

How to Deal With Personal Besetting Sin

by Al Whittinghill

Living a holy life is God's will for our lives, and it is the normal Christian life, but it requires submitting ourselves unto God and mastering our sinful habits by faith in Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:06:31

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Besetting Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Job and how he became a showcase for the universe. The preacher emphasizes that Job didn't even realize that all the angels were watching him. Job wished that his words were written down in a book, and the preacher highlights that every idle word is recorded and written down by God. The preacher also mentions that we, as believers, are also being watched by the world, spirits, and angels. The sermon encourages listeners to have faith, receive God's victory, and allow the word of God to bring power into their lives.

Transcript

1 Chronicles chapter 16, beginning in verse 10, reading down through verse 12. Glory ye in his holy name. Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his face continually. Remember his marvelous works that he has done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.

Then, verse 27, glory and honor are in his presence. Strength and gladness are in his place. Give unto the Lord ye kindreds of the people.

Give unto the Lord glory and strength. And now, give unto the Lord the glory. Do his name.

Bring an offering. And come before him. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

In the beauty of holiness. Father, in Jesus' name, we pray that the beauty of holiness will become our highest passion. Because that holiness is really a life in your presence.

We pray that you will have our soul bless the Lord who reigns in beauty, in wisdom, and in power. We pray that our souls will bless the Lord, and all that is within us will say glory in his holy name. And that we will live our lives continually as an offering, as a praise, sacrifice, as a member of your body.

And teach us practically how to do that, and why. In Jesus' name, amen. Psalm 19, is David praying another way, what Ian had spoken on.

In Psalm 19, in verse 12, the second portion of that verse, David prays, Psalm 19, verse 12, the second portion and reading on, cleanse thou me from secret faults. But the word faults is not there in the original. Cleanse me from secret things.

Verse 13, keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. In another place in the Bible, it's called sin with a high hand. It's an arrogant, it's a presumptuous activity.

Don't let them have dominion over me. Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. And here David is surely speaking of a sin against light, a sin against knowledge from God.

Then he says, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in man's sight. No, in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. I was reading the other day in a scientific journal about this new discovery that they had made in the bottom of the deep and dark part of the sea where there's no light.

They'd gone down there with their lights and they discovered these absolutely beautiful flowers. Down in the dark where no light reaches and there were beautiful colors, just unbelievable. And they showed some pictures and it was it made the flowers that we see look pale and just kind of drab.

Even in Atlanta at this time of year, it was absolutely beautiful. And I caught myself thinking, I wonder why those flowers are like that. I mean, nobody ever sees them.

There's no lights down there. And so what's the point of having beautiful flowers when no one can see them? Why are they there? And the Holy Spirit brought to my mind because I like them. The Bible says, you see, that God created all things.

And for thy pleasure, they are and were created. And God likes those flowers that nobody ever sees. It's like the Arctic Explorer that was up in the Arctic and he was picking along through the barren ice where death is everywhere.

And he found a violet growing beneath a big iceberg, just one solitary violet. And it brought him to tears because he saw their life holding on in the midst of what was so barren. And you see, why would why would God want a holy life when no one ever sees? Why would God want you to be beautiful in holiness when no man ever sees when when you're in secret? Well, because he likes it and he made you for his pleasure.

Beauty for the eye of God when nobody else can see. I wonder what you think of when you hear that word holy. Someone came and said, tell us more what holiness is.

Well, we're afraid to do that because then you might go out and try to do it on your own. Holiness is something that God shows and we become. Maybe you think that holiness is a certain kind of churchy lifestyle.

Walking around with this Cheshire grin, praise the Lord, brother. You know, that kind of thing. Or maybe you're kind of repelled by that word holiness.

You think it means lace cuffs like the guys in the pictures. And if you ever seen a fisherman with lace cuffs like these medieval things say, that'd be terrible, wouldn't it? Or a halo or kind of a sissy look. Maybe it's exactly the opposite of macho to you.

Kind of a limp wrist kind of activity. Or maybe a holy person is someone who lives in a hole. They've dropped out of society.

No, that doesn't make you holy. You just carry your sin with you and makes you miserable. Maybe some weirdo isolated from the world or kind of going around this hocus pocus wide eyed look.

You know, always looking like you're seeing something that nobody else sees. Or you carry this big black Bible like this. You know, maybe we think that's holiness.

Or maybe somebody who does nothing but read the Bible. You know, all he does is serve on a physical level. Is that what holiness really is? Well, holiness may involve some of those things, but there are a lot of misconceptions about holiness today.

Real holiness is the result of only one thing. Only one. And it's the presence of the Holy One living in my life.

That's what makes a person holy. And there's no other way. It's Jesus Christ given the freedom by faith to be himself in me.

That's what holiness is. It is the disposition that says, Lord, be who you are in me so that I can be who you want me to be unto you. And so holiness is when God communicates his presence into my being.

And, of course, it's progressive. After all is said and done, the finest life on earth, even in the Lord, is yet full of dross in many areas when it comes to the refiner's fire. In the book of James, it says, in many things we all offend.

Job was the best man on earth, but when he was put in the fire, many things were revealed that God had yet to deal with. He says, I know after God's finished with me, after I've come to his fire, I'll come forth like gold. Well, the trumpet call of scripture is to yours and to my holiness.

That's the call of scripture. And there are two elements in holiness. There's one that's a separation from and a separation, secondly, unto.

Separation from involves cleansing. That's the first side of the coin of holiness. Cleansing.

I must be cleansed from sin. But the second side is separated unto. And that's consecration.

That's separation unto God. And so it's a life that is separating and have been separated from sin and idols and things that offend. And on the other hand, it's being separated unto God with all its faculties in communion.

You say, well, now, that's heavy. I want to know about amazing grace. I want to hear more about grace.

You're talking about works. Did you know that grace teaches us something? In fact, it says over in Titus, you might want to turn to Titus chapter two. And you'll see in verse eleven what the point of grace is all about.

Titus chapter two, verse eleven. Titus is just after all the T's before you get to Hebrews. All the T's and then Titus and Hebrews and after Philemon.

So it says in Titus two eleven. Here's what grace is meant to produce in your life and mine, brother. Amazing grace.

How sweet the sound. Once you see it, here's what happens. Verse eleven.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us. Here's what grace teaches us. That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.

Not the sweet by and by, but the nasty now and now. Verse fourteen. Look at this.

Jesus gave himself for us in order that, here's his motivation, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority. Don't let anybody despise you.

You see, people don't want to hear that. They want the amazing grace. How sweet the sound.

But they don't want the part that amazing grace teaches us that the bottom line is a holy life. And if the holy life is not there, God is not there. You see, because wherever God starts to work, he always works holiness.

Whenever he creates, he always creates holiness. The first thing he ever does is convict us of unholiness. In John, he says, The first thing he does is come and shows me where my life is not in order with God.

And I have a choice at that point. Confession or covering. Holiness or hypocrisy.

I have a choice. And what you do and what I do with what God said to us in that last hour will determine the direction of whether we are hypocrites or saints of God in his sight. So God's grace teaches us.

Well, if you could just tell me God's will for my life, I would I would feel better. I would be able to be more practical. I'm I'm more practical.

Well, you want to know God's will for your life. Turn back. Second, second, first Thessalonians, and that's just back a few books.

First Thessalonians, chapter four. It says so clearly what is God's will for your life? First Thessalonians, chapter four. It says in verse three, for this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

And the word there is the same as holiness. And then over in verse seven, God's calling, you see. I know it's God's will for me to be sanctified, but what's his calling specifically for me? Verse seven, for God has not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness.

And remember the scripture we just read when it says to rebuke and exhort with all authority about holiness. Don't let anybody despise you. Look what it says here.

Verse eight. He, therefore, that despises meaning despising the message of the holy. He that despises that message despises not man, meaning the preacher that says it, but God who has given to us his holy spirit.

You see, in God's mind, it's perfectly reasonable to say be holy for I am holy because he has given us everything that pertains to life and holiness in Christ. And every man in this room is just as holy as he wants to be. The way is open.

We can leave here gloriously, gloriously worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. If there is no holiness in before God's eye, maybe not man's, but before God's eye in a life, then God is not working in that life. If you find a person that doesn't yearn for holiness and doesn't want holiness, then that person has no biblical ground.

To claim that they are truly biblically saved. Who was it? The old preacher that said, boast not of Christ's work for you if you can't be aware of his spirit's work in you, in you today. You see, the Bible says in Hebrews 12, 14, it says without holiness, no man will see God.

It doesn't mean that we're going to be utterly and totally changed in our total demure and personality just when you die. That it's been enough to glibly hold on to a powerless set of beliefs, a sentimental kind of nostalgic faith, and then you die and go to heaven. It means without holiness, without a life being separated from sin and being separated to God, you'll never see his face.

Never. You may go to church for years, but without holiness, no man will see God. In fact, holiness is the normal Christian life.

The word saint means holy one, as Ian pointed out. The word church, ekklesia in the Greek, means called out. His name shall be called Jesus because he will save his people out of their sins.

That's what it means, his name Jesus. I'm separated out of, I'm brought out of Egypt, I'm brought out of bondage, I'm brought out of my old man. And placed over into the Lord Jesus Christ in that light of God, which no flesh can glory in and into which no man can boast.

In light is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light, then as men we have fellowship with one another and the blood cleanses what the light reveals. Now, you see, the whole point of Jesus coming is to make us holy, not just to save us, not just to take us off of earth and put us into heaven, but also to take heaven out of heaven and put it into us on earth.

To be sent as he was sent. In fact, that's what Ephesians speaks of when it says in verse 26 and 27. It says this is why he came.

This is why he died. In order that he, and it says, listen, Ephesians 5, 26, 25. It says husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.

He gave himself for the church. Then it says in order that he might sanctify it. That's why he died to sanctify the church and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word that he might present it to himself.

A glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. That's what he is about to do in our day. He's saying to the church, put on your beautiful robes, cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in reverence for God.

So I believe that we need to see this this morning. Second Corinthians chapter five tells us again why he died. Second Corinthians chapter five, verse 15.

It says Second Corinthians 5, 15. He died for all in order that they which live should not from now on live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. That's why he died.

So we wouldn't live our own plans and desires, but unto him separated from the old and to the new. Now, brothers, as we heard last hour, I believe that it's Satan's goal to destroy the holy life of every believer. If you can't keep them from Christ, it's to keep them in a place where they don't know who they are, to live in ignorance or fear or bondage and to cause that fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ to be held in question by our hearts to where we're always cast down in our soul.

And I believe it's Satan's goal in every single brother, every single man in this room to have some kind of hold somewhere in every life, an area that he can throw his dark grappling hook and mount the citadel of our soul and paralyze us and render us powerless in the spiritual realm. Maybe not in church, but in the spirit rendered neutralized. Maybe you would say something like, oh, well, it's just so small.

It's such a small thing. Well, the Bible says who has despised the day of small things, you see, maybe small to you, but if the Holy Spirit says this is an issue, it's a big thing to God. It's a big thing to God.

Or maybe you've become blinded to it. So long ago, he spoke to you that now your conscience is seared and maybe you fought and lost and fought and lost so long that now maybe you say there's no hope and you've settled down like Reuben Gad and Manasseh to live in the wilderness forever. You can't go into the promised land.

You're not able in your mind and heart to live there. Well, so many people like David prayed have secret areas of their life. I mean, I'm talking about people, any one of us, and we know nobody else knows how we weep over certain things.

We struggle that God might point out to us. And we go home from a conference like this condemned in that area. And even rightly so, because the Lord has spoken to us about it over and over.

Lord, cleanse me from secret faults, the Lord says. And in Psalm 90, verse eight, it says, you have taken our secret sins and put them before your face. You see, secret to man is only secret to man.

It's right beneath the eye of God. Consider what it really costs to live a hypocritical life covering our sins in Psalm 66, verse 18. It says it says, if I regard iniquity in my heart, Psalm 66, 18.

If I look at, if I cherish iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. If I hold on to what God says, let go of. If I do not come from and move to what he says to move to and leave what he says, leave.

Then the Lord will not hear me. I want to ask you something. Do you really want to be holy? Now, it's deeper than it sounds on the surface.

A lot of people want to be spiritual. Lord, I want to be spiritual. But to them, that doesn't mean necessarily holy or Lord, I want to be healed in my body.

But they don't want to be holy. Lord, I want to have victory. Lord, I want to be blessed.

Lord, I want to have joy. But do you really want to be free? Do you want more than just relief? Do you want a cure? Do you really want to be better or just feel better? You see, if you had your choice, would you rather feel good or be right? Because, you see, to be right with God means we have to labor through that not feeling good part of our life. As we're transformed, as we're renewed, as we're weaned from this

world's dainties, as the psalmist put it, taken away.

So, it's usually a little thing that the devil first finds to land his grappling hook on. We're warned about it. Give no place to the devil.

Brothers, in Ephesians 4, 27, give no place of occupation to the devil. It begins small. I heard a story about some engineers that were trying to build a suspension bridge across a large canyon, maybe a thousand feet deep.

And it was a wide canyon. They had a problem. They couldn't start the bridge.

How are they going to get the initial span covered? And they sat there with all their skills, and they couldn't figure how to start the bridge. And a little boy came along and said, I'll help you. And he had a kite, you see.

And he was flying a kite. And he flew the kite way in the sky. And as it went way, way, way up in the air and went across the canyon, he dropped it.

And it fell across. And a string was stretched across this canyon, which no man could cross. And so they tied a little larger string to that string and pulled it across.

And then a rope, and then a cable, and then a string of cables. And soon they had a bridge built across what seemed impassable. And it all began with a string.

And that's what the devil does, you see. He comes to us in our life in an area where there's a great gulf fixed. We know it's so wrong.

And he flies one of his kites across, and he drops it. And a silken gossamer thread of iniquity begins, but it holds. And then he uses that and brings something a little stronger.

And then a little stronger. And soon he has a bridge that he's taking tanks across and dishonoring the Lord Jesus in your life. Well, how do I deal with besetting sin? How do I deal with the things that hinder, those hindrances to holiness? And I was sitting over there so excited because I knew that God had laid this word on my heart that, you see, the Lord exposes things.

And then we've got to deal with them. Just because you see things does not mean that you're any better off. You're worse off, actually, because we cry over sin and feel bad about it doesn't mean that we've paid our dues.

It means that we're accountable more than ever. And if we don't deal with it at a practical, real level, it becomes mockery to God. It becomes the high handed sin, the presumptuous sin, the hidden things that that when we know the Lord is there, we hide like Adam.

The first thing sin does in man is makes him want to hide, makes Adam want to hide. I heard your voice and I feared your presence. And so I hid myself and I say, let my preacher speak to me and not God.

You see, that personal intimacy with God, we draw back from and we don't want it. Well, sinful habits begin innocently at first. But if we don't master them, they will master us.

They certainly will take the heartbeat from us. So how do we deal with the things that God has pinpointed, especially in the last session? You've dealt with it before. Let me give you some things, some practical things.

Number one. These all sound so simple to you, but I pray that they'll come together in your life and that you'll act on these things. If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

First thing and the obvious thing is, number one, submit yourselves unto God. You see, a lot of people have been trying to resist the devil. But the first thing is to settle the fact of your submission to God.

In fact, that's what it says in James chapter four, verse seven. It says, submit yourselves unto God. Then it says, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Let me tell you, you can't say no to the devil until you say yes to God. You're going to have to settle the issue of Lordship in your life before you escape the clutches of evil. In fact, that's why he came and died.

Again, it says in Romans 14, nine. Just listen to this. This is the whole reason that Jesus Christ came and revealed himself.

And it says in Romans chapter 14, verse nine. Just listen to this. It says to this end, Christ died and rose and revived that he might be Lord.

That's why he came to be your Lord, to be your love boss, to control your life by indwelling holiness and his presence. So we've got to confess our sins to God. It says humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God because he gives grace, that overcoming grace to the humble.

That means submit yourselves unto God, like James four, seven says, and then resist the devil. You see, confess your sin to God by name. Call it what he calls it.

And then after submitting to God, then resist the devil. You see, it's not principles. They will overcome.

It's not going to seminars and getting lists on how to have financial blessing. It's not self effort that will overcome trying harder. It's Christ within Christ within.

I'll never forget once when I was in seminary, I was having a problem in my mind that resulted in certain actions. And it was a devastating thing to me. It was a grievous thing because I knew that God did not want this as a single man.

And I wept before God and I said, oh, God. And I remember crying at night and and and I would make vows and promises and and I thought about mutilation and everything else. I mean, I was serious about being free.

And I remember promising God and with more tears, maybe many more tears, make my promise to me more. And I'll never forget after I'd scribbled and scribbled. Is that a word stroke? Anyway, I had tried against sin so much and failed and failed.

And the more I tried, the sooner I died. I tell you, it was terrible. And one day I was in my apartment and I sensed that temptation coming into my mind and heart.

And I said, oh, God, here it comes again, that temptation. And the Lord spoke to me and said, Al, are you tired of trying to overcome sin? I said, I sure am. I'm worn out.

He said, good, because you'll never do it. You can't overcome sin. Only I can overcome sin.

Why don't you just let me overcome you? If you let me overcome you, I'll overcome sin. When trouble knocks at your door, you've got to send me to answer and you'll find nobody's there. If you answer the door for yourself, they'll jerk you outside and whoop you real good.

Are you tired of trying to overcome sin? Brother, the Bible never says overcome sin. It says die to sin. Even in the trying to overcome it, you're getting defeated.

Jesus overcomes. He's the overcomer. If I let him overcome me, submit to God, then he will overcome as I resist the devil.

You're to overcome the world. But we've got to die to the world. See, we get it just backwards.

Get at Jesus' feet. First thing, keep short accounts with God. Deal with him on a real level.

Listen, if the Lord Jesus controls the inside, nobody can control the outside. Nobody. Nobody.

And that's what it says in Psalm 16. It says again, rehearsing to us about this inner control of God. Just jot down Psalm 16 when it says in verse eight and nine.

Listen to what it says. Psalm 16, verse eight. I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand.

I will not be moved. Therefore, my heart is glad and my glory. My tongue, it means rejoices.

My flesh shall rest in hope. My flesh, my body will have hope and assurance of being who he's called me to be. So the first thing is, submit yourselves to God.

Let me tell you, brother, that right there is the first step. Humble yourself and confess that you're not nearly as holy as you want to appear to be. Humble yourself.

Submit to God and get dead honest. Second thing is, and this is for when you go home and for your life. Second thing is, search the scriptures.

This is so easy. I mean, it's so I almost feel apologetic giving it. Search the scriptures and let them search you.

You see, refuse to make your Bible study just disciplined and intellectual. I mean, don't just go to the Bible on a scheduled series of readings. Don't just go to the Bible on an intellectual pursuit of a lesson.

Go to the Bible to search the scriptures and let them search you to love God and let him love you back. By that, I give reference to Psalm 17, verse four. Listen to this.

Psalm 17, verse four. By the word of thy lips, I have kept me from the path of the destroyer. By the word, O Lord, of your lips, I have kept me from the path of the destroyer.

You've got to use your Bible as a roadmap to keep off the devil's detours. He wants to detour you. You see, this means I must come to the Bible and memorize the Bible.

You want to have victory? Then come to the Bible and memorize the Bible and meditate in the Bible and learn to carry it with you. 90% of Americans have a Bible, but only 15% have ever read it. That's a new statistic I heard the other day.

God's truth is the only answer for the devil's lies. Not man's thoughts, but what God has said. And God has given us everything we need in the word of God.

2 Peter, chapter one. Listen, 2 Peter, chapter one, verse three. It says, according as his divine power has past tense, given unto us all things that pertain to living and godliness.

Through the knowledge of him, clearing up of ignorance, knowing him that has called us to glory and to virtue. God has given to us everything through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Verse four, whereby are given to us exceeding and great precious promises in the Bible.

Great and precious promises that by these promises, you might be fellowshippers, partakers of the divine nature, the very nature of Jesus Christ. Through the word of God, you can allow to take over your life and having escaped the corruption that's in the world through lust. As you get into the word of God with diligence and search the scriptures and let them search you.

The word of God will become the received word, the engrafted word, the living word, the eternal word, and it will bring power into your life. I love Psalm 119. Some of you during your free time ought to get out and just read Psalm 119.

Go up on the hill and get under a tree and lay down on your face and put the Bible down there and say, Lord, speak to me about the Bible. It says Psalm 119. Just listen to some of these verses that it talks about.

Verse one, blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep his testimonies that seek him with their entire heart. Then it says, talking about the word, verse nine, wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way when he's going to Auburn, when he's going to any college or any job.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way. Here it is, you want it? By taking heed according to your word. With my whole heart I have sought thee.

No part held back. Oh, let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hidden in my heart.

That's memorization, brother. Thy word have I hidden in my heart. Why? That I'll be blessed.

Yes, that'll happen. But it says here that I might not sin against thee. When you memorize scripture, it gives the vocabulary greater power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

He'll bring the word to you. He'll bring it to you in a moment. Look at verse 80 and Psalm 119.

Let my heart be solid or sound in your statutes so that I won't be ashamed. Lord, let your word be strong in me, saying, so I won't be ashamed. Verse 97.

Look at this. Oh, how I love your law. It's my mind's dwelling place all the day.

You, through thy commandments, have made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me. Your commandments. They're in me.

I've memorized them. They're always there talking to me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.

I'm thinking on your word all the day. Even while I'm doing accounting, your word is ruminating. Going around in me and bringing back thoughts of the Lord God Almighty.

And you're keeping me in perfect peace because my mind has stayed upon thee. 105. Thy word is a light, a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path.

Oh, what a blessed word he has. Verse 128. Therefore, I esteem all of your precepts concerning all things to be right.

And I hate every false way. This is holiness in the beginning, in the life of faith. Psalm 100, Psalm 119, verse 133.

Order my steps in your word. That's a walk of faith. Let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

148. It says mine eyes prevent the night watches that I may meditate in your word. Lord, I'm staying up all night to read your word.

How good it is. 162. I rejoice at your word as someone who finds great spoil, buried treasure.

It's like living on top of a gold mine in a shack. Most people who have a Bible. We need to open the word and to let the word open us and let the Lord open the word to us.

Did you know that Jesus prayed in John chapter 17? These words, listen to his words. John 17, verse 17 in the garden when he was alone before his father. He prayed maybe not in the garden, but it was that last priestly prayer before he was offered as a sacrifice.

John 17, 17. He's praying and he says to the father, sanctify them. And it means you and me.

Through your truth, your word is the truth. And then he says, verse 19, for their sakes, I sanctify myself. You see, Jesus was holy in character, in being, in every way.

But his life direction was set toward the word of God and everything and the truth. And therefore, he was always being sanctified, being set forth for the will of his father. For this, for their sake, I sanctify myself that they might be sanctified also through the truth.

He wants you and me to be sanctified toward the truth. As we heard last hour, study examples, get in the word and study examples in Scripture. Weren't you just trembling as you heard of how flesh is in that last hour in the wilderness? I'm like that.

I heard about idolatry and I heard about lust and I heard about murmuring and I was condemned justly, sitting right there. And I said, oh, God, oh, I need you. I need you.

Only with you can I walk in the steps of your way. I am the way, not a way. I am the truth, not a truth.

I am the life, not just a blessing. I mean, he is it. And only in him can I have victory.

You ask Noah how important it is to know the scriptures about drinking. He can tell you he blew it. You ask Saul about pride.

He'll tell you. You ask David about lust or idle, wrong use of time up on the rooftop when he should have been out at the war, looking at what his eyes should never have looked at and thinking about what his mind should never have been thinking and daring with a presumption to say God loves me and he understands and taking what he should never have taken. Ask Esau about the craving of a moment.

He gave his birthright for a silly bowl of stew, venison. Search the scriptures, let them search you. Memorize scriptures, find scriptures that directly correspond, brother, to the area that you're being tested in and pack them into your heart so you can have them ever with you.

And when you're in that place and the devil comes to you and he says something, you pull out the word of God. That's what Jesus did in the wilderness. He was there and the devil said, turn these stones into bread.

Nothing wrong with bread. Nothing wrong with turning stones into bread when God tells you to. But see, he was not doing what he wanted to do, even with right desires.

He was doing what his father wanted him to do. And so what did he do? He pulled out the sword. Who did he use it on? Himself.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. He was hungry, but he took the word out and he went, I'm dead. Not what I want, but what God wants.

You see, you have to use the sword on yourself before you work on the devil. Let me tell you something, friend. There's no point in waging war with sin, with the devil.

Like so many people are getting so excited about spiritual warfare. I'm going to tell you something. Unless you're prepared to wage war on sin as well, you better not wage war on the devil.

Because you'll find you have on no armor. And you run away naked and bleeding like those in the book of Acts. Jesus, I know.

Paul, I know. But who are you? The armor of light. You must have it on.

The word of God applied. The buckler of truth. Search the scriptures.

Well, thirdly, thirdly, realize that you are in the arena. You are in the arena of God. And I don't just mean that men are watching you.

Because if that's all you live for, then in secret, you'll be a different person. But you got to realize what Job never realized until the end of his life. You see, Job, he lost it all and he was tested.

Remember, the devil came before God and the Lord initiated it. It wasn't the devil's doing. The Lord said, Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There's no one like him.

He's a perfect man. He's entire. He lacks nothing.

And he fears God. He hates evil. And his answer, the devil's, showed he had considered Job.

Ha! Job serves you for what he can get out of you. He's in that crowd that thinks that all you have to do is just pray a little prayer and you'll get blessed. And if you take the feed bag off and quit blessing him, he'll curse you to your face.

And right then, a contest was set up between the devil and holy God. And the Lord consented to make Job the showcase of the universe. He didn't even know it.

And all the angels were watching. And Job even said, oh, that my words were written down. That they were in a book.

Oh, boy, if he'd only known. Oh, if my words were written down. God says to you, every idle word is the same for you, brother.

They are being recorded. They are written down. You are in a showcase.

And Job said, oh, the Lord give us and the Lord take us away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. He didn't sin with his lips.

He didn't speak foolishly. But the point I'm making about Job is that all of heaven was watching him. And in that moment, he stood for the glory of God.

And he passed the test. He passed the test. And this is exactly what Paul says about us as well.

First Corinthians, chapter four, verse nine. Look what it says about the apostles. But same for us.

It's a pattern for us. First Corinthians, chapter four, verse nine. It says, I think that God has set forth us.

The sent ones, the apostles, last, as it were, appointed to death. God has made us a spectacle of the cross, he's saying. For we are made a spectacle.

And the word spectacle is the word the Greeks used for the Roman Colosseum. Looking down the games. We are a spectacle.

Look at the realms to the world, to angels and to men. It's not just men that are watching us. It's the world spirits and it's angels of God.

They are watching us. In fact, over in first Peter, chapter one, verse twelve. It says that the angels desire to look into the things of God.

The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. Remember when that prodigal out in the far country came to himself in the hog trough. Angels were watching him.

And it says there is joy in the presence of the throne of God over a sinner that repents. And they're watching me. That's exactly what it says in Ephesians, chapter three.

This changed my life. I can't even tell you. And in Ephesians 3:10, it speaks about to God's intention.

Ephesians 3:10, that now at this moment to principalities and powers in heavenly places, it might be made known by the church. That's his body. The manifold wisdom of God.

Wisdom is truth behaved. How to make truth knowledge experience. That's wisdom.

So that now to the invisible intelligences, demons and angels, they're watching. They might say, look at those people make truth real in their life. You see, here's what I'm talking about.

You're in your room and you go to that drawer that nobody knows what's in it but you. And you go over there. And in that moment, there is a contest going on in the visible for control of you.

And there are the demons saying, go read that book. No one knows it's there but you. And after all, you've had a hard day.

And your wife is angry at you. And that girl at work, she's always flirting with you. You'd never touch, but go read your book.

And you begin to be reasoned with. And you go over to that drawer. And in that moment, the Holy Spirit says, touch not the unclean thing.

Be ye separated, saith the Lord. And there's a contest right there. And in the invisible, let me tell you, angels are watching you.

Demons are watching you. The saints who've gone before, I believe, can see as well. We are compassed about with so great a crowd of witnesses.

It probably means they can see us as well. I don't know for sure, but I think it does. And they're looking and they see me in that moment.

And can you imagine the man that takes out that book and opens it up and begins to peruse those pages? And the Lord says, I am of purer eyes than to look on sin. I cannot look at iniquity. And the devil goes, you call him your child? And he accuses God of his face.

That revelation changed my life in private. Because I realized that it didn't matter what man thought. It only mattered what the truth really is.

And as you're in private, you can be who he tells you to be. You can be. You must be.

The strength of a public life is the private life anyway. It's who you are when no one sees, like those flowers. But God, did you know that the plate that the priest wore on his forehead, the high priest? God said, you wear a plate of gold on your forehead.

Don't ever come before me without this plate. And on that plate is a deep etching. It's on the forehead because it stands in Scripture for disposition and direction and purpose of life.

It shows the purpose of a priest. And it says in deep inscribed etchings like writing it on your mind. Holiness unto the Lord on gold plate.

And God says, you've got to always have that there on your forehead. When you're in the secret place of the Most High, when nobody else sees, I see it. Make it your intention.

And so, the possibility, you see, for failure is real, brother. It's real. God wants you to be victorious.

But the enemy wants to paralyze you. I am the bone of his bone, it says in Ephesians 5.30. I am flesh of his flesh, as Ian pointed out. In 1 Corinthians 12.12, it says, we are members of his body, in particular, expressly.

It means exactly what it says. God doesn't have a body to live in anymore. He's spirit.

He's looking for a body in which he can live. And so, therefore, I want you just to think for a moment about this private thing I'm talking about. When nobody sees, when you're in a town on a business trip, and nobody you know is around.

You're in another country, you're there, and you know that you can do things that no one at home will ever know or understand. And you see, it just shows that God is remote to you, if you could live like that. Listen to 1 Corinthians 6, right after the verse that Ian read this morning.

And right after it says, verse 15, that your bodies are the members of Christ. It goes on to say, 1 Corinthians 6.15, shall I then take the very members, bodily parts, of Jesus Christ and make them the members of a harlot? He's talking about adultery here. But shall I take Jesus' body and make him be involved in adultery? God forbid.

What? Don't you know that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? So what you're doing is, you see, get this. What you do with your hands, you make Jesus do. You literally make the Lord Jesus do.

This is why the Bible says, grieve not the Holy Spirit. This is why the Bible says, quench not the fire, the passions of the Holy Spirit. Hinder not the Holy Spirit.

Resist not the Holy Spirit. We can do all of those things. And let me tell you, you'll never be more committed to Jesus in public than you are in private.

Never. When nobody sees but God, just him. What a privilege it is to go to your bathroom and look in the mirror and say, Lord, I thank you that you've cleansed my heart.

And although there are many things that you're doing in my life, my heart is toward you. And you can look with a clean conscience in the mirror and glory in God. What I do, I make him do.

Well, the next thing we've got to do is make no provision for the flesh. Make no provision for the flesh. You want victory when you go home? Then take the truth of Romans 13, verse 14.

It says, Romans 13, 14. Excuse me. Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.

Am I the only one that's ever done this? I have known a weakness in my own life. And I've known that if I go to that place over there, I'll probably be tempted. And I found myself in a battle of whether I'll do it and said, oh, I'll trust God there.

And when I've got there, I've failed to obey the Lord. You see, I've got to identify pitfalls. You've got to be sensitive to the Lord to know what's a pitfall.

When you go to college, when you go to a business meeting, you've got to beware of the snare and not be ignorant of the devil's devices. See, brother, you've got to evaluate honestly how you have fallen, where you have fallen. You've got to look at it and be honest and see the patterns of temptation.

The devil is the best psychologist in the universe outside God. And he's had six thousand years tempting men. And he knows your particular weakness.

And he will come perhaps for some man. It might be a time when there's leisure. That's when he's tempted.

Another man may not be bothered by leisure, but it's when he's under stress that he can be tempted and his flesh can take over. Another man, it might be after he's been blessed. I've been with some meetings after a great time of preaching where godly people let down their guard after God has blessed and around the table.

God is great. Temptation takes root because after blessing, we get distracted. Be sober, be vigilant for your enemy.

The devil goes about seeking who he may devour. Avoid those areas. Know where you're vulnerable.

Flee youthful lusts, single men. Don't go parking if you have a problem with lusts. I'm saying you say, well, I'm going to go out and I'm going to I'm going to stop at this point.

That's nonsense. Let me tell you something. Once you disobey God, you're out of control.

Nobody can control how far they'll sin. It's either all in God, in the light or you're on your own. Joseph lost his coat, but he kept his testimony.

He lost his coat, but he kept his character. You see, we're given a hundred chances to say no, aren't we? Before we ever come to that last one where we're like doing some business deal and the Holy Spirit begins to say, no, my child. And scripture begins to come.

And we have a chance at the very beginning to say, no, I won't in Jesus name. But then we go through that little roadblock and get down and we're farther along. The Holy Spirit says again, no, no.

And a little louder. And we run that roadblock a hundred times to say no. Until you get to the last one that says like, you know, it says danger, detour, detour, road, close, road, close, road, close.

It's this last big one with all these signs. That's the end, brother. Off you go out into the abyss where there's no bridge.

You're crashing. And that's what happens to us. A hundred times to say no.

You see, we don't only need willpower, brother. We need willpower. Willpower.

I won't. In Jesus name. I will not look at this.

Going to the airports in Europe. They have pornography just out on the shelf. And all the battle I've had when I've been away from home for weeks.

When I walk down there, like in Germany, I look over and I see these magazines and I know all I have to do is just tarry for a moment. My eyes. Just to stay.

I wouldn't stop. Oh no. Somebody I know might see me.

But as I walk by, my eye goes over and it's like the battle is there for the honor of God. Job 31. One.

I've made a covenant with my eyes. Lord, why then should I think upon a maid? You see, I must have willpower in Jesus name. It may not even come out of my life.

I could look at that and you'd never know it. My wife would never know it, but I'd say what my inner man would know it. And he wouldn't forget it.

It would burn itself into the impressions of my mind. I could walk through there and look at that book and walk by and say, how disgusting. I'm just trying to keep up with what the Lord says he hates.

I'm serious. That's what people do. Well, brother, I'm just going to go see this movie because the world is watching it like crazy.

And I got to know so I can preach against it. We laugh. But this is the plague of my soul.

And I remember being tortured, walking, saying in the name of Jesus Christ, I'd be better off blind than looking at that. Lord, I will not in Jesus name. And boy, when you walk by, the devil is just ashamed.

He's just ashamed. He says, oh, I couldn't do it. He must love God.

You say, hallelujah. I love God. I've proven to the Lord I love him.

Now I know that you're my servant. You see, on little issues like that, little things when you're tempted. Well, you want to make no provision for the flesh.

The human heart is like a draw bed of straw just waiting for a spark to happen. God says, keep the fire away. Keep the spark of temptation.

I remember once praying with an alcoholic who was saved and he was having such a bondage time. He was walking in victory. But every day on the way home from work, he'd always stop for a six pack and drank it on the way home.

And he came to me about a month later and said, Alan, having such a hard time, it's as if I drive by and the car almost turns in like this. What can I do? Oh, how can I have victory? I looked him right in the eye and said, because it was the same place he always stopped every day. Same old 7-Eleven, whatever it was.

He'd always stop in there. Same routine. I looked him right in the eye and said, brother, drive home a different way.

Take a new route. Go a couple of miles out of your way. Make no provision for your flesh.

If you want victory, you can have it. Oh, I don't. I'm going to go home the same way.

I've no time. You know, we make loopholes for sin. Don't hang around opportunities for sin.

That means places or people. You know, some of your old bass buddies and some of your old country club buddies, some of your old ex-barroom buddies. They'll make you sin.

The principle of Scripture is they will corrupt you. You won't correct them. Evil communications corrupt good manners.

Romance can ruin you if it's not in the center of God's will. I've met many a disciple who's become a noodle, walking around like this because he was in love out of God's will. Romance.

Silly, fleshly gratification. You see, one of the devil's favorite lines is, you can handle it. And one of the most naive things we ever say is, I'll wait till tomorrow.

I'll wait till tomorrow to deal with this. You've got to identify grounds and give it back to Jesus. Take back the ground you've given to the enemy.

Well, the fifth thing you've got to do is earnestly pray. Earnestly pray. Jesus said, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

See, a lot of people are trying to live dynamite lives on firecracker prayer. God says you've got to watch and pray. You've got to have a secret heritage in the closet of God.

Alone, a place where you can go. Oh, how sweet it is. How sweet it is.

And in that place of prayer, God will show you roots of why you do what you do. Maybe the reason you're angry is not because of circumstances. It's because of something that happened to you years ago.

You've never gotten over. And God says, I want you to confront that thing with your dad or your mom and ask for forgiveness and be cleansed. And the root will be axed out and the fruit will begin to diminish.

Pray. Learn to pray for those people that you lust after instead of lusting for them. You see some woman dressed like Bathsheba or something with nothing practically on in our day.

And she's walking along and you're sitting there and you have these thoughts. I tell you what, if you can make yourself say in the name of the Lord Jesus, I won't follow that line of thought. I'm going to pray for that woman.

And you pray for her. You have a hard time lusting over who you're praying for, brother. Job's captivity was turned when he prayed for his friends.

Pray for somebody else who's got the same problem you have. Pray for them and you'll find that as you pray for them, God will be setting you free as well. Find them to pray for and pray for them.

Well, the sixth thing you've got to do to be free from besetting sin is find someone or some men to be accountable to. Someone to whom you can bear your soul and someone who will love you enough to hold you to the tip of God's sword. I was in a meeting one time and I was talking to a bunch of preachers, a bunch of pastors about accountability.

And this one man stands up and says, well, brother, what you're saying just doesn't bless me. It just doesn't register. You know, he's kind of a little guy.

He said, it just doesn't bless me. It doesn't register. It doesn't really edify my spirit.

And I looked at him right in the eye and I said, brother, who are you accountable to right now? He said, well, nobody really. I said, that's why it doesn't bless you. Well, I am my wife.

I says, oh, man, you know, I said, what you need are some guys that will hold you to the tip of God's sword. Ephesians 521, it says, submit yourselves one to another in fear of God, in astonished awe for

God, submit to one another. This afternoon, we'll have men's groups and you have the opportunity to do this.

James 5:16, confess your sins, your faults, your your your lacks one to another, and then pray for one another that you may be healed of outer and inner things. Say, well, I wouldn't share my private life with anybody. Well, then you're going to go ahead being carnal the rest of your life, because only as you walk in the light together do you have real fellowship as you're willing to be not only known by God, but known by man.

I'll tell you, I love being with AFC. And after six years, we know the worst about each other. And there's some things that we've had to work through and being in a team.

But I'll tell you what, we love each other. And if things aren't right, we've gone into rooms before and we've dealt through things. We want to get up and walk out and come back.

For God's sake, we know fun. You know, if we just did it for fun, we would just split up. But God says submit one to another in fear of God.

And I tell you, the rewards of fellowship shine on and they outlast any inconvenience or trouble or pain. Well, the next thing we've got to do, and I need to hurry. Learn to reckon, learn to reckon.

You have to reckon when you balance your checkbook. You have to reckon when you pay your taxes. You have to reckon if you're from the South.

We always say, well, I reckon strengthen your will. You want God to strengthen your will? Then begin to fast in secret. Ask God to teach you about fasting when nobody can see.

That'll strengthen your will and God will give you power to say no at a right time. If you can say no to food, you can say no to anything. That's right.

For by one offering, Jesus has perfected forever those that are being sanctified. You see, the major error that many of us think is that we'll outgrow temptation. Brother, you'll never outgrow temptation.

You'll never get to the point to where you're too mature to be tempted. And if you think you are, you're in that group that says, take heed. If you think you're standing lest you fall because your armor's down, you're not safe until you're helpless in Jesus' presence.

Trust in Him. And so learn to reckon. Don't dwell on memories.

Put them behind you. You've come to this conference. Begin a new thing when you leave here.

And fight battles when you leave at the threshold of your mind. The devil comes to say, think about this or do this. And you bring it into your mind and say, this is why I should.

This is why I shouldn't do this. You've already lost. You start reasoning with the devil.

Keep it out of your mind. I fight the battle at the door in the name of Jesus. The thought of foolishness is sin.

It says in Proverbs, get out of my mind in Jesus' name. My mind has stayed upon God. Expect a fight, brother.

Feelings will rebel. And you may have to suffer in your flesh. But it says in 1 Peter 4, let him who knows if he suffers in the flesh, he cease from sin.

He cease from sin. It takes suffering. It takes denying yourself.

You see, you've got to realize when you go home, you may be dealing with addiction. Oh, I'm not an addict. I'm not talking about drugs only or alcohol.

I'm talking about emotional addiction. You know what? We have an addiction to be entertained. Even in church, we have to be entertained.

Jokes, humor. All the right stuff. Right colors.

Right this and that. You know, I'm so sick of that. I mean, it's nice.

But why do we have to have it? God may take it all away because he wants to be the center. We have to be entertained. And so you have to realize it takes time to break an addiction.

You come home and you're addicted to the television. You've got to have that stimulation of living in someone else's life, that excitement. And so when you think of what you're going to do, you're so tired from work.

Oh, I'm so tired. What do I do? What do I do to be ministered to? I'll be entertained. You think about the word of God and you say, well, that's just not what's going to bless me right now.

I'll do that later when I'm more in a spiritual mood. Addiction. It takes 21 days to break a habit, it says, physically.

And I'm sure soulishly it must take longer. If you're used to thinking a certain way when somebody says something and the habitual mind is, you dirty, if you do that every time when somebody says it's going to take longer than that, when that you dirty comes up to say in the name of Jesus, I cut that off in Jesus name. You go to hell.

And it'll take you a while. But as you keep on cutting, cutting back, cutting back, God will get it down to the roots and blessing will come. Someone asked George Mueller once, George Mueller, how is it that you have such a life of faith? How is it that you have such a life of victory? It's a bunch of pastors.

And Mueller stopped for a long time and looked down at the ground and a tear coursed down his cheeks. He says, gentlemen, there was a day that George Mueller died. That's it.

There was a day in which George Mueller died. Brother, the remedy for my flesh is not consecration. It's crucifixion.

God's remedy for who I am is not consecration of my life. It's crucifixion so that his life can come. They that are Christ have crucified their flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.

Well, number eight, I'm winding down, you guys. Lunch is in half an hour. Eight, in an act of faith before you leave this place, dare to receive God's victory by faith.

Dare to face those areas of your life and come to him and say, in the name of Jesus Christ, I receive your victory. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory. Let me tell you, victory with God is never partial.

It's always total. Did you know that? It's just as thing as a halfway victory with God. And victory with Jesus is always now.

It's never future. You don't have to wait for it. Any victory you have to wait for is count of his.

It depends on you. But if I come and humble myself and come to the cross, I can receive victory from the hand of the risen Lord. Here is victory.

Just as I gave you salvation, the hand of a dying Christ gave you eternal life and salvation. Now receive victory from the hand of a reigning, living Christ. Same way.

Same way. Come by faith and dare to receive and know that, yes, in the world you will have tribulation, but you fight from victory. Not for it.

You stand in the name of Jesus and fight from victory, not for it. I'll never forget in St. Louis, there was a man up there. And some of you here are from St. Louis.

And I think you know this man. I won't be too specific. But he had this.

He came to a conference and he was saved. And a year went by. Gloriously transformed.

But he had a problem with cigarettes in his life. He was hopelessly addicted. He tried everything.

He went to all these seminars and made promises to God and snuck and did everything. Finally, he tried to humble himself by smoking publicly as a Christian and everything. It didn't work.

He was a wretched man in his own mind. And I was up there and I went to see him. And if you know who Carl is, if you're from St. Louis, you should ask him.

I got his permission for this. I went to this man and he was a successful businessman. And I said, how are you doing? He told me.

And I said, Carl, you've tried it all and failed. Now, why don't you just dare to believe that God can do what you can't do? Believe him for a victory. Are you willing to receive total victory after all your failings? Receive victory as a pure grace gift from God? That'd be nice.

It seems too good to be true. Well, let's just pray. We bowed our heads and we closed our eyes and we humbled ourselves together.

And I prayed over him and I said, Lord, in Jesus name, Carl has shown what he can do. Now, will you show what you can do? Not just control the flesh like a muzzled dog, but change the nature and the desire. And take away the desire for these things.

And we said in Jesus name, Amen. You know what? That man's never had a cigarette back in his mouth since that day. And he hadn't even wanted one.

He told me, he said, Al, this is amazing. I feel guilty. It's so easy.

It's amazing. You see, the truth of the matter is, brother, this is going to hurt. A lot of us wrestle with lust, but if it really came down to it, really came down to it, as long as we keep wrestling with it, we don't mind keeping it.

We don't really want to be free. We think we wouldn't be a man if we didn't lust after women. And God says, listen, lust is not normal.

It's devilish. Lust is not normal for a man. Lust is of the flesh.

It's of the devil. Brother, God says you can be pure. Well, the last thing is realize God's grace.

Brother, realize God's grace. And after all that I've said, I want to take us back to grace. He gives grace to the humble.

He gives grace to those who humble himself. And it says in Timothy, last words to Timothy, 2 Timothy 2.1. Thou, therefore, my son, be strong. Yes, yes.

In the grace that is in Christ Jesus. That's your strength. Not your promises, not your feelings, but his grace.

And you've got to keep your eyes on Jesus. And I tell you what, you've got to gaze at Jesus and glance at your struggles. Don't take your eyes off him.

Don't become overly introspective like we've heard about and become self-centered and self-worried. Just rejoice in the Lord and know there's room enough in his glorious grace to grow. There's room to grow.

There's always more in Jesus. He always saves the best wine for last. But today can be the day of victory.

Faithful is he who calls, who will also do it. He's called us to holiness and he will do it. Meditate on his goodness.

Meditate on how much he loves you and your family and what he wants to do. And that leads you to a deeper repentance than men's desires would ever go. I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed to him against that day.

He is able to keep me from falling, it says in Jude 24. He is able to present me before the Father without blame in Colossians. He is able to save me to the uttermost in Hebrews 7. He is able to give me an inheritance among those who are sanctified.

It says he is able, God is able. And the large part of it is no longer being ignorant of the fact that not only does he command me to be holy, but that he's able. And he's yearning.

And he will, if you'll believe it. Lord, you're able. We can be pure, brother.

Not because of law, but because of love. Because of the love of God, we can be pure. Love demands it.

God's calling demands it that we walk worthy. By the precious blood of Jesus Christ, I can draw as near to God as my desires take me. Did you get that? By the blood of Jesus, I can draw as near to God as I dare.

The limitations to holiness are not on God's side. They're on my side. And I'm willing to face this without holiness.

No man, no man will see God. No man.

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