

Prepare for Success

by Andrew Weaver

Andrew Weaver's sermon encourages young people to prepare for success in life by aligning their goals with God's definition of success in money, marriage, and ministry.

Duration: 1:30:09

Scripture: Colossians 1:9

Topics: "Successful Living", "Faith Guidance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the crowd before being executed and shares a message about following God's voice and making choices that bring peace to our hearts. The speaker also mentions a testimony about experiencing God's satisfying love. The main focus of the message is to encourage and bless the youth, providing practical preparation for a successful life in the areas of money, marriage, and ministry. The speaker emphasizes that these principles apply to Christians of any age and encourages the audience to study the Word of God for further guidance.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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We have with us this morning Brother Andrew Weaver from Guyana. They are serving there as the Lord has planted them there at this time and directed them that way. So we have asked him to share the message with us this morning.

So Brother Andrew, you just come and let the Lord speak through you to us. Amen. Praise the Lord for the opportunity to be together and worship Him.

We are looking forward to going back to our home in Guyana Wednesday, Lord willing. We've had a very good six or seven weeks here in the States visiting our family, our church home in South Carolina. And I do want to thank everyone that we've been blessed by.

We've enjoyed visiting with many of you, getting to know some of you better. We wish there would be more time to spend personal time with so many people that we love and appreciate. But we do thank you for your blessings and encouragement to us.

Thank you for your gifts to God's work. May God bless and reward every one of you for what you've contributed. We do appreciate that very much.

Let's just bow our heads and commit this time to the Lord this morning. Father in heaven, we come to you only in the name of Jesus. And we thank you that through Him we have access unto you.

And we give you praise, honor and thanksgiving this morning. Lord, we want to worship you. Thank you that you are worthy of all of our praise.

That the best we can give to you is not too much and in fact is not even enough for what you deserve. We invite you to be here with us this morning. May your Holy Spirit open your word to our hearts.

May we understand it. May it become a part of us. And may we get a clearer vision of you and of your will for us here on this earth.

Would you speak through me, Lord? Sanctify and cleanse me. And let your truth be unhindered by my own ideas or agenda. Let it just flow through in truth.

I ask in Jesus' name. Amen. The message that I felt burdened to share this morning is especially for the youth.

And of course God's principles and God's truth apply to people, Christians of any age. But I've gotten a burden in a new way for the young people during this trip. Spending time with them.

Hearing their dreams and visions. Hearing some of their struggles. And I would like to just especially share this with the young people.

As a blessing, as an encouragement. Not to correct, but to encourage the right dreams and visions that we've heard. To give some practical preparation for a life of success.

And that's what I've titled the message is prepare for success. In three particular points. When it comes to money, to marriage, and ministry.

And I realize those are three huge subjects. There is no way that I can really do justice to it. And I'm not trying to be thorough on each one.

I'm just trying to give the young people a few specific things they can do right now. To begin preparing to succeed. And I don't have to tell you that the way that I'm going to define success.

Has very little to do with the way that the world defines success. We want to know God's definition of succeeding. But there are many things that very young people, young teenagers can do.

To begin laying a foundation for success. The way that God sees it. And sometimes there's a breakdown between the dreams and the visions that young people have.

And the reality. Because they seem to feel that this is all in the future. And when I'm old, when I'm rich.

Then I'm going to do all of this and that for God's kingdom. But the fact is it all begins today. That the habits are formed now.

And that's what I want to encourage you in. That today there are things you can do. And there's no doubt that everyone wants to succeed.

That's only natural. Nobody plans for failure. We want to succeed.

But we need to know what God defines as success. And what we can do today. To begin preparing to succeed.

To begin succeeding today. Paul told Timothy that he was to be an example of the believers. Timothy was a young person.

Not an example to the believers. Although that is also true. But he was saying, Timothy, you as a young person should be an example of a believer.

The world should look at you as a young person. And you are an example of what a real Christian is. You are an example of the believers.

And so young people are called to a very high and holy calling. To represent to the world what a real believer is like. What a real child of God is like.

That's what God is calling you to. To be an example of a true believer. And I'm going to share some practical things.

What I believe that you can do to prepare. And if anything that I share contradicts what your parents believe or wish for you. I want to make very clear that your obligation is to your parents and not to me.

There is some variety allowed in the practical details. God does not force us all to be identical. And so if your parents would prefer that you do something differently than I say.

The most specific one I can think of is in the area of money. Because different people operate differently. Your obligation is to your parents.

Life is long enough that God can lay his convictions on your heart as you study the word. And if they end up being a little bit different than mine. God bless you.

You just follow the Lord. I do believe that his ways and his thoughts are so much higher than ours. We can't confine him to one simple thing.

But I will define success in money. As handling your finances in such a way that God is glorified and the world is baffled. And if God is not glorified.

And if the world perfectly understands what you're doing. Then something is probably wrong. The Bible tells us in Romans 12 too.

That we are not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed. And we hear a lot about not being conformed. And the word non-conformity is often used.

But it is seldom applied to this area of our life. Where in fact we have our greatest opportunity to impact the world by not being conformed. Because most of our interaction with the world.

With the unsaved is in the realm of business. And that's not right or wrong. That is simply the way that it is.

That is how. That's where most of our interaction is with the world. And so that is our greatest opportunity to show them a transformed mind.

That is our greatest opportunity to be not conformed to their way of thinking. Not conformed to their standard. And I'm afraid we're often missing that opportunity.

It's our greatest opportunity. The world should be looking on and be puzzled at the life of a Christian. The Bible says that the preaching of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness.

And we can say that about a lot of aspects of our life. The world looks on and they say this is foolishness. It makes no sense.

But too many times when they look on at our business, our handling of finance. It makes perfect sense to them because our goals are their goals. We hope to expand.

We want to keep pushing this business bigger and bigger. We want more customers. We want more money.

We want the bigger bottom line. They understand that perfectly because that's their goals too. And I feel that we are often missing our very best and biggest opportunity.

To show them what it is to be conformed to a different standard. To be transformed by the power of God. Matthew 6.21 tells us that where our treasure is, that's where our heart is.

And maybe we could say it another way. Where we spend most of our money is where our heart is. See, God is very practical.

He gives us some very specific guidelines. We look at our hearts. We look at our lives.

We look at what happens with our money. And we have to ask ourselves, am I measuring up to the standard? Am I under God's control? Is this every detail of my life, the little purchases that I make, is that under God's control? We somehow have this attitude sometimes that God cares about anything over a thousand dollars or over a hundred or twenty or whatever. But below that, it's totally my own thing.

But I believe that God desires to be a part of all of our life. Not just in spending money, but in every part of our life. I believe He wants the kind of relationship with us where we are constantly in communication with Him.

Where He's constantly a part of our life. And He will naturally influence what we do with even the one dollar bill and even with our quarters and dimes and pennies. God is a part of that too.

One of the first things that I want to tell you as young people to understand now is that there is nothing embarrassing. You don't have to be apologetic about the fact that you have a job and that you are earning

money. Sometimes there is this extreme veneration of full-time workers, missionaries, pastors.

And we feel apologetic for anything different than that. But the Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:31, Whether therefore ye eat or drink, what's more basic and earthly than that? But whether therefore we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, anything at all, do all to the glory of God. And so it is possible to work at a job, to earn money, to the glory of God.

That can be a holy thing. That can be an act of worship. But of course God wants to be in control of that too.

But it can be a holy thing. You never need to feel apologetic for the fact that you are working and providing for the people that you are responsible for. But what often happens is in our minds we make a division between our life here on this earth and our spiritual life.

We see it as two different things. It's what A.W. Tozer called the false, sacred, secular divide. When in fact there is no such divide in our life.

There is no part of our life that is secular where God is irrelevant. It is true that in many people's lives there is a section where God is ignored. But that does not make him irrelevant.

He still belongs there and he still wants to be a part of that. And he deserves to be involved in that. It is simply a communication where very naturally, as naturally as breathing, I'm faced with a decision.

A \$2, \$3 decision and I just very naturally listen for God's voice and he can direct me one way or the other. I'm not talking about looking at some item. Say you're going to buy a shirt.

You look at the options on the rack. You find one that the price seems right. It seems to express what you want to express.

You tell the clerk, alright I'll go home and pray about it. Fast for three days and then I'll be back with my decision. That would be a burden.

That would be an impossible burden. But if you are just walking with God and your heaven above you is open and your conscience is free. And throughout the day you've been having communion with God.

You're faced with this decision. You reach for the wrong one and you just hear the spirit saying no. And you say yes father.

You back off. And you get his direction. You have this feeling of peace.

The sense of his blessing. His approval on what you're doing. There's no burden in that.

That's a privilege. It's a joy. But you can't expect to ignore God the rest of the day.

And now you're faced with this decision. And you say come on now and help me make this decision. I need you.

This is in the context of a relationship that is constant. Always. God is involved in every part of it.

And you don't just suddenly bring him in as your financial advisor. He is your best friend. Your constant companion.

And then it happens naturally. It's not a burden. It's not something where you have to burden yourself with fasting and prayer over every decision.

You simply follow the light. You walk with him and doors open and close. And you just follow that prompting.

Right, left, stop, forward, back. You hear his voice and you just obey promptly. I believe many of us would be surprised probably if we knew how well that other people could read us.

You know the purchases we make. The cars that we drive, the clothes that we wear, the things we buy. They tell the world, other Christians, they tell onlookers pretty clearly who's in charge when those purchases are being made.

Is it God or is it me, my old flesh? Who's in charge? And again, I don't believe that God leads everyone in precisely the same details. The important thing is obedience. The kind of relationship to God where you know his voice and you know that you have his approval for what you do.

And I don't think we're all going to end up identical. But I think there are certain things, there's a certain pattern that is going to emerge after a while. There are certain principles that are going to be consistent throughout our lives when we have God as our constant companion.

Influencing even those little decisions about how we earn money, how we spend it, where we give it, and all of that. 1 Timothy 6.8 gives us a standard that is very much out of sync with modern American thinking. It says as long as we have food and clothing, we should be content.

How many Americans do you know that actually have that as their standard? Food and clothing. Maybe we can stretch it a little and say shelter as well. But having that, they're content.

Isn't there always a drive for more and more and more? 1 Timothy 6, I wish we had time to read all of that, but there's a lot of warning in there. And it is directed to a young man. Very good for young people to read and see.

What is God actually saying? When God is in charge, like I said, certain principles are going to be consistent throughout the lives of his people. The details will differ, but you will see certain principles. And one of the very first ones that God will teach is the lesson of contentment.

Paul said as a testimony, I have learned how to be content in any condition. He did not say I've always been content in every condition. But he said I have learned how to be content no matter what my state is.

I know how to be abased. I know how to abound. He knew how to be abased, how to be in real want and need.

And at times he spoke of working night and day to provide for his own needs so that he would not be a burden to someone else. He also knew what to do when he abounded. He knew what to do with plenty.

And there is something that many of us Americans have forgotten. We don't know what to do with plenty. And God has a plan for that too.

And we need to, each one of us individually, need to cultivate that kind of relationship with God where he has the freedom to speak to us about small details. And we hear it and obey it. If he's teaching you to be

content, and I believe that will be one of the first things he will try to teach you is get contentment across to you when you put God fully in charge of your finances.

Maybe you're young enough, you don't have a job. Maybe you have an allowance. God wants to begin teaching you how to involve him, how to give control of that to him, even at a very young age.

Probably one of the first things he will do is to ask you to be content with less than many of your friends and peers have. Very, very likely. I'm not going to make prophecies about what God will do in your individual lives, but I suspect some of you are not going to be given the freedom, as you consult God, to carry a cell phone like everyone else does.

I don't know how much of a status symbol that is here, but in Guyana it still is in a lot of places that cell phones are new, and it's a big thing to have one. Well, there's no doubt that that's a big blessing, even in the work of God, to some people. But not everybody needs one.

And if you follow God, you might be the only one out in the crowd that doesn't have one. You might have to be willing to stand out. And people may not understand your reasons.

You may not be given a chance to explain, and you have no obligation to make sure that everyone understands this is a matter of spirituality. You know I'm more spiritual than the rest of you. Not at all.

You just follow God, keep your mouth shut, and he'll take care of the rest. It may mean... Oh, what's the other thing I see a lot? Palm computer? No doubt that is a real blessing. I've had one myself when I was in business in South Carolina.

It was a real help. It was a blessing. But not everybody needs one, and I don't need one now.

I don't need one today. But if we follow God on those little details, he may surprise us. You know, his ways are higher than our ways.

His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. He may have a better purpose. We can't just follow the crowd and spend the money because we have it available.

We need to be in tune with his Holy Spirit and sing, Lord, can I glorify you with this? And if he says no, we leave it at that. And say, yes Lord, I trust your wisdom. It's very possible, in fact I would say it's very likely, that as you really put God in charge of your money and your finances, that you're going to drive a car that is a bit older, has a bit more miles, more wear and tear than a lot of your friends.

And again, you're under no obligation, in fact you shouldn't, make sure that everyone understands that there's a spiritual reason for this, and they appreciate and admire you for it. You just follow God's Spirit. Someone once suggested that when you go to buy a car, you mentally take the hand of an orphan from a third world country, a starving orphan, and just mentally take that little child's hand, and you take them along when you go to make your decision on what you're going to buy.

I thought that was great advice, but even better than that is take Jesus along with you. Take him with you everywhere. When you're looking at the options on the cars, have him there.

Hear his voice on it, hear his opinion. And again, I don't believe he's going to tell us all exactly the same thing. God knows he has work for some people that involves a lot of traveling.

They're going to need a better car. They're going to need something reliable and dependable. That is fine.

God is going to show up, each one, what is best for your circumstance. And, of course, he may do that through advice of other people, too. It's not just a matter of between me and God alone and nobody else has any say.

It's all balanced with the input from our parents, from other people, from godly leaders, whatever. But God must have his opportunity to speak. We can't just lay him aside, go do our thing, and then ask him to come along and bless and sanction what we've done.

It doesn't work that way. It's very possible that your clothes will stand out as being, obviously, Salvation Army tights. That would be a real embarrassment for some people.

Instead of the name brands that are popular and that everybody knows about and recognizes. How about if God tells you, I have much better use for the money you've earned than to spend it on those expensive clothes. I want you to go and do your shopping here, buy your shirts for a dollar a piece.

Would you be willing for that? That's a small sacrifice. That's nothing compared to what you're going to do when you go to the mission field. And I hear lots of dreams and visions, very good ones, about how you're going to live when you get into these difficult circumstances.

But, you know, you could start practicing right now by being willing to do a little thing like that if God calls you to do it. I didn't say God does that for everyone. But if, in your following God's leading, that's what he says, then there's just no questioning it.

You follow God's prompting. I can tell you almost certainly that you won't be wearing Oakley sunglasses, even if all of your friends are. I've heard people talking about this particular brand of sunglasses, which I had never heard of before.

The figures they were throwing around, one, two, hundred dollars and more for a pair of sunglasses. If you tell me God was along on that purchase, I will try to believe it, but I will sure struggle with unbelief. But God's ways are higher than my ways.

He has sure surprised me before, it's possible. But that just seems preposterous to me. Surely God was not consulted in something like that.

But I don't know. Another thing, the lack of discernment surprises me. People wearing name brand clothing, displaying the name of an ungodly and immoral, depraved person.

You know in business world, this man should have to pay for billboard space to advertise. Instead, you are paying him to become his billboard and display his name and advertise for him. He's getting free advertisement.

And those evil people don't deserve that. Totally apart from whether God wanted you to spend that much money for those clothing, you don't want to become a billboard for the enemy. You don't want to be advertising for the enemy.

They don't deserve that. Make them pay for their own advertising. You don't want to do that for them.

God has something better in mind than that, than to be a billboard, a display for the other side. I believe when God has gotten this lesson of contentment into your heart, of being content no matter where he leads you, I believe that he is going to begin to teach you to give sacrificially. And I will be honest and say this is something I don't know very much about.

Most of us don't. We are so blessed materially that it is hard to give enough that we actually are sacrificing, that we actually suffer genuine need because we've overgiven. I know very few people who do that.

But I believe as we follow God, we may very well be called to do that sometime. It is entirely possible that we will be called to give sacrificially. And like I said before, I hear the visions of the young people, especially the ones with a desire to serve God in foreign missions, and I appreciate those visions of going among the people, living like they do, doing your best to live on their level.

I hear people talk about being content with a dirt floor, not needing a vehicle but walking or riding a bicycle everywhere. That's great. I believe in that vision too.

But my question is when are you going to start? Are you going to wait until you get there? Are you going to pamper yourself with everything you can afford here and coddle yourself and then get there and expect to become a tough soldier overnight? It's not going to happen. The way this world operates with all the transportation and the freight, the things you can ship, it's going to be very easy for you to indulge yourself even in a foreign country. I could get basically anything I want shipped up the river to our house in Guyana.

You won't be hindered because it's impossible. And if you haven't learned to live sacrificially, to give sacrificially, to be content, you will take every means at your disposal to make your life more comfortable and you won't be true to that vision you have. And I want you to be true to that vision.

That is a good vision to have and I agree with it entirely. But you can start today. You don't have to wait until you're somewhere in a primitive setting.

You can start right now. And God will also teach us the very difficult lesson of trusting in him to provide. When we give sacrificially, sometimes we're going to have a few needs of our own.

And God will teach us that he can be depended on to provide and he will guide us in those purchases, in the way we spend our money, what we do with our possessions. He will guide us. Just a testimony I have of learning to trust him, and I consider it a privilege because as long as we lived in the States, I never had an opportunity quite like this.

But there was a time a while ago in Guyana when we were completely out of money. There was not one dollar in the house. And we still had food to eat, but the groceries were getting low and it was time to buy some food and there was no money.

I knew that there was a little bit of money left in our bank account, but the town was about an hour away and it takes a dollar to ride the bus there so I could withdraw it. And I did not have a dollar to go to the bank and get the little bit of money that we needed for our groceries. And so we had an opportunity to trust the Lord and say, God, here's a need.

We need one dollar. Would you please provide that? And of course, within a very short time, someone came and wanted to buy a little bit of fruit. I sold a basket of fruit.

I got one dollar. I went to the bank. I got what I needed for that week's groceries.

I would have never had that privilege if I had been living in such abundance that God never had that opportunity. And I genuinely, from my heart, I consider that a rare privilege. I feel honored to have been at the place where I had to ask God for one dollar.

And he proved himself faithful. It was a matter of only hours. And I feel very privileged that my children get to see that.

They're too young to understand it yet, but I hope those things will happen again where we will be able to just gather together when we're having family devotions and say, Lord, we're not sure where this week's food is coming from or maybe even where the next meal is coming from. I don't know. But we're depending on you.

And I want them to see God moving on our behalf. I get the impression sometimes that God is saying, I've got so much wealth, and I would really like if somebody would just give me a chance to share a little bit of it as a testimony of God's leading, of Him wanting to be involved, of proving that He wanted to be involved in a purchase. My first car, I didn't spend much time consulting the Lord.

I bought what I wanted, and it was a very nice car. In retrospect, I regret it, but I was only learning then to walk with God, and I regret the amount of money that I spent on it. It was a very nice car.

Then I got an opportunity to spend a few months in Central America after Hurricane Mitch had devastated several countries there, and I had my parents sell the car for me while I was there working. And of course, being in the midst of all that poverty and homeless people, I couldn't come back and drive a car like that again. So I came back, and I told the Lord, this time I want you involved.

I'm not going to spend as much money. I'm going to be satisfied with less. And I went looking for a car.

That's a terrible experience, dealing with used car salesmen. I remember being called into this little office to talk to a guy who found a particular car I liked, and it was blue with cigarette smoke. He was telling me, I'm going to sell you this car at my cost.

I don't need to make any money on it. And he named a price. We talked a few more minutes.

He had dropped the price \$700 more. I knew he was lying to me, and that's something I can't tolerate. So I left.

I said, this whole thing is a big mess. And I told the Lord, maybe you don't even want me to have a car. That's fine.

I quit. I'm not going to keep on going out there trying to find something I like. If you want me to have a car, I'm going to trust you to send it to me, and I'm going to accept whatever you send.

Even if it's a rusty 74 Beetle, I will drive whatever you send. And I asked the Lord for a figure. How much do you think it is right for me to spend on a vehicle? And I felt like he clearly gave me a dollar figure.

So much, but not more. The very next day, 24 hours later, I get a phone call, and our neighbor says, hey, is any of you boys looking to buy a car? My mother-in-law needs to get rid of a car. Her husband is going to a nursing home.

Got a nice car. They need to get rid of it. I ask, what's the price? And he named the exact dollar figure that the Lord had given me.

I said, I don't need to see the car. I'll take it. And it was a blessing.

It was a good car. It was nothing fancy. It wasn't as nice as my first one, but it never made any serious problems for us, served us well, until the time when we went to Guyana.

And I thank God for that. And that was a step of growth for me, to realize that when I just give God the opportunity, he will show himself strong on my behalf. He went out of his way to make this happen, to prove to me that when I just give him a chance, he can do a much better job at choosing a car than I can.

It's that simple and it's that practical. He knows how to do it. Let's just allow him to do it.

Another practical bit of advice that I would share is to try, as much as possible, try to stay out of debt. And I know that opinions vary on this, and when I concluded that I was going to, with God's help, stay out of debt, the reactions I got from people were very interesting. They did everything short of just pat me on the head and say, there, there, little man, stay calm about it, nice thought.

But there was really a lot of response like that. People were saying, it's a nice thought, it's really a nice thought, but it's just not realistic in today's economy. It's just not possible.

And they all warned me, you will never own your own home. You realize that. The way things function today, you will rent for all of your life.

Well, that certainly was not an appealing thought to me, but I said, alright, I feel that is what God wants me to do. And I will say, I don't believe there is a clear scripture where I can give that as a law of God, that it is wrong to borrow money. There's a verse that I think might be suggesting that, but it is not something that I condemn someone else for.

But in giving control of these little areas of my life to God, that was one thing I felt He told me, that He wants our family to stay out of debt, no matter what. So, my wife and I agreed, maybe we're going to waste our money, all of our lives, paying rent every month. Well, that's the Lord's problem.

It's His money. If He doesn't want us to do that, He's going to have to do something about it. But we are not going to put ourselves into debt, put ourselves under bondage, where we're not free to go anywhere that God calls us to go.

One year, after we were married, we bought a house and almost two acres without borrowing one cent. Yes, God did intervene and worked a miracle, and the price was so low that most people wondered if we had bought a tent or what. They actually asked me that.

You bought land and a tent, or what's the deal with this price? But God did that. And again, it was like, I sensed that He was saying, I've got all this wealth. I can do anything.

Why don't you just give me a chance? So, when people tell you, it's a nice thought, but it's an impossible dream, I just want to tell you, please don't accept it. You don't have to be rude to them. You don't have to defy them.

But it is not true. It is possible that God will work on your behalf. And I admit, I have not proved that in Lancaster County.

I know that the land prices here are much, much higher than they are in South Carolina. But the \$15,000 that God provided for us to buy a house is a drop in the bucket for Him. He can do ten times that much if He needs to.

He can be trusted. God is not only trustworthy up to \$20,000. There is no limit to what He can do.

And I believe, even if He may not call everyone to that exact standard, I believe that He honored our obedience to Him. In staying out of debt, He provided this place that we could afford. The next year, I was busy starting a new business from scratch.

We had no real income that year. We only broke even. Yet, when the call came for us to go to Guyana, somehow God had provided so that we were able to buy another place there.

So, without ever having been in debt, we owned two homes. And I will admit that neither of them would quite meet Lancaster County's standards. But they've been beautiful homes for us.

One of them is a Third World shack, 15 by 20. I believe the book Pursuit of God in the Seed says that we live in a house 17 by 20. And sometimes we look at that and we say, boy, we wish for those extra two feet.

But that was a misprint. It's 15 by 20. And sometimes the 17 would be nice, but it is actually only 15 by 20.

So, most people would not be content with that. But it is the perfect house for the place that we live. It fits in with our neighbors.

It doesn't stand out as being anything extraordinary. It's just the perfect place for our family, the size that it is now. I don't know about the future, but that's the Lord's problem.

He's going to be taking care of that, too. So, I just want to encourage you. If God lays that vision on your heart, that you want to remain debt-free, and you get nothing but discouragement from other people, you just listen politely and smile, but you know that it's not true that it is impossible to stay out of debt.

Because it is possible. And I'm not the only one that has done it. I know other people who have made that commitment, and it has worked.

God has honored their vision. Something that I did a number of years ago that I would like to encourage young people, especially young men, to do. Sometime you are, most likely, going to be responsible for providing for a family.

And you want to know God's heart on providing for your family's needs, on earning money, on giving. And this was a real blessing to me and formed a lot of my convictions. I read through the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation with a notebook in hand, and I copied out every verse that I felt applied to the issue of possessions, covetousness, money, borrowing, lending, everything.

The book of Proverbs also has a lot. I just chose to go through the New Testament because I wanted Jesus' heart on the matter. And boy, when you have that all together in one notebook, that is one powerful formula for success by God's standards.

You go back and you read over all that, all the warnings about covetousness and greed and about the dangers of those who want to be rich and the things that Jesus had to say about money and about contentment. I would really encourage you to do that sometime as an exercise in studying the Word and in filling your heart and mind with God's principles and preparing for a life of success when it comes to handling your money. That's a real blessing.

I have a vision of people in the States being willing to live sacrificially. Somehow, there's sometimes this mentality that those who go to other countries, to the foreign field, they're called on to sacrifice. Those at home give of their extra and everything's all right.

But you know, I believe we could do so much more. I believe, I know that it would be entirely possible for one family in the U.S. to support one family in a foreign country. And it's going to vary from one place to another.

The expense, maybe sometimes it would take two, three, or four families to support one. But where we live, one family could very easily support us the amount that we need every month. And I think it would be such a blessing for a family to feel so connected to God's work in another part of the world.

And of course, I'm not talking about striking out on your own and two families forming a mission. I mean under the blessing and authority of the church where they would approve the plan, we're sending out this family, and this family is committed to living sacrificially. The one, the family that stays lives sacrificially just like the one that went and they support them all their financial needs.

It's a dream that I have, but I know that it's possible. I know that it could be done. I know that a church of even ten families could send three or four of them out and support them.

They would not continue living the same standard of living that they do now. There would be real and practical sacrifices that would need to be made, but it could be done. And who knows what would happen in God's kingdom.

Who knows what he could do if a church would send half of its families into the mission field and the other half would stay home and sacrifice, lower their standard of living to whatever is necessary in order to support them, to support God's work. That's an exciting possibility just to dream about. And again, I want to emphasize the most important thing in this success in handling money is a personal, close relationship with God.

There's no substitute for that. You cannot take my experiences and make some kind of a law out of them or anyone else's for that matter. But it takes a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a walking with him every day where he has the freedom to speak into your heart whatever he wants and you say, Yes, Lord.

It is a simple fact that most of you young people will eventually be married. And so we'd like to look at a little bit of what you can be doing to prepare for success in marriage. And I will define success in marriage as having a relationship that accurately portrays Christ's love for his bride and inspires other people to aim for that same standard.

It doesn't matter what the society or the community around you accepts as normal or good. God's standard is that we strive to love our spouses as Christ loved the church. And yes, there are things that even very young people can do to prepare for that.

Marriage is really about relationship. It is the closest and most important human relationship. And so one of the best things you can do to prepare for that relationship is to learn to build and maintain good, healthy, honest relationships with other people.

With your parents, yes, with your bossy older brothers and sisters and the younger ones that you think are past. Build good, healthy, respectful relationships with them. Maintain those relationships with them.

That is, in fact, some of the best preparation that a young teenager can make for marriage. Your parents, your brothers and sisters especially. You can build such meaningful, good, lasting relationships with them.

And they are foundation stone. They are preparation for marriage. And of course, the most important relationship of all that you need to build and maintain is with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I don't believe that a person is going to experience a blessed marriage until they have had a relationship with Jesus that so satisfied them that they're willing to have that one alone for the rest of their life. And I remember when the Lord showed that to me, my problem was not that I was in a hurry to get married. I had my plans of how long I was going to wait because I had a lot of other things I wanted to do with my life first.

And so, I had to say, Yes Lord, I'm giving control of this to you. Whether it's soon or later, I don't care. It's in your hands.

And I remember coming to the place a while later where suddenly I realized this growing relationship with Jesus is such a treasure, such a joy, such a constant friendship that even if I never do get married, and even if this is the relationship that I have for the rest of my life, I will not feel slighted in any way at all. That would be perfectly satisfactory. That is all that I need.

And it wasn't too long after that when God led me into another relationship with my wife. But, I could honestly say from my heart, whether that happened or not, I was going to be content. I was going to be satisfied because this relationship with Jesus is so rich and so meaningful that there's nothing missing if that's all I ever have.

That's all I ever need. And that is the most important. You cannot, you cannot overdo your efforts, your time in building this friendship and even this relationship, this love relationship with Jesus.

When you can read the Song of Solomon with a pure mind and all of that is deeply meaningful to you in relationship, in your relationship to Jesus Christ, then He is preparing you for a human relationship. But that is the goal, to learn to know Christ as an intimate friend and lover. And to understand the spiritual meaning of the Song of Solomon.

I remember when that became so precious to me, I began to realize this is real. Yes, it has another application to marriage, but this relationship between Jesus and me and all of those spiritual truths through that book is just beautiful. And there was, as I studied that, I realized this is perfectly satisfactory.

I don't need more in order to be complete and to be fulfilled. But then, of course, God added so much more and I praise Him for that, the relationship that I have with my wife. I would encourage you young people to set very high goals and to dream very lofty dreams.

But then turn those back on yourself. Instead of having a very high list of standards for who your future spouse will have to be and what he or she will have to measure up to, turn that back on yourself and become that ideal spouse. Yes, I do believe in having a very high standard.

You don't want to just accept the first person who comes along. I believe in having a high standard, but I believe in having a higher standard for yourself. Turning those dreams that you have of what your future spouse should be like, turn those back on yourself and ask God to make you that kind of person.

And He's going to do it by pruning and chastisement sometimes and also by just the life of daily growth with Him. It's not going to be all unpleasant and painful, but there will be some of that because our flesh and our old self nature has to be put to death. And that's a painful experience, but that is God making us into the kind of person that we someday want to marry.

So, I encourage you to dream high dreams and to believe that beautiful things are possible. But turn those dreams back on yourself and promise God that you will cooperate fully with Him in His task of making you one of those people. And again, your relationship with your family.

Beautiful practice to put your flesh to death. To let the Holy Spirit within you direct your responses and reactions instead of your flesh. Have any of you girls ever had a daydream like this, you picture? Beautiful little house, all in order, everything spick and span, soft music playing, wonderful smells coming from the oven as you wait for your husband to come home from work.

The baby is lying in the playpen cooing to herself and the two-year-old is folding the laundry and singing a song. Six-year-old boy, he's probably studying his algebra book or something. You're just waiting for your handsome husband to come and open the door and suddenly your daydream is interrupted by your little brother tugging at your elbow.

I can't find my socks. And you say, oh, why don't you ever put your socks away where they belong? I don't have time to help you. I'm busy.

Do you think there's any possibility that a person responding in the flesh like that is going to come even close to the daydream they were having? Don't count on it. God has you in a school now with the people that you think are the hardest to get along with. He is giving them to you as a gift to learn not to respond in the flesh.

He's teaching you to put that flesh to death and to respond in the power and grace and anointing of the Holy Spirit. That's what He wants to do. And that is your preparation for marriage.

And that begins when you're very young. But it is God working on you to make you the kind of person that you think you deserve to have. Someday, when you are in love with a person, you will realize you owe them much more than you can even give.

And you will want to be all that you can possibly be. And then you will thank God for all of the sanctifying work that He's done in you to at least start you on that road to becoming who you want to be. You don't have to settle for what you see around you.

And I would encourage you to observe other people and families, not in a critical way, but observe them and see what you want to emulate. Find role models, who you want to learn from and ask advice from, and who you don't want to. You don't even have to settle for exactly the kind of marriage that your parents have.

And it is very important that you understand you have no right to criticize or condemn them. But you can set an even higher goal. And something that may help you to understand and to give them grace is this example I've used sometimes.

Let's say that line represents an awful marriage. This line represents a perfect marriage. Your parents, before they were saved, may have started out here.

And by God's grace, outpoured in their lives, and by a lot of hard work and sweat on their part, they have moved all the way up to here. And they have a good relationship. And God has done a lot of beautiful things in their lives and has brought them so far.

Now they are giving you the gift of starting here instead of back here. And you, because you have a good start, you may eventually be all the way to here. But do you see what would be wrong with criticizing your parents for where they are and having a critical attitude? Look at the distance they've traveled.

Look at what God has done with them. You've done this and you think somehow you have the right to criticize them. Definitely not.

It is possible to aim for a higher standard than other people have and even than your own parents have and yet not be critical or condemn them in any way. Because just look, look at the grace of God and what He has done and how far He has brought them and be thankful that you were given the privilege of starting from there. What if you travel as far as they did? Look where you will end up.

That's your goal. That's what you have to work for. You have no right.

We have no right to criticize or condemn someone else who has experienced the grace of God and who have traveled a great distance. Many of us who are tempted to be critical, we haven't done anything near like they have. We have not experienced God's grace to the same measure of bringing us that kind of distance.

So set your goals high and follow after godly examples and if you pass someone up, you have no right to ever look down at them or criticize them. They have experienced God's grace in bringing them a long distance too. But as I said, I don't know high standards.

Don't just think that because someone else tells you that disagreements and arguments are inevitable that they are because they're not. God does have a higher standard. And again, let me demonstrate something here.

The culture around you will have a standard and possibly even the culture within the church may have a standard and they may say, okay, this is you. And they may say, out here is a line that you may never cross. And this could be physical abuse.

Husband beating his wife. And nobody, no couple would think of crossing that line. Another couple might draw the line back here and say, well, there's a line that we would never cross.

We would never argue, shout, get angry at each other. But the culture would say, as long as you're on this side of the line, you have a good marriage. Everything is alright.

But the verse I always think about in connection with this is, put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. And I picture it like this. Put him on.

How big a field does that give you for sin? You know, the closer you get, the smaller the sins are. Here, it might just be to ignore your spouse, try to teach them a lesson. There might just be subtle little things of disrespect.

The lines get closer and closer. Some people will cross this one, they'll cross this one, but not that one. But when you put on the Lord Jesus Christ, make no provision for the flesh, the lines are so tight that you make no excuses for any kind of sin.

And that is the standard that I want you to have. Someone else may have their line out here and say, well, we'll go that far, but no farther. And I believe that everybody does have a big roadblock line somewhere.

I would never do that. But I will tolerate this little sin. God is asking us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, to make no provision for our selfish old flesh.

And that puts us in a very tight standard. Then we cannot make provision for any of, even of those small sins. We are called to a much higher standard than that.

And that is the standard that I want you to aim for. Again, without being critical of other people who are also on their way toward that standard. It is a process.

You're not going to be there instantly. It is a process of walking with God, of being conformed to the image of Jesus, of becoming like Him. But go for that.

I would encourage you to read in the Amplified Bible sometimes the verses on marriage. There are some especially powerful ones to the wives, but even to the husbands. The way that they amplify some of those words to bring out the meaning.

Maybe type them out and hang them on your mirror. Be sobered when you look at what God is calling you to be. That gives you a purpose to work for.

You look at what God is calling you to be for your future spouse and you say, Lord, I know I'm not there yet. And I need your chastisement, your pruning, whatever, to make me like that. And invite God to work in your life in that way.

And remember that you owe it to your future spouse to be conscious of them as you interact with members of the opposite sex. Young men, you owe it to your future wife to be aware of her, to be conscious of her as you interact with young ladies and vice versa. I don't mean that you have to know who your future spouse is going to be, but you need to be aware that sometime you want to present yourself as a pure and undefiled gift to that person.

And that means even in the way that you relate to other people. And it is entirely possible to have good, healthy friendships between young men and young men ladies. And to be able to come to marriage with no regrets.

But I would encourage you, again, the most important thing is to be walking with God and to have the voice of God speaking to you and directing your actions. But sometimes it would also be good to develop a consciousness. Someday I probably will be married.

The girl who I will one day marry may be watching me now. She may be watching the way I'm interacting with young ladies. What is it going to mean to her once God finally leads us together? Is she going to have to struggle with distrust because of the way that I've been too free and flirting? Or is she going to be very confident that I've kept myself physically, mentally, spiritually only for her? I believe there could even be some value.

This is not for everyone. But some people I've heard of that write letters to their future spouse. Again, not knowing who it is.

They start quite early and they say, this is a journal of my spiritual growth. This is what God is teaching me. This is what I'm learning about interacting with young men or young ladies.

These are the temptations I've had. It doesn't have to be explicit. But just a little bit of an accountability between you and the journal.

And someday you will have that as a gift to give to the special person that God brings into your life. And what a privilege, what a treasure it would be to give them a record of your spiritual growth, your relationship with other people that would cause her, him or her no doubts, no grief, no disappointment. What a gift that would be to give.

And I would also like to encourage you, don't burden yourself with trying to figure out all of God's will for the future. When it comes to marriage, some people, it seems like such a big burden of needing to figure out God's will, needing to find every detail of God's will. You know, the example I think of is Peter.

When he was in his jail cell and he thought it was all over, suddenly a bright light shone in the cell and what did he do? He just followed that light and one door after another opened in front of them until they came to the big city gate. It opened of its own accord and he was free. He just followed the light and God opened the doors as they went.

There was nothing burdensome, there was nothing heavy or difficult about that. It was simply a matter of obedience step by step by step and sometimes God does impress on us the gravity of the decisions that we're making and the life-changing possibilities and effects and yes, it's right to feel that responsibility very heavily but it is not a burden to seek God's will. It is a joy to walk after God in obedience.

One step today, another step tomorrow, another step and he should have freedom as we walk along to just correct our course a little bit to this side or that side and we should be in the kind of relationship with him where we respond immediately. I think God could save us from a lot of heartache and tragedy if we just walk that way. We may make one small step in the wrong direction but his spirit is right there to say not that way.

Just redirect our course a little bit and it doesn't have to be a painful, burdensome thing. It can be a joy to just follow that direction as he goes along and again I understand God works differently in different people's lives. That doesn't mean it's going to be easy sailing for everyone but overall the principle is we follow God in obedience today.

Tomorrow, God may have a new requirement for us. Again, we follow him in obedience and like Peter, we see the doors opening ahead of us one after the other until we're out where God wants us to be. It's not a burden.

Discerning God's will is not a burden. It's simply a light surrender, obedience, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. A few thoughts on preparing for success in ministry and again, you know that I'm not talking about huge crusades, huge offerings, very popular ministry.

God does use some people in a very visible and public way that's wonderful. Other people are called to a ministry that is invisible and I would define success in ministry simply as offering yourself as a living sacrifice willing to pay any price for God's glory and for the sake of His kingdom and at the same time saying from an honest heart I am an unworthy servant. I have done what it is my duty to do.

That to me would be successful ministry whether it is the ministry of being a godly parent and raising godly children or of an encourager to other brothers or of an intercessor or a more public one like an evangelist or pastor or teacher. Any one of those. We just offer ourselves to God for any price as a living sacrifice but the attitude of our heart is I am an unworthy servant.

I am only doing what it is my duty to do. This is nothing special. But something that is hard for us to understand is that God prepares us for ministry in the most basic things of life.

Did you know that God actually prepares us for ministry by seeing how good a job we do mowing the lawn washing the dishes doing laundry building furniture laying bricks whatever it is God is actually testing us for ministry in those things. I believe there is a direct relationship between how well we do those little what we think of as secular things those little things how well we do that and how much ministry God can trust us with. I believe there is a clear connection there.

And we often fail to see it. We divide it. Now I am living my secular life sometime God will speak out of the clouds and lead me into a wonderful public ministry and thousands of people will get saved.

Maybe. God is higher than us and his thoughts are not our thoughts. But more often he is going to watch us and watch our faithfulness in the little details serving our family doing our job serving our boss honestly giving him an honest day's work and then when he sees we can be trusted then he has more for us.

In fact the Bible says very specifically that if we are not faithful in that which is least God cannot trust the true riches to us. That's in Luke 16 in the context of the parable of the unjust steward and it seems to be suggesting that God tests us with how we use unrighteous mammon. That's the phrase it uses in that verse.

How well we use what stewards we are of the unrighteous mammon. And when we have proven that we can be trusted with the unrighteous mammon then it says then and only then can God trust us with the true riches which could be spiritual gifts or ministry things like that. But he watches to see how we deal with this unrighteous mammon that has been put into our hands.

If you can't rejoice and be faithful in the drudgery of your life as a teenager today don't imagine that you are going to be some powerful missionary for God tomorrow. Let me give you another daydream. You're picturing God calling you into a public ministry in some foreign country and heathen are turning to the Lord by the hundreds and maybe thousands and God is working miracles through your ministry and finally of course something this big comes to the attention of the enemies of the cross and you are arrested and

suffer for your faith and you're let out to be executed publicly you go out calmly, serenely you give a last message to the crowd of people watching and there's your little brother again.

I can't find my shoes. And you tell him why don't you ever put your shoes where they belong? I don't have time to help you. I'm busy thinking.

You know what thinking is? If you respond in the flesh at that moment what reason would we have for thinking that somehow in the future we will be so controlled and filled with the power of this Holy Spirit that God would trust us with a martyr's death? See a martyr's death is something very powerful. It can bring tremendous honor and glory to God. But God would not trust something so powerful into the hands of a person who is still used to responding in the flesh.

A person who is still afraid to hurt the flesh. Who doesn't like to have the flesh disturbed. Until we have learned to put our flesh to death to say no to it to respond, to react in the spirit to rejoice in where we are to rejoice not only tolerate but to rejoice in the drudgery of life as it is today.

We can't expect to be used in either ministry or martyrdom tomorrow. God is looking at how we are handling the drudgery the little details of life the chores day in, day out. And while he's watching he's evaluating can I trust them with something more? Can I trust them with the true riches? And no matter what your calling or your ministry is going to be you are going to need to know how to pray.

It does not matter if God is calling you to be a godly parent to be an intercessor to be a pastor teacher evangelist it is so important that as young people you learn how to pray. To learn to enjoy to pray. To have the kind of relationship with God where you naturally pray.

Where it doesn't have to be a discipline where you spend an hour each morning. That would be great if you have an hour each morning. But more than that that you would be communing with God throughout the day.

That you would be in contact with him. You would be telling him what's on your heart. He would have the freedom to speak to you.

To give you revelation to give you guidance to give you correction to direct your course. No matter what your ministry is going to be you can begin preparing today. No matter how young you are you can begin preparing for your future ministry by learning to pray.

And again no matter what your ministry is you are going to need to know the Word of God. I think it is so important while you're young to develop a habit of not only reading but studying the Word of God. We need to keep our minds active and sharp.

You don't want to put the pure Word of God into a lazy sluggish mind. I would suggest some of you young people study a biblical language. Study Greek or Hebrew so that you can learn to read the Bible in its original language.

That would be a tremendous blessing and it would be a very good exercise for your mind to keep it from getting lazy. So many people finish their schooling go out and begin a job and their mind just kind of goes into hibernation. I believe it's important that you young people don't waste the best possession God has given you in your body.

Keep the mind active sharp be memorizing Scripture be studying the Bible in a regular systematic way. You should become familiar with the customs culture practices of Bible times so that you can read the Bible with clear understanding of the context. There's so much to be learned here.

The sooner you can develop a lifetime love for this Word and a habit of studying it the better off you're going to be. So much of ministry has to do with warfare. You know we are in a war.

The devil is out to destroy us and the only weapon God tells us that we're given is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. And if you don't know this Word of God you're going to be very handicapped in the war. And God is not going to call a soldier into battle who doesn't even know his weapon or how to use it.

So I would encourage you to develop this habit of studying loving the Word of God filling yourself with it making it a part of your mind heart your thoughts your attitudes your reactions to things just let it be filling you. No matter what the future ministry is going to be that will be valuable. If you have an interest in foreign missions if you believe some day God may call you there even if you don't there's great value in studying another language.

I mentioned a Greek and Hebrew. If you want to study something that is more likely to be of use in relating to other people that's a very good exercise too. And there is no better time to do it than when you're young.

Very young children can absorb languages effortlessly but young people teenagers you can still learn them much much more easily than older people can. And there's tremendous value in that. And even if God calls you to a different place where you don't use the language skills you have I'm living in Guyana where the official language is English and I've invested a lot of time and effort in learning several other languages they're not being put to use right now but I don't regret it at all.

It's good discipline for the mind it still opens up communication with several hundred million people throughout the world that I would not be able to communicate with otherwise. So there's great value in that. I would encourage you to consider doing that.

Another thing that I believe we could do is to adopt a certain country for prayer. And that does not mean that you're making some kind of commitment or limiting yourself to someday serving God only in that country. Because God has a heart for the nations of the world.

And we are so focused on only a few of the ones that we know about. Who is praying regularly for the spiritual needs in Uzbekistan? Who knows what the spiritual needs are in Angola? Who's praying specifically for Rwanda? Who is spending regular time in prayer asking God to crack the bamboo curtain in North Korea? Who is studying Korean so that when God brings down the bamboo curtain we'll be ready to move into North Korea with the gospel? There are several generations of people have grown up in there with no knowledge of the gospel whatsoever. Do not even realize that it exists.

Somebody should be preparing. Somebody should be praying in faith for God to tear down those walls. And there should be an army preparing, studying Korean, prepared for the day when God is going to open that country and we can move in there with the gospel.

There's no use sitting around with light business as usual, Brother Ron. No use going on with business as usual and thinking someday in the future God is just going to drop a ready-made ministry into my lap and

I'm going to be a great foreign missionary. It doesn't start that way.

It doesn't work that way. It starts today. I would encourage you to choose a country and you could even rotate it every month or every week or however often you want to.

But it's so easy with today's communication to actually keep up to date with the needs and the events in a country. I know many of you have access to the internet. I would say if you have something so powerful and so potentially dangerous in your house, at least put it to good use.

Don't just let it be a tool of the devil. Put it to good use. Find that country's official website or a website about that country.

Check on it every so often. Find out what is happening and read it through the perspective of discerning the spiritual needs and being able to pray knowledgeably about that country. Learn what it means to carry a nation on your heart and a people.

And again, I'm not saying that you will then become focused only on that one place and believe God has called you to a very specific place. Give God the freedom to lead you as you go through life. But I think that's only a reasonable service.

That's the very least that any one of us could be doing for foreign missions. Even those who never are called to leave this country. That is something you could be doing and making a powerful difference.

I know it. I know it is a fact. I know of someone who felt led by God to pray for a certain country a devastating situation that was going on there of warfare and bloodshed and killing.

And this person began to pray very specifically and constantly about this need. God was just burdening him for the need of that country. And within a very short time God turned the circumstances completely around.

Against all human expectations God began to relieve the suffering of those people and to stop the bloodshed and the warfare. God can do that through our prayers. God can open the way for the gospel where the way is closed now.

And any one of us can do that. Here's a suggestion that you definitely need to check with your parents. But you can get a very cheap short wave radio and once a week listen to broadcasts from almost any country in the world.

They almost all have an English broadcast. Some of you already may have access to a little radio like that. It's completely different than the AM and FM that is full of commercials and music and things.

Generally this is nothing more than a statement of the events of the previous week. And the government of each country sponsors that. Now of course you have to be discerning.

I've heard a broadcast from the Islamic Republic of Iran and you can't believe everything that you hear on there. But it certainly gives you a burden for the spiritual condition of that country. And if your parents would support that idea or maybe it's something you could do with them so that they could watch over it, that would be a way for you to understand what is happening around the world in a country that you've begun to carry on your heart.

Or even if you don't have access to a shortwave or the internet or your parents prefer that you don't use those methods, you realize you can subscribe to newspapers from almost any country. You could get a weekly or a monthly newspaper from almost any country around the world and very likely you could find it in English. You might have to do some searching to find out the name and how you can get it but it is possible because there are people from countries all around the world who live in the U.S. who have an interest in their home country.

They receive this weekly magazine or monthly just to keep track of what's happening in their home country. You could use that as a tool for the building of God's kingdom. One way or another, be involved now.

Don't wait until God hands you something. Begin learning about the needs of the nations of the world and begin to carry them on your heart. Begin to learn how to intercede and to pray.

Learn how to stand in the gap for a nation. I believe it could be a powerful exercise. Maybe someday God would allow you the privilege of visiting the country that you've cared about for so long.

Maybe not. It doesn't matter. Your prayers could still literally change the history of that country.

It is entirely possible. God has done it before and he would do it again. One more thought in preparing for ministry.

We need to learn to find joy in serving without being noticed, without being appreciated. And where could you learn that better than right in your home, with your family, your brothers and sisters? God wants us to learn to find genuine satisfaction and joy in serving without even being noticed or appreciated. When we are appreciated, that's wonderful.

And let's be more appreciative to each other. But if you are the one serving and you're not being noticed, if you are able to find genuine joy in that, you've passed one of your courses in God's preparation for mission, for ministry. I believe that.

And again, in all of these areas, everything we've talked about, the money, the marriage, the ministry, there is nothing that is more important than that you walk with God every day and that you keep a clear relationship with him, that you keep a conscience void of offense because you know that allowing any sin into your life dulls the voice of God. Imagine all the damage that can be done if you're walking without the benefit of God's guiding voice and you're making all these decisions in the flesh. But if we keep our heart free and our conscience clear and God has the freedom to speak into our heart at any time and we hear it, just imagine what God might do with our life for his glory and for his kingdom.

I'd like to finish, to close, by reading a few verses from Colossians, chapter 1. This is my desire for all of you young people who have a desire to be successful for God. And I mean to glorify God. You have a desire for God to be glorified in your lives.

You want to learn to walk in the Spirit, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, to not make provision for the flesh. You want to learn to involve God in all of the details and decisions of your life, all of your purchases. You want him to be working to perfect you, to transform you into the image of Christ, preparing you to become a wonderful spouse or another wonderful person someday.

You want God to be teaching you, preparing you for ministry. And I know I haven't been able to cover any one of these subjects even to my satisfaction. But I hope I at least gave you enough inspiration that you will study them out more carefully.

You will see what the Word of God has to say about those things and that you will walk with God and let him take you further, teach you, let you grow. There's a very, very long sentence here in Colossians chapter 1. Glorious sentence. I'm not going to read all of it.

Just part of it. Paul is saying he has just heard of the Colossians love for Christ. And he says, For this cause we also since the day we heard it do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled, filled up to the top with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

I desire that for every one of you young people. Your desire to walk with God. Your desire to glorify him.

I pray that God is going to fill you with the knowledge of his will that in the smallest details of your life before you spend 25 cents for a pack of gum that you will be filled with the knowledge of God to the extent that God could easily say not this time and you would hear and respond promptly. I desire for you to be filled with his knowledge in that way. Not to be put under a law.

I don't want you to think of me the next time you spend a dollar and feel guilty about it. I want you to be walking with God and be filled with the knowledge of his will for you and his will for you is not going to be precisely his will for me. That's part of the greatness of God that he loves us each personally and he is willing to step by step reveal his will to us personally.

Isn't that an awesome thought? God cares enough about me to give me instruction on buying a car or something even much less. God cares about me. So I desire that you will be filled with all wisdom spiritual understanding and that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

Being fruitful in every good work. Every good work. Every little good work that you will be fruitful in that and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Every day increasing in the knowledge of God. That's my prayer not only for the young people but for every one of us. For myself that every day we would be filled with the knowledge and wisdom of God.

We would be increasing in knowledge of him and that every little decision we make and every action we take pleases and glorifies the Father. May God bless you. Did we hear from the Father's heart today? We did.

Amen. Thank you Brother Andrew for sharing with us in that very practical way. It's for us too.

It wasn't just for the young people Brother Andrew. It was for me too. I know that every father in this room it's your heart's desire for your young people to get this.

Live it out in reality. And I know that a lot of you young people that's your heart's desire too. And that's a joy to us.

So where you're at today you see some needs you see some areas where you can grow in go for it. Amen. Just like to open it up maybe there's someone that would like to share a testimony confession just mind the Lord.

Is there someone? Raise your hand we can get a microphone to you. And if not that's okay too. Amen.

Praise God for His word to us this morning. God bless you Brother Andrew for declaring all the counsel of God. I'm just thinking of the verse in Hebrews that says seeing we're encompassed with such a great cloud of witnesses and gives us instruction how we must live our lives.

I think we heard another witness this morning of what it's like to live a life of faith. And I feel like the message was for me. I'm still a young person.

I'm married and have a family and some of those things but it's a beautiful message. But the challenge comes to my heart. As a young father I can only transmit that which I have.

And by God's grace and mercy our children may pass us up but I just had to think of the words you shared Brother Aaron about every father's heart is that. But how many fathers of us are willing to pay that price to live the way Brother Andrew laid out so their children can follow and be an example. So that they can go there.

So they can live that way. Yes the young people have a burden but I believe we have a responsibility those of us who have families to live that sacrificial way and lift up an example so our young people can follow. Maybe it starts with our PDA or our cell phone.

Maybe it starts with the car we drive. Maybe that's what it takes sometimes for the young people to get it. I just want to examine my heart and say God help me to be that kind of example to my little ones looking on.

Amen Brother. Thank you. Someone else? Up here in the front.

I want to say thank you Andrew for sharing with us. It's on your heart. I greatly appreciate that.

I would agree that to those who have the faith to walk that way it is the most blessed way to live. So just an encouragement to everyone here. Yes it is possible and it is the most blessed way to live.

Amen. Thank you Brother. A hand on the sister's side.

On the outside there. Thank you. I too appreciated the message this morning.

It really spoke to my heart. The testimony that I have last night as I was in bed waiting for sleep to overtake me and just thinking about what God had done for me this week. What He brought me through and what He taught me.

A testimony came forth out of my heart and God spoke to me and said you have something to share with your brothers and sisters. And I said no Lord I don't think so. I praised Him for the testimony but this morning when I woke up that very same thing was on my heart so I need to share out of obedience.

This week I confess there were times when I got to looking at the waters around me. I got to looking at the sea and the waves were a little stormy and I began to sink into discouragement and despair. And I had to just cry out to God Lord save me from this discouragement.

And I began to look on Jesus and I felt Him pull me up out of the waters. And I began to walk on the waters just as Peter did. Did the circumstance change? No.

The circumstance still stays the same. But with my eyes on Jesus I can walk on the waters. Praise the Lord.

Amen. That's a hand right there. I would just like to say something before the mic goes past the bench.

I thank God for the message this morning and it echoes what is in my heart to follow in obedience to His voice and the little things that He shared and the decisions that we make each day in responding to our siblings and our choices. But those do make a difference in the peace that can flood our hearts over such small things like that. And also just I have a testimony in my heart like when Andrew shared when he was so close to God that he didn't that his love was so satisfying that he didn't know that love could even be needed.

And I just was thinking that the last few weeks I've been able to walk in that peace that just enjoying my Savior's love and the satisfying just it satisfies my soul much more than any other thing. And it just I even thought those same thoughts. Oh God, if I could just walk like this for the rest of my life I wouldn't need any other relationship nothing else but that just I know it can be done and if we could just walk in that that love can overflow our hearts to other people around us.

I even found out that a lot of those problems that I was having through the week were just taken care of by simply abiding in His love. And they just spread out over my heart and I just thank God for the message I heard this morning. Thank you for sharing.

I was just so thankful for the message this morning. I've always said to God Lord, I want to minister for you. Lord, I want to serve you.

I want to be there. I want to just pour my life out to you but it was always later. It was always not now.

There's not much I can do now. But I realized that there's so much that I could do to practice now. There's so much I could do to prepare for then.

And I just want God to use me in that way and open to Him. Thank you. Amen.

You know, now's the time. I think maybe one of the subtle lies that we give in to at times is well, we have plenty of time to get ready or what can I do and I'm too young or I'm too old or whatever. You know, all kinds of different thoughts but now's the time.

And you're in the right place too. So God bless you, my dear brothers and sisters. Is there another hand over here on the brother's side? Well, I had something on my heart to share.

I was struggling with it some. I really did appreciate our brother sharing this morning. Thank you so much.

I know that in my life there was a time, you know, I wanted to do the things that were spiritual and then God brought me to that scripture that our brother touched on in Luke chapter 16. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. And he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous manner who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own? And I remember God bringing that scripture so clearly to me and I being so far in the dish that I wanted to be that spiritual person and not get wrapped up in the things of this life. And God using that scripture showed me that when he wants someone that's spiritual he does look for someone that's faithful

in the material things in life. And I would testify of the goodness of God that when we give ourselves to that which God shows us in that way he fills our lives so full we hardly know where to turn at times.

God is so good. Amen, brother. Thank you for sharing, Luke.

Was there another hand right in that area as well? Yes. Yeah, I was very blessed with the message this morning too. I was just thinking as Merle was talking about the fathers too going before us and I was just thinking we're looking up to you fathers.

Be a leader for us. We need some encouragement at times. I was just thinking I really appreciate this.

You say, please you want your children to pass you up but please don't take that as an excuse. Go for it anyway. Amen.

Thank you, Elo. Is there one over here? Yes, thank you. Go ahead.

Yeah, I was just really challenged by Andrew's message. I was just thinking about the way that he spoke about financially and the dollars and how the Lord just can lead us to spend even a dollar or two dollars in His will. I thought about all the girls that are starting up housekeeping and I just wanted to give a testimony that it does work because the Lord's been teaching me this in the last couple of months and it does work.

Maybe some of you might think, well, Andrew and Elizabeth live far away in Guyana and they have to do that but I just wanted to give testimony that it does work here in the States too because the Lord has been teaching me. It's been exciting to live that way, to go grocery shopping and there's so many selections and so many brands and just to be able to go and know that the Lord's going to guide me that I get what I need but yet not too much and it's just been exciting and it's been a blessing. Praise God.

Thank you for sharing. Well, may we meditate, reflect in these coming days what God has given to us this morning and not just be hearers but doers of the Word of God.

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