit.

It's also very important that you all have a detailed financial proposal at the time of your husband's calling. It doesn't make you greedy or untrusting of God to need to know what kind of money your husband will make and what kind of benefits the church can provide. This is a part of him managing his family well. Many churches mean well but don't have great salary packages for their pastors. Sometimes, it's because the funds aren't there. But other times, it's because they haven't thought through what a pastor's family needs. This was one of the awkward but very important conversations that Mark had with the CHBC pastor search committee. Awkward, because he was "negotiating" for his family. But so important, because it opened up a new perspective on what it means to care well for a pastor's family so that might stay for a long time. And here we still are, being well cared for, over thirty years later.

If your husband is looking at a position underneath a senior pastor, by all means find out what sort of management that senior pastor intends to provide. And if you're being called to a new position, make sure your job description is written and its practical implications to your family schedule and day to day out workings at church clear. Pray, pray, pray for your husband and for the church considering him as pastor.

Once You Get There:

But even with all this great groundwork done, be prepared to disappoint. My husband tells young man aspiring to be pastors, "Don't be in the ministry if you can't disappoint people. We will disappoint people just about every day." It's hard to hear this. We love to make those we serve happy. But this is a great reminder that we serve God's little children and little children can be fussy as they grow. Pray that God's heart of endearment for them out ways your desire to not disappoint them.

Some of the expectations for my husband that surprised me the most were the expectations that I had for him. Expectations to hit the sermon out of the ballpark each Sunday. Expectations to keep everything calm (the way I liked it), even as he was trying to gently make good changes in the church. Expectations that he would get the family and ministry balance right quickly, to name a few. As his wife and chief supporter, these unrealistic expectations had the power to discourage him more than all the other church members' expectations combined.

Your Expectations

So far most of the expectations have been the expectations that others have upon you or your husband. There's a whole another category of expectations that are also very important to think about: your husband's expectations for the church, for himself, and for you.

1. Your Expectations of Their Expectations

In the previous chapters, I introduced you to many of the expectations that were originating from myself. I hadn't even met the congregation yet, but my heart was already full of these. It is so good to recognize when your heart is the source, not the church. Being forewarned of the faulty earpiece fitted to your heart can help you not over-react in your ministry situation. We all tend to hear based on what we already think. Knowing that you are expecting (or simply fearing) people will respond in particular ways to you, your husband and your family, will pre-dispose you to take their comments to fulfill what your heart was expecting. This is a really good reason to not just listen to yourself, but to have others to be a sounding board for your thoughts and reactions. Your husband, who knows you so well, can be especially good at being a good "hearing aid" for you.

2. Your Husband's (and Your) Expectations for the Church

What expectations do you and your husband have for your church:

- Are you or your husband expecting change to come quickly and easily?

- Are you or your husband expecting this church to be just like the last church you were in in either a good way or difficult?
- Are you expecting to find no friends or for everyone to be your friend?
- Are you expecting to not find any more “cans of worms” than the ones revealed in the pastoral search process?

Ideas to Think about

Take time to talk together about your expectations for the church. Ask God to help you discern where you are being unrealistic or where you're being pessimistic. Pray together about those expectations that God would fulfill where they are God, he would change them where they are unrealistic or pessimistic. God's perfect timing is never ours, but it is always perfect! Ask Him to give you patience as you wait His timing.

3. Your Husband's and Your Expectations for Him

It is extremely helpful for you to know what your husband's expectations for himself, as pastor, husband and father, particularly if your husband is new to any of these roles. This can help you understand how you can best support him by what you do, how you encourage him, and how you pray for him. It can also be very helpful to reveal unrealistic expectations before they lead to discouragement or bigger problems.

Ideas to Think about

Ask your husband about his expectations for himself, as pastor (Nourisher), husband/father (Flourisher), and in the example of his life (Furnisher). Be careful how you ask him. It can very easily sound like you are taking the role as inquisitor when what you want to be his confidante and “co-dreamer.” You are on his team, not about to make a new score chart for how he's doing.

Think through your expectations for him, too. Often these expectations go unacknowledged even to ourselves until some sort of failure to meet them. By identifying your expectations and his, you can work through them to a set of joint, realistic expectations.

Encourage each other with how your expectations both show a desire to love God, God's people and your family. Talk through practical ways you can help him. Take these expectations and pray about them. Good friends, especially good more experienced pastor friends, can be a great way to help your husband develop realistic expectations for himself. Their zeal for the Lord and His people may make him desire to be superman. An older pastor can appreciate your husband's enthusiasm but temper it with a long view of the ministry.

Finding an older pastoral couple to talk to both of you can also be very helpful. They can not only “dial down” any unrealistic expectations but help you learn how to help each other. Any time there is a big change in your family or your church, there will likely need to be a change in expectations or how they are worked out. Talking about the practical repercussions of these changes can help your husband, your church and your family through them. This is especially important for young men in their first pastorate.

4. Your Husband's and Your Expectations for You

You've already heard many of the unrealistic expectations I brought into the ministry. Take time to examine your expectations and bring these to your husband. Talk these through and ask him about his expectations for you. Expectations from your husband are some of the most important expectations you have to think about. You are his helpmate and that puts you right by his side, supporting him as he is pastoring the church.

Ideas to Think about

Especially if you are new to the ministry, seek the advice of an older, godly pastor couple. Learn from their experience instead of just your own school of hard knocks! Why not take the quicker path to oneness if it is available!

But even with the best of advice, there's still a learning curve. If your husband is a new pastor, realize that he is learning every bit as much as you are. There may be things that he expects from you that as he gains experience and maturity, he realizes are not realistic or healthy. Be kind to him as he's learning! He might think that you all should have people over for Sunday lunch every Sunday, even though you have two small kids who need to go down for nap and you are exhausted from tangling with them on your own in the pew, all the way through the service as he's preaching. Perhaps you will have enough forethought to help him see why that might not be such a good fit before you start regularly having people over. But, perhaps is going to take a few weeks of doing it and then him saying it's not a good fit.

Or perhaps he feels like he does need to take every phone call and does need to be at every committee meeting and does need to be at every hospital bedside as he's getting started. And he wants you to cheerfully let him go anytime day or night with no limits. You talk about it and modify that expectation with a conversation but realize that it might take a few weeks or even months for him to find a great balance.

Pray for your husband! Encourage him to speak to other pastors and get their feedback. Be patient with him. Be humble as you engage him on things you disagree with. And be kind if he comes to see perhaps you are right.

While your husband may have a few unrealistic expectations that might need modifying or scrapping completely, there is one expectation (or maybe just a desire) that you want to find out about: what can you do that really cheers your husband on in the ministry.

- This might be you sitting (or wrestling) with your little kids in the pew as he preaches ...even though you hear very little of the sermon. Just to have your face there helps him!
- This might be having couples over regularly one night for hospitality so that you all can get to know increasing number of the congregation in a more personal setting.
- And believe it or not, this might be simply having enough energy for sex on Sunday night after his long Sunday is through (bet you didn't see that one coming! But it is highly requested by many pastors!).

Don't just guess at this one. Ask him! And ask him again! It may be something that changes as he pastors. Rarely is the wish list long, which always gives me hope of meeting them. And if for some reason, the thing he would really love for you to do is something you're not sure how you can do it, talk it through and see if you can modify and come up with the best solution possible to encourage him without killing you. The advice of other pastoral couples can help you a lot with this, too.

Mess in the Middle

Overwhelmed with all these expectations? Join the club! With so many people having so many expectations, the ministry can sometimes feel like working in a customer service department on a bad day. Somebody always thinks something is wrong, and no one seems to agree on how to fix it. What might please some people, may displease others. Is the glass really half empty? Where is the gratitude that it is also half full? Some get completely dissatisfied and decide to take their "business" elsewhere

to another church. And of course, there's our husbands and ourselves. Not only do we get grumpy about everyone else's expectations, but we have our own expectations, too. Ah... the Fall. Ah... sinners. No wonder men must be godly to pastor God's people!

Here are four last thoughts on expectations that I hope will be encouraging to you and your husband:

1. Remember the Good

Caring about what church members think can be right and good. It can be part of us knowing them and learning how best to love them. Church members caring about what our husbands and families are doing can be right and good, too. It is part of us furnishing them with a godly example that may help them grow in the Lord. Caring and watching are attributes of learners and instruments of change. These attitudes can help us keep on seeking out what's best for one another and to build up one another in Christ.

2. Forbear through the Bad

But unfortunately, with us being sinners and all, our care for others is contaminated with selfishness. Many times, we care about what others think because we want them to think well of us. Church members may sometimes desire or expect things from their pastor that aren't healthy. Even pastors may desire the wrong things or respond in the wrong ways to church members.

As God's people who are new creations yet carry around sinful hearts, we're going to experience both. All we can do is have humility, confess our sin to God, and ask Him to help us love each other better. The great news is that the same God who calls our husbands to shepherd His people, shepherds us. He is more than sufficient to give us His heart of patience, forbearance and love.

3. Work for Change

Our husbands get to shepherd the church, themselves, and their families away from inappropriate expectations and lead them towards biblical ones. We get to support our husbands through our encouragement, prayers and long-suffering love. Sometimes the changes come through conversations ("I'm so sorry I can't lead a discipleship group like the previous pastor's wife did. My husband needs me to be more available in the evenings for our family. By helping him, it frees him up to pastor you better." etc.). But many times, changes in expectations seep in almost unnoticed through the preaching of His Word and prayers of God's people as they gather together. As we grow up into Christ, our heads, we grow together in our desires.

4. Look to God and Take Hope

But most of all, look to God and take hope. He who calls us is faithful. Oh, so faithful to give us all that we need. We are His people. He had the power to save us, though we be dead in our sins. He has the power to change us, too. He can bring encouragement when we dash expectations and strength to persevere, nonetheless. He can give wisdom to form good expectations and grace to help us meet them. He can give us courage to confront inappropriate expectations and kindness as we respond to them. He can give us love for one another as we work through all these expectations. And He can help renew our hearts and our minds so that our expectations line up increasingly with His. In the end, we all live for an Audience of One. It is Him we desire to please and it is only Him who can make us able to fulfill His expectations:

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, with joy..." (Colossians 1:9-11)