

Questions and Answers

by Chip Brogden

Chip Brogden addresses listener questions about the nature of revelation and the importance of seeking God in a relational and grace-filled manner.

Duration: 59:22

Scripture: John 3:30

Topics: "Question Answer"

Description

In this video, Chip Brogden deviates from his usual chapter-by-chapter study of the Bible and instead answers listener questions. He emphasizes the importance of surrendering and dying to oneself in order to experience the revelation of Christ. Brogden teaches that as Christ increases in our lives, we must decrease, resulting in brokenness and humility. He encourages believers to trust in the life of the Lord to accomplish what they cannot do on their own, reminding them that all things are possible with God.

Transcript

And be glad in it. Hello again everyone, this is Chip Broadbent coming to you with another edition of our weekly webcast. I am streaming online at www.watchman.net. And this week we're going to do something a little bit different than what we've done in previous weeks.

Ordinarily, I will take a book of the Bible and we'll progress through it with a chapter by chapter study. But we're doing something different today. And what we're doing is we're going to go through and answer some of the listener emails that I've received from questions I've received from people who have listened to the webcast or have visited the website.

I sent out an email to our list several days ago and asked people to give me some feedback and ask me questions that they would like to get answers to. And you certainly responded. The response was tremendous.

Lots of good questions. Lots of questions that are simply too complex for me to answer. Certainly by sending an invitation out for people to write in with questions, it's not to give the impression that I've got all the answers.

But God has given me some wisdom in certain areas. And He is able to use me in a way to more or less confirm what He is already showing to other people. Not because I have any great wisdom in myself.

I've made a lot of mistakes and I try to learn from those mistakes. But basically, it's the Spirit of God who gives you wisdom. So what I want to do is take some of these questions.

I don't have answers to all of them. Some of them I really don't know, to be quite honest with you. Now, some questions I have avoided discussing because they're just too controversial.

But others that are more applicable to the people that are listening and the questions that have to do with practical issues and issues along the lines of what we typically will teach. Those are the ones I want to spend some time on today. And hopefully it will be encouraging.

Hopefully it will be interesting to you. Out of all the hundreds of questions I got, I'm not going to be able to answer even a fraction of them. But maybe something will be said in the answering of these questions that will benefit you.

This is what we're able to do in our School of Christ. We go into a place and we have a workshop all day on a Saturday. We teach on the principles of the Kingdom of God and God's ultimate purpose and how we fit into that purpose.

We begin to cast that vision that God has for us individually as disciples, for the church as the body of Christ, and for all of creation, and for this Kingdom of God that He's establishing in us and around us and through us. That is a good opportunity to get questions answered. But we don't have the benefit of that over the Internet.

So this is an interesting opportunity that I have to be more interactive with you. And maybe since the response was so good, we'll have an opportunity to do more special programs like this where we take the questions and the issues and the problems that you're struggling with and try to address them, hopefully from a spiritual perspective, from a Kingdom of God perspective, and certainly using Scripture as a way to provide us with the answers that we're looking for. So why don't we get right into it and take the first question.

But first let's go to the Lord and ask Him to pray and to lead and to guide our discussions today. Thank You, Lord, for Your Spirit which gives us wisdom and illumination and insight. And I thank You that in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom.

And I know there's lots of questions. I have lots of questions. Really, Lord, You're the only one who has the answer, and You are the answer.

It's just a matter of seeking Your face, getting Your wisdom and Your thought and Your will. And so, Lord, just help me as I try to answer these questions that people have that I do it in a way that points people to Jesus, number one, and that people are able to tell the difference and I'm able to tell the difference between what Your Word says versus what just my opinion is. And if we can keep that clear, I think then we'll have a good time of discussion and it will be beneficial and profitable to everyone.

So, Lord, I thank You and I praise You for everyone who's listening. And I pray that You would bless this time that we have together in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

Praise the Lord. Well, the first question is something that comes up pretty often. As I write, as I teach, as we travel, and I'm able to interact with people in person or on the Internet, here's the question.

What is someone supposed to do while they're waiting to receive the revelation of Christ? What is someone supposed to do while they're waiting to receive the revelation of Christ? If someone has asked, prayed, and waited but still has no revelation, what do you do and what's the problem? Well, that's very interesting and let me address it by saying, first of all, what revelation is not. Now, I've talked a lot about revelation and I've written a lot about revelation. And I mean the revelation of Christ.

I don't mean the last book of the New Testament. I mean the revelation of Christ and the necessity of having spirit and truth revelation as opposed to flesh and blood knowledge. So, I think when people hear that, it can be easily misunderstood.

So, hopefully by answering this particular question, I can help clarify this issue for you. First of all, revelation is not an event. So, when someone is asking me, what do I do until I receive this revelation of Christ? It sounds almost as if they're waiting for something to happen insofar as a spiritual experience is concerned.

I'm waiting for the revelation of Christ. And maybe they are thinking that the revelation of Christ is going to be some kind of an earth-shattering event with angels or lightning or thunder. I'm not sure what the conception is.

But when I hear people ask questions along those lines, then I think maybe it's because they are seeing revelation as an event. Some type of something happening to them that's going to be like Paul on the road to Damascus. And then he saw the great light and he fell to the ground and Jesus spoke to him.

And they hear my testimony of how I was sitting in the backyard reading the Bible and the Lord revealed himself to me in a very powerful, very tangible way. So, I've got to be careful when I'm sharing my testimony that I don't give people the impression that if you haven't had this experience, then you haven't received the revelation of Christ. It's not tied to an experience or an event.

Secondly, revelation is not a reward for works. It's not something that you're trying to work for in order to justify God granting you this revelation. It's a revelation of grace, just like everything else that we do in the Christian life.

It is not that God is holding back on us and he's waiting for us to prove that we are worthy, to prove that we have earned the right to receive this revelation of Christ. And then he pours it out on us. So, when people ask me what do I have to do to receive it and what do I do now if I've prayed and I'm waiting for it and it hasn't happened yet.

Those are the two issues that I think come up. And it's critical that we really understand what revelation is not because I think that will help answer this question. Revelation isn't an event.

It's not an experience. It can be that. I'm not saying it can't be that.

But revelation, whether you have heard the voice of God, whether you have seen angels, or whether you've been thrown to the ground with a vision, or whether you've had this experience of being called up into the third heaven. If you haven't had any of those experiences, you can still have the revelation of Christ because it's not an event per se. It's not some type of a manifestation that so many people are seeking.

Some type of tangible manifestation where they can point to it and say, Oh, I've had the revelation of Christ. I've been struck by lightning or something. Now, I'm just speaking very plain and I'm telling you it's not an event.

It may be for you. I'm not saying it has to be one way or the other. But don't be discouraged if it's not because revelation in and of itself is not necessarily tied to an event.

On the other hand, you can have all kinds of spiritual experiences and have absolutely no revelation whatsoever. So, you don't want to equate revelation, the revelation of Christ, with some type of a mystical spiritual experience. And secondly, revelation certainly is not a reward for your works.

So, it's not a matter of, I've got to pray harder, I've got to read the Bible more, I've got to work at it, and I've got to keep after it and keep after it. Then, you're not walking according to the Spirit, you're beginning to justify yourself in the flesh. The revelation of Christ is not a reward for works.

So, let me tell you what the revelation of Christ is. The revelation of Christ is a process. It is a process of Christ increasing as we are decreasing.

John 3.30, my life verse, says this, He must increase, but I must decrease. And that is revelation. The revelation of Christ begins with this increasing of Jesus.

Now, this increasing of Jesus is already taking place in the world. It's already taking place. If there was not some form of a revelation of Christ in a person, they wouldn't even come to the Lord to begin with.

They wouldn't know that they needed to come to the Lord, unless the Lord, in some fashion, in some manner, revealed Himself to that person. Even to a sinner. I'm not saying that the revelation of Christ is God's reward for you demonstrating how spiritual you are.

Jesus revealed Himself to Simon Peter, right there on the shores of Galilee, and Peter says, Depart from me, Lord, I am a sinful man. He called Jesus, Lord, and he knew who Jesus was. But Peter was a sinner at that point.

It was only then, at that moment in time, that Jesus received him and said, Fear not, I will teach you to be a fisher of men. And he became a disciple of Jesus at that point. But Peter didn't stop learning.

He continued to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's what I want to communicate to you as I try to answer this question. Revelation isn't an experience.

Revelation isn't a reward. Revelation is a process of growth. And if you're even seeking God, if you even know to seek God, if you even desire the revelation of Christ, if you even have a heart towards the Lord and towards the things of the Lord, then you've got the revelation of Christ.

Now, you may not be mature. You may not be spiritually, you might not have reached the point of knowing all there is to know about the Lord. Who has? I certainly have not.

We are all growing in grace. And Peter says, That's why you're to desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. He says, Grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So you don't know everything there is to know about the Lord. You know, that's one of the big problems I see with Christian people, especially people who interpret the Bible very literally, very fundamental type

religious people. They think they know everything there is to know about the Lord.

And they don't know. They've barely even scratched the surface of who He is. We have to understand that this revelation of Christ is a progressive thing.

The kingdom of God, it increases and it grows within a person. And it's not that you don't have it one day, and then all of a sudden you're struck by lightning and then you've got it. It can appear that way sometimes.

But you know, as we grow in grace, and as Jesus is increasing on the inside, He is enlarging and expanding of the increase of His government and peace. There will be no end. And so we simply, folks, we just need to relax.

We just need to let the Lord reveal Himself to us. How does your spouse, how is your spouse revealed to you? You enter into a relationship with your wife or with your husband for a lifelong commitment. And it takes years and years to develop that relationship.

Now, the revelation of Christ is granted by the Holy Spirit, and it's a revelation of grace. And I would suggest if you're even bothered by the fact that you don't know Jesus enough, you've got some inkling of a revelation of Him already. But just be very careful not to judge yourself based on other people's experiences, other people's what they say God told them and how God showed them.

These things should encourage you, that God can and God does reveal Himself to people in a thousand different ways. And if you've set rules for yourself that says, well, this is what the revelation of Christ is. It has to be this kind of an experience.

And here's the way I'm going to feel when it happens. You're setting yourself up to be unnecessarily disappointed. It doesn't have to be that hard, and it's not that hard.

Revelation isn't an event. It's not a reward. It's simply a process that we can yield ourselves to.

Certainly you seek the Lord. You seek Him early and you seek Him often. And you hunger and you thirst after the Lord and after righteousness.

And you pray, Lord, reveal Yourself to me. But see, that's a daily thing. He's not going to reveal Himself to you all in one glorious mountaintop experience.

Wouldn't that be nice if He would just do that? But we don't grow in that manner. We grow as we live our life day by day, and we see the Lord reveal Himself to us in a thousand and one little ways. Little revelations, little insights into Him and into His ways.

And that's what makes it so powerful. Now, you may very well have a mountaintop experience, but revelation does not depend upon your feelings. It doesn't depend upon those mountaintop experiences, those spiritual events.

Just continue to be faithful and just seek the Lord. Rest, relax, and allow Him to reveal Himself. Just allow it.

Just let it happen. Just surrender yourself to the process. And that's the best counsel and the best wisdom that I can give you there.

I've got some other material on the website that will help you with understanding what revelation is all about. But I just encourage you. You've already got more than you realize.

It's not a matter of trying to get more of the Lord. It's just getting less of you. With less of you, there'll be more of Him in your life.

Praise the Lord. Well, let's move on to the next question. Here's an interesting question.

It says, I recently read a book, and it talks about a man who tried to achieve salvation by works. Now, this ties into the first question, so I wanted to share this. This book's about a man who tried to achieve salvation by works.

Now, we know that's impossible, right? But listen to what this man was doing. He was reading the Bible no less than three hours a day. He was praying no less than two hours a day.

He was witnessing two or three times a week, giving so much to the poor, fasting two or three times a week, etc. He was doing all this because he was supposed to, out of obligation, and it was killing his spirit. Then he finally figured out that he was a Pharisee.

Well, praise the Lord for that. Then he stopped and gave up. He decided it was better to be cold rather than to look good on the outside and die spiritually on the inside.

He stopped praying, reading the Bible, fasting, giving to the poor, everything he did out of obligation. For a while, nothing happened, but then pretty soon he started to have a hunger and thirst for the Word and started reading the Bible because he wanted to, not because he was supposed to. The same with praying, fasting, giving to the poor, etc.

Now, here's the actual question. I've listened to your teaching growing up spiritually, and in it you say that we should develop a habit of daily prayer and Bible study, which I agree is important. But based on what I wrote above, how can we develop these daily habits without them becoming obligations? If we develop the habit of prayer and Bible study, but it seems like we're just doing it out of obligation, should we just stop like he did and wait for the Lord to put that desire and hunger into us? Where's the line between seeking the Lord's face and doing things out of obligation? Well, that's an excellent question.

That particular teaching, growing up spiritually, I've gotten more comments back on that program, probably than any teaching series I've ever done, and it's along these lines exactly. The question is, where do you differentiate between works, doing something out of obligation, and doing something because you want to out of a good habit? Some people would even question the need to have habits at all. They believe that to be led by the Spirit means that you're totally spontaneous.

Whatever comes up, you do. If you don't do it, if you don't feel like doing it, you don't do it. And you know what? The problem with any of those things is regardless of whether I feel like it or don't feel like it, some things need to be done, right? Regardless of whether I feel like loving my wife today, I have an obligation to love my wife.

You say, well, I don't feel like it. And I would say it's beside the point whether you feel like it or not. There are some things that need to be done.

Some things need to be learned. I'm not a big fan of natural learning. That's a type of philosophy that some homeschool families have adopted.

And based on my understanding, if the child feels like studying a particular subject, then you work it into your daily routine. And if not, then you don't. And I know I'm oversimplifying that, but here's the issue that I have with that philosophy.

The issue I have with it is there are some things a child needs to learn whether they feel like wanting to learn them or not. I don't need to wait until they begin to show interest in algebra. If they need to learn algebra, they need to learn it.

There are some things that we need to do just because we need to do them. And regardless of whether or not I feel like it or not, they need to be done, okay? Now, that sounds very much like an obligation. It sounds very much like works according to the flesh.

But I think it's important to get behind the scenes, not just look at what's being done, because I think everyone listening will agree that two people can read the Bible. One person can read the Bible because they feel like it's their Christian duty to do it. They feel like they're scoring points with God when they do it.

And they have some kind of a need to make up for past sins. And they feel like if they read the Bible, they'll be more of a holy person and they'll be more pleasing to God. Then another person sitting right next to this person can read the Bible just because they hunger and thirst after the Lord and they want to know more about His Word.

Where outwardly speaking, if you're just judging according to the outward appearance, both of them are reading the Word, both of them are reading the Bible, so they are both right, right? Well, wrong, because one's motivation is completely different than the other, but you can't tell that from looking on the outside. Now, this question is talking about a book where the man, obviously, is trying to achieve his salvation by works. What he was saying, in essence, is I've got to read the Bible three hours a day.

I've got to pray two hours a day. I've got to, I've got to, I've got to in order to be saved. And folks, I'm telling you, if you belong to the Lord, you are saved.

There's nothing you can do to earn it, and there's nothing you can do to merit it. And so that all of this activity of reading the Bible because I'm trying to be saved or I'm trying to score points with the Lord or make up for lost time, so I'm going to pray more and I'm going to read the Bible more, I would say that that's a wrong motivation and that's in the flesh. But if you have a desire for the Word and that desire causes you to read three hours a day, then praise the Lord for it.

I don't think we should measure spiritual things in terms of hours spent. I would rather spend five minutes a day in the Word of God being led by the Spirit than to spend five hours a day reading the Bible and be completely in the flesh. Now see, this is going to get into an area where it's very difficult because I can't look at someone on the outside and discern the thoughts and the intents of their heart.

Only Jesus can do that. So it's going to depend upon your motivation. Now the motivation that I'm assuming in my teaching series, Growing Up Spiritually, is that you want to grow spiritually and you want to go deeper into the Lord.

You want to develop a relationship with Him. And the point I'm making in that series is there are things that you can do to create an atmosphere in which you are furthering your relationship. Just like if I want to have a deeper relationship with my wife, it only makes sense that I need to spend time with her, I need to talk to her, I need to listen to her, I need to care for her.

I can't have a relationship with my wife if I never see her, if I never talk to her, if I never spend time with her. Well, how can I have a relationship like that? Well, in the same way, I think a lot of people just believe a relationship with the Lord just kind of happens by accident. They don't have to do anything.

It's just kind of a spontaneous, whatever will be, will be. And I'm saying that there are certain things you can do. You do them not because you're obligated to do them, but you do them because you have a desire in your heart and you want to serve God and you want to go deeper.

So there are some very basic, elementary things you can do, like pray, read the Word. Not difficult things, but you really need to get at your motivation. Why are you praying? Why are you reading the Word? Hopefully it's because you are hungering and thirsting after righteousness and you want to know the Lord and you want to seek His face.

But sure, I've had times where I had to give up praying and I had to give up reading the Bible because I perceived in my own self that I was doing them out of obligation. And I've had the same experience where I've stopped reading the Word, I've stopped praying, and eventually the Lord just kind of draws me back to Himself through those things and they become active in my life once again. I think you can do that when you've reached a certain level of maturity.

However, when you're just starting out, when you're a new believer, when you're a new disciple, there are spiritual disciplines, spiritual habits that you can and you should begin to develop in yourself. Because here's the thing, if you have a habit of prayer, then one day you'll get up and you won't feel like praying, but you'll pray anyway. Who ever said that we're supposed to live by our feelings? Who said that if I get up today and I feel like praying, I'll pray, but if I don't, I won't? You know, if I pray just because I feel like praying, I'm just as much in the flesh as if I don't pray when I don't feel like praying.

Either way, whether I'm praying or not praying, if it's based solely on how I feel about it, I'm in the flesh. I'm not in the spirit. So there are certain things you can do.

Paul told Timothy, stir up the gift that is within you. Stir up the gift that is within you. And every one of you listening, every one of us has a gift that is in place within us.

And I would say first and foremost, that gift is Christ. And then how that gift plays out in your life, how that gift is released and manifests through your life is going to depend on where God has placed you in His body and the unique talents and skills and gifts that He has placed within you. But first and foremost, your gift is Christ.

How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? So the question is, if my gift is Christ, and Paul says, stir up the gift that's within us, stir up the gift that's within you, how is that gift stirred up? Just my opinion, I believe that it's stirred up as we seek the Lord with prayer. We seek the Lord through His Word. And those are the two basic things.

There are other things like gathering together with other believers when you have the opportunity. Fellowship with others when you have the opportunity. I'm speaking to a lot of people that they don't have

that kind of fellowship.

They don't have those relationships with other people. But that doesn't mean that they're dried up. It doesn't mean that they can't have a fruitful and productive relationship with the Lord.

So I would say it all depends on your heart. If you feel like that you're doing something out of obligation, stop doing it. Don't do anything out of obligation.

But at some point you've really got to ask yourself where you are with the Lord and do you mean business with God? Do you want to go on deeper with the Lord or do you just want to play tiddlywinks the rest of your life? There are certain spiritual disciplines. We know we need to be in the Word, folks. We know that we need to pray more.

That's not even the issue. The issue is how can we go about it in a way that doesn't fall into the flesh. And I think you just have to search your heart on that.

And you know the difference. I have a lot of people that because of legalism and because of bondage, they have a real problem with fasting because they see fasting as part of bondage and part of good works. And so my advice to them is don't fast.

If that's the way you see it, don't do something that's going to cause you a problem in your conscience or is going to cause you to question or to put yourself in doubt. If you can't do it out of love and you can't do it out of a God-given desire, then don't do it at all. And just lay that down reverently and respectfully.

Ask the Lord if He wants you to pray or to read the Word more or to give or whatever it is that you have this feeling that you ought to do. That's what needs to be determined. What's the motivation behind it? What's motivating you to read the Word? What's motivating you not to read it? Why not? What's motivating you to pray or what's motivating you not to pray or to run in the opposite direction? Because you can do all the right things and have a wrong spirit or you can refrain from doing some things and if you're in the will of God, then you're okay.

How's that for an answer? It's not very definitive, is it? Well, of course not, because when you're walking by the Spirit, there's no such thing as definitiveness. There is only indicativeness. If something indicates and appears to be how God is leading you, then it's safe, because I promise you, you can't make a mistake so big that He can't correct it and He can't show you a better way or show you the right way.

Look, folks, He's your shepherd. He's your good shepherd, and He'll lead you and guide you. He'll direct your paths if you just yield yourself to Him.

Praise the Lord. So if that is your issue, if you're coming from a very legalistic, religious background where people were expected to pray so many hours a day or read the Bible so many chapters a day, and when you hear people talking about spiritual disciplines, if that causes something on the inside of you to recoil, then I would say whoever has ears to hear, let him hear. I think it's better if you stop doing everything along those lines.

It would be better just to put the word down than to do it legalistically. It would be better, I think, just to not pray at all than to go through the religious motions of praying when you're not really in the Spirit. At the same time, you'll notice that when the person in this example, when they stopped doing all of that by legalistic motivation with legalistic religious intentions, the desire came.

The desire to read the Word came to them. The desire to pray came to them. And all of these works, quote-unquote, were restored to them, but the motivation was completely different.

So what changed? The activities didn't change. It was the intention of the heart. It was the heart that was changed.

So that's what I'm saying. Let's don't judge according to the outward appearance. That's why I'm not trying to tell you, even when I say develop good habits, develop habits for spiritual disciplines, even when I teach people how to do that, I don't put a time limit on it.

I don't say that you need to pray an hour a day or you need to pray three hours a day. I think that all depends on your maturity. How old in the Lord are you? I know for me that I am going to expect myself to pray a lot longer and for a greater period of time than someone who is a brand new Christian or someone who's only been saved very recently.

But there's no doubt at all, Jesus prayed all night. So it's not that living by the Spirit means we can throw out all of those things and all of that is wrong. Now, if we feel like praying, we don't.

See, that's not spirit and truth at all. That's living according to your feelings. And I don't want to get into the whole teaching that I got into with growing up spiritually.

That's, like I said, a whole other series that I've done. But one of the benefits of developing good habits, whether it's brushing your teeth or whether it's kissing your wife goodbye when you walk out the door or kissing your husband hello when he comes home, you're going to live by habits regardless of whether they're good or bad. So you might as well develop good, sound, godly, spiritual habits and disciplines.

The fruit of the Spirit is self-control, the ability to control yourself. Now, that is a fruit of the Spirit. So we're not getting rid of the Holy Spirit and saying it's all up to you to do this.

It's the Holy Spirit working in a person that gives the person an ability to control themselves. That's part of the fruit of the Spirit. And that's part of what it means to develop these spiritual disciplines of being in the Word, being in prayer, giving.

And all of these things flow naturally out of a person, but they have to be stirred up. And you stir them up by doing things that are conducive to living the kind of life that we are to live, seeing that Jesus lives on the inside of us now. It's not that we're in the Old Testament.

We're trying to earn our salvation by how many hours a day we read or how many hours a day we pray. Instead, the heart is completely different, and so the actions that follow should be totally renewed and refreshed. It should be done out of love.

It should be done out of faith. If you can't do it out of love, and if you can't do it out of faith, then don't do it. And ask the Lord to restore and change you so that you can do these things, and you'll do them from a heart that wants to, not from a bondage to legalism or a bondage to religious activity.

Well, I don't know if that answers your question, but I hope it does make the distinction here between the motivation of the heart. It's not the outward thing that God is concerned with. It is the thought, the intent, the attitude of the heart.

And so if you need help in that area, just ask the Lord to give you a new heart and give you a desire. And look, in my own experience, I've been there. Man, I would be so tired of reading the Bible.

I'd be so burned out on trying to get sermons out of the Bible that I would lay it down, and I'd say, Lord, if you want to speak to me, if you want me to pick up your Word, you're going to have to give me the desire to do it. And don't think, if you're honest and sincere, and you go to God and you ask God to give you the desire, don't think He's not going to answer your prayer. He will answer your prayer.

And then see, now, when I read the Word, I don't have to read chapters and chapters and chapters a day. I could read one or two verses and there's such revelation exploding, such life coming out of those one or two verses. It keeps me going for hours and for days and for weeks at a time.

So there's different kinds of Bible reading. There's different kinds of prayer. I guess the main thing I can say about the Spirit of God is just relax.

Don't make it into such a chore. Don't make it into such a hassle and such a work to be spiritual, to walk with the Lord. It's so much easier and so much better than that.

And I pray God will just give you wisdom in that and give you some liberty. And that kind of flows into the next question that we need to deal with. And it's interesting.

This person says, I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this, but I'd be curious to hear your thoughts. Here's my question. Are there shortcuts on the path to holiness? What's the quickest way to overcome besetting sin? I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this one.

Well, yeah, I think you do know the answer to it. Are there shortcuts on the path to holiness? Well, sorry to say there's not. Holiness, sanctification, overcoming, just like the revelation of Christ, it's not an event.

You're not going to have a mountaintop experience one day and then all of a sudden, all those things that you struggled with are going to be resolved right then. Now, that would be nice if that would happen. And I know you hear testimonies of people that say that they had an experience with God and they were changed and they were bound by some things and those things fell off and they were never a problem again.

Well, that's true and that does happen. And I would venture to guess that in your life, you probably have some things that you used to struggle with that you don't struggle with anymore because the Lord took the desire away or God gave you victory in that area. But every single person I've ever met with or ever talked to or ever heard about who had a testimony that said, God delivered me instantly from fill in the blank.

Nevertheless, if you really look at it, in every case I've seen, there was always something else that they needed to deal with that God did not take away right then and there. He didn't give them instant holiness. He didn't give them instant sanctification.

He didn't give them instant deliverance from everything that was besetting them. He moved on them in a very powerful way and set them free from something so that there was no doubt that only God could have done this. But here's the thing that's really perplexing that people don't understand is God will do that for someone in one area of their life, but then here's another area of their life that we call our besetting sin or our thorn in the flesh, and it just lingers and lingers and lingers and holds on, and we just can't seem to get the victory over it.

And that's what this question is referring to, I think. Are there shortcuts on the path to holiness? What's the quickest way to overcome besetting sin? Well, I'm going to give you a three-step process for overcoming besetting sin. And the first process is admitting that you can't do it.

That's number one. If you're making notes or if you've got something to write with, I would jot this down or at least record it mentally in your mind. Number one, how do you overcome besetting sin? Number one, realize you can't.

You cannot do it. You cannot. That's number one.

And Paul talks about this in Romans 7. He says, the good that I would, I do not. And the thing that I hate, that's what I end up doing. And that is a fact of life.

You can't do it. Now, a lot of people are not willing to take step one. They won't take step one because they're not willing to admit that they can't do it.

I don't think that's the case with this person because I know the person who wrote this in. But I think a lot of people, they're looking for a method or a formula or a plan because they want to be able to overcome something. And I'm telling you straight up, you can't.

You cannot do it. You can't. Because if all you have is a method or a formula or a plan, it is still you trying to do it.

And you've got to come to the place where you realize, I cannot do it. Now, you think, boy, if I admit that, it's going to be worse, no? If you will go ahead and admit that I can't do it, you will only be agreeing with what God has been saying your whole life. Your whole life, God has been telling you, one way or the other, you can't do it.

He's been telling me that for 34 years. Chip, you can't do it. I say, oh, yes, I can.

Watch. And then I go out and I follow my face. And God says, look, you can't do it.

And I say, yes, I can. And here I go. And then I go out and I try again and I fail.

And I say, well, see, I'm kind of stubborn. And I think, well, my approach was wrong. Let me try a different approach.

And I fail. I say, well, I need to try this or try that. And I fail and I fail and I fail.

And some people fail a hundred times. Some people fail a thousand times. Some people fail 10,000 times or more before they realize and come to the place that Paul came to in Romans 7 where he says, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.

I recently sent out a little article called No Good Thing. I encourage you, while you're on the website, look that article up. No good thing.

That is lesson number one that we all need to learn is I can't do it. In and of myself, I don't have the power. So instead of pretending as if I've got it all together, instead of pretending like I have all of this power and all of this authority, when the reality is I'm getting beat up, I'm getting defeated by this one thing.

Or maybe it's several things in your life. Maybe it's two or three. Maybe it's this huge besetting sin that God has not given you instantaneous and miraculous deliverance from.

But what is He trying to teach you? He's trying to teach you, number one, you can't do it. So what happens when you can't do it? It means that you have to rely upon and depend upon and trust in someone else to do what you can't. And a lot of us just are not willing to go there.

We don't want to admit we can't do it. But I'm telling you, that's number one. The quickest way to overcome besetting sin, number one, admit that you can't do it.

Now it's obvious to everybody except for you that you can't do it. I'm telling you, it's obvious. It may not be obvious to you.

You might have deceived yourself into thinking that you can handle it, you can control it, you can overcome it, but I'm telling you, you can't do it. And until you're ready to admit you can't do it, you will never see victory. It will always be a besetting sin.

So here's the quickest way I know is number one, I cannot. Number two, and this falls right on the heels of number one. Number one says, I cannot.

Number two says, I will not. I can't do it. And number two says, I won't do it.

Now that's a huge step. And it took me many years to get from step one to step two. It took me 10,000 defeats to learn I can't do it.

In and of my own self, I can't do it. Jesus said, apart from Me, you can do how many things? Nothing. You can't do anything.

Now right now, we're talking about overcoming besetting sin. And I know that's a problem. I can't think of a single person that doesn't have besetting sin in their life, myself included.

And we all want to know how to overcome that. Most of us do. And so naturally, we try to overcome it, but we fail.

And so what the Lord is trying to show us is you can't do it in yourself. Apart from Me, He says, you can't do anything. You can't live the Christian life.

You can't overcome besetting sin. You can't be holy. You can't be sanctified.

Now that's not to take away from all of what I said before about prayer and the Word. See, it's going to happen. Things are going to happen in your life.

You're going to do things in your life. You're not just going to be passive and lazy and sit around and wait for the Lord to give you instantaneous deliverance, instantaneous spiritual growth and wisdom and maturity. There are things that you have to do to cooperate with God, but what I'm saying is you don't do them in your own strength.

You rely upon a strength and a power that is outside of yourself. Paul says, I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. Through Christ, who strengthens me.

See, that is the key. That's the key. I can't do it.

Number one. Number two, I won't do it. Because here's what I finally learned after so many years.

If I can't do it, it doesn't make sense to keep trying. I can't do it, so why should I keep trying to do it? And I would ask you the same thing. Can you overcome it? If the answer is no, why are you still trying? So I can't do it, number one.

Number two, I won't do it. Because if I can't do it, it doesn't make any sense for me to keep trying. So what I'm trying to do is get us to the point that we admit we can't do it and admit that we can't do anything about it and admit and realize and understand that since we can't do anything about it, we're not going to do anything about it.

I can not, therefore I will not. Now I know a lot of people can take God's grace for granted and just go right off and destroy themselves with it. But that's not what I have in mind here at all.

I'm speaking to people who are struggling with besetting sin and they won't know how to overcome it. I'm not speaking to people who are just looking for an excuse to go out and live any way they want to. That's not what I'm talking about.

And I think you know the difference if your heart's in the right place. First of all, I can not. Therefore, number two, I will not.

And number three, and here's the step of victory. I'm going to trust in the life of the Lord Jesus to do in me and through me what I know I can't do on my own. See, I know number one, I can't overcome sin.

Therefore, number two, I will not overcome sin. I give up. I stop trying.

And number three, I trust in the Lord to do in me and through me what I can't do myself. Now that is not a passive just kind of sit back and say, well, you know, if God delivers me, okay. If not, oh well, I'm just going to live any way I want to.

That's not the attitude here. The attitude here is, apart from Jesus, I can't do anything. But through Him, I can do all things because He strengthens me with His mighty power.

And greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. So right there is your answer. That is the quickest way to overcome besetting sin is to get out of the way and let the Lord do something in you and through you that you know you can't do on your own.

And if you don't know that you can't do it on your own, you'll always continue to try and do it on your own. And I would say even asking Jesus to help me do it on my own is a recipe for defeat. Jesus is not trying to help you do better.

He is trying to live His life through you and in your place. And your only recourse, your only hope is to die, to be crucified with Christ so that you can live the resurrected life of victory and overcoming. And I hope that doesn't sound so spiritual and so philosophical that you can't apply it to your life.

I'm telling you, I apply this to my life every single day that I live because I am constantly, constantly coming up against things that humanly speaking, it is impossible. The disciples came to Jesus and Jesus had been telling them how difficult it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples, with great bewilderment, with great astonishment, with great amazement, said, well, who then can be saved? And Jesus says, with man it is impossible.

With man it is impossible. That needs to be your mantra for the next several weeks. With man it is impossible.

With Chip, it is impossible. With Sarah, it is impossible. With Jim, it is impossible.

Whatever your name is, put your name in there. With me, it is impossible. With man, it is impossible.

But not with God. For with God, all things are possible. Hallelujah.

Now that's the quickest way to overcome anything. Besetting sins, sins of the flesh, sins of any demon that you think needs to be overcome, the devil himself. All of these issues can be resolved the sooner we take up the cross, Jesus says.

We will find life. We will find resurrection on the other side. Hallelujah.

That's the secret to living the Christian life. It is no longer I who live, Paul says. It is Christ who lives in me and the life that I now live in the flesh.

I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Praise God. And see, that is taking us out of this whole works mentality.

And everything I've dealt with today as far as questions, they're dealing with works. How do I? How can I? What do I have to do to? How can I get from point A to point B? And a lot of it, if you're not careful, it becomes an exercise in utility because we are trying and trying and trying and trying. And I'm saying the quickest way to get there is to give up.

Surrender. Die. And that's what's so wonderful about this John 3.30. He must increase.

And since He must increase, He will increase and He is increasing. This is what we teach in the school of Christ. Since He must increase, He will increase and He is increasing in you.

That's the revelation of Christ. You say, well, I don't see it. I don't feel it.

It's beside the point. It must be so. Therefore, it is so.

He is increasing in you. And here's the other reality. I must decrease.

And since I must decrease, I will decrease and I am decreasing. I'm becoming less and less. Jesus is becoming more and more.

And this decreasing process, what does it result in? It results in a person who is broken and humble who realizes and goes to the Lord saying, Lord, I can't. I cannot. Therefore, I will not.

And I trust in You. I believe that Christ lives in me. And so I trust in the life of the Lord to do in me and through me what I can't do on my own.

And it doesn't matter if what I can't do on my own is love my neighbor, pass out of the devil, overcome sin, live a Christian life. It doesn't matter. Because the things that are impossible with man, and that's all things, are possible with God.

Apart from Him, you can't do anything. But with Him and through Him, you can do all things. I don't know how to make it any more simpler, any more plainer than that.

Now, the difference is, where you're going to see the difference is, is that just a teaching? Is that just some rhetoric I threw out there? Or is that something that you can really grab hold of, apply, put into practice right this minute? Whatever that thing that you're struggling with, a besetting sin, or a relationship, or an unanswered question. I probably created more questions than I have given answers today, but that's okay. Because the whole object here is to get us to go to the Lord in our weakness.

Because you're already there in the weakness. The whole point is to go to God in our foolishness, because you're already there. Go to God in the darkness and in the confusion, because that's where you're at already.

You don't have to do anything to get there. In a lot of these areas, we already feel defeated. We already feel confused.

We already are in a weakened condition. So we go to God just as we are and say, Lord, here I am. I'm weak.

I'm confused. I'm foolish. I'm full of pride.

And I admit that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing. I can't do it. And a lot of people just will not admit that they can't do it.

But I'm telling you, until you admit you can't, you're not going to go to the second step of I won't do it. I won't do it. I am through banging my head against the wall.

Lord, You're going to have to come and it's going to have to be miraculous intervention in my life. Now, when you surrender and you give yourself over to Him in that way, then if He's living on the inside of you, and the Bible says that He is, if you abide in Him, He is abiding in you, He lives in you, and His life begins to be revealed through you. That's another point.

The revelation of Christ doesn't come as we sit inside of a room locked away from the world, meditating, and then we get this great vision. Christ is revealed to us as we live our everyday life and as we come face to face with the reality that I can't do it, so I have to go to the Lord and ask Him to supply me with the Spirit of Jesus to meet that need and to overcome in that particular area. And then when He does that, that is proof enough to me that Jesus is alive.

How do I know that Jesus is alive? Not because I saw Him in a vision. Not because I had a mountaintop experience and I heard the voice of God and I saw the manifest presence of God. It's because as I live my life on a daily basis and go through the problems and the challenges and the persecutions, I see the life of the Lord rising up and demonstrating His preeminence over all these things.

There are only two things that God wants to show you. He wants to show you how sufficient He is and how insufficient you are without Him. Praise the Lord.

So I hope that answered your question and I hope that even if your question didn't get answered today, I hope that you benefited from it. And you can take what I'm telling you right now and apply it and get the answers directly from the Lord. And they'll be good answers.

And they won't necessarily be the same answers that someone else would get, but they would be particular and specific to your situation. And you know, one thing I've discovered too, the more time I spend with the Lord, the less questions I have. Sometimes we don't need more answers.

We just need fewer questions. And Jesus is the only one I know who is so sufficient. He is so glorious that I'm content having Him.

I'm content even if my questions aren't answered. Because He is my answer. And He is your answer.

And I know we want specifics. I know we want practical stuff. We want practical application.

It doesn't get any more practical than this. I can't do it. I won't do it.

I trust in the life of the Lord to do it. In me and through me. To do what I can't do in and of myself.

Praise the Lord. Well, that's all the time that we have for this week. I appreciate so much you taking the time to write in.

I'm sorry I didn't get to all the questions, but I hope the questions we dealt with will help many people. And I hope even if you're not satisfied with the answer, that you'll go to the Lord and it will cause you to go deeper into the Lord Jesus and seek Him out with a sincere heart. Not with a legalistic mentality.

Not from a religious perspective. But from a heart that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. And Jesus says, you are blessed if you are hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

His promise is, you will be filled. Hallelujah. Thanks again for listening.

This is Trip Rodden. I'm streaming online at www.watchman.net. I enjoyed myself today. We'll have to do this again sometime.

But God bless you. Thanks for listening. And we'll talk to you again soon.

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