

# Don't Judge by Your Feelings - Part 1

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson's sermon teaches that true spiritual growth is rooted in our position in Christ rather than our fluctuating feelings.*

**Duration:** 35:37

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Faith Assurance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not judging one's spiritual condition based on feelings but on faith and growth in grace. It highlights the need to understand that true growth in grace involves doing the same things with more love for Jesus and assurance in the heart. The speaker encourages believers to focus on learning to love Jesus more and not to be deceived by feelings of boredom or comparison to past emotional experiences.

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## Transcript

Thank you choir, orchestra, and welcome to our visitors. May God bless you and we trust your heart has been touched already in this service this morning. Pardon our disruption, we're putting a new marble floor in the Rotunda.

This place was built I think in 1918 and the same floor all those years was coming up and so we're replacing it, pardon us please. Now Saturday, keep this in mind, Friday night by the way, a mission conference starts and ours is different here at this church. Believe me, I've never seen it anywhere.

Missionaries say they've never seen it like it. We don't bring in named speakers, we bring ordinary people that have gone out of this church, people who were working at a job, God called them, sent them, and they come in here and tell the most incredible miracle stories, true stories of what God is doing. We do have Rocky Bean and his wife coming back and a number of others.

I believe David Davis from Israel had to cancel, didn't he, because of the problems there in Israel. But we have an incredible thing happening here Friday night and then Saturday, congregation, you need to come. The police have allowed us to block off the whole block out front and there are going to be testimonies.

We have 103 nationalities at last count in this church. We have booths set up representing all the various nations and there are thousands of people who walk through. So we're just taking the church out on the

street, you understand what I mean, and doing the missions work out there.

And then all day Sunday, the conference, and then on Tuesday as well. It will be a very, very exciting time. Thank you for your prayers.

In our recent trip, we'll be talking more about it in the course of the message. But I want to speak to you this morning about my subject this morning, don't judge your spiritual condition by your feelings. Don't judge your spiritual condition by feelings.

Now folks, if you get a hold of this this morning, the devil can't lie to you anymore about your position in Christ. If we can only learn who we are in Christ, our position, not our condition, but our position. If we can understand that, the devil can't sway you by feelings anymore.

Go to 1 Thessalonians, please. 1 Thessalonians, the fourth chapter. Fourth chapter, verse 1. You'll read just one verse, 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 1. Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

Read it again. Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more. Now Father, take this word and multiply it, increase it, and cause us, Lord, to lay hold by the help of the Holy Ghost this morning to truths that will deliver us from this everlasting terror of our feelings, being up and down, hot and cold.

Oh God, we want to understand by the word of the Lord, the power of the Holy Spirit, the steadfastness that you want us to have in Christ and in the word, so that in the days ahead when the world is spinning out of control and everything is out of kilter, we will be steadfast, immovable, and we will not be listening to the lies of the devil, we will not be swayed and tossed by winds and waves of doctrine, but we will be steadfast, immovable, and ever increasing in the grace of God. Anoint me to preach this word, I pray. Amen.

Now Paul in this verse is saying to the Thessalonians, you can't say you haven't been well taught. He said, I and others have taught you well. We've shown you how to walk and how to please God, and therefore we're asking that you abound in that.

Now the word abound means to increase. Paul's saying, if you, and I would say this to everyone in this congregation, if you've been sitting under pure gospel, if you've been hearing the word being taught from consecrated vessels, and the word is strong, it's pure, it's life changing, you should be increasing in faith, in the knowledge of God, you should be increasing in the love of the truth, in love of the brother, in the knowledge of God, in the love of God. You should be increasing, there should be an abounding.

He said, you've been well taught, so we're saying you need to abound, you need to increase in the knowledge. You have a foundation, we taught you, now there should be increase in you. Paul spoke of abounding or increasing in utterance, in knowledge, in love for the ministry, in prayer, in the ministry to the saints, and in giving, he said you should be giving more of yourself, of your money, of your time, your talents, there should be changes happening in you.

You should be growing in grace and in the knowledge of God. Christians who have been fed the word of God are, according to scripture, expected to grow. Would you turn with me to Ephesians, turn left, please,

to Ephesians, the fourth chapter, Ephesians the fourth chapter, and begin with me in verse 11.

Now wait till the rustling of the leaves stop. By the way, if you're new in Times Square Church, did you notice that everybody brings their Bible? I noticed at ministers' conferences there were very few Bibles. I said you need to come to Times Square Church in order to bring your Bible.

Bring your Bible if you're just starting here at Times Square Church so you will be able to follow. Verse 11, beginning to read, He gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come into unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure, the stature, and the fullness of Christ. In other words, do you understand what he's saying? All of these preachers and pastors and prophets, evangelists and teachers, all of this word that you've been receiving, it's that you come into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to be a mature person, measuring up to the stature, the fullness of Christ.

Not a baby anymore, but growing. Verse 14, that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of man, and cunning craftiness whereby the lion wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, you may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

That you may grow up in Christ in all of your ways. Jesus said, didn't he? I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. In other words, an increase, a constant increase in your life of all these things we're talking about.

Jesus commended the church at Thyatira, remember? He said, you're increasing, and here's how he stated it. I know Thy works and Thy charity, and the last to be more than the first. He said, you are more intense now.

You are growing more than when you first started. God, Jesus himself, commends them. He compliments them.

He said, I see something in you. You have more of love of God. You have more of the things of God in you.

You are more intense, more on fire for God than you were at the first. How are you growing? What is happening in your own life? That is my question. Proverbs 4.18 says, the path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more until that perfect day.

It's shining more and more. Is the word opening to you more and more? Do you have the love of God growing in you, the knowledge of God? Is there an ever-increasing walk with God of faith, of giving and serving? We see there is no place in the Scripture allowed for sloth, for laziness, for stunted growth. Job said, the righteous shall hold on to his way, and he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger.

He that is clean before the Lord will grow stronger and stronger. Now, I ask this question again of the congregation, all of you hearing me. Are you growing in the Lord? Or do you, have you, has your growth been stunted so that there has been no growth this past year or this past month? Now, my question again is, how do you know? How do you measure your growth? How do you know that you're further along the road than you were last year? How do you compare now to the time when you first came to Christ?

Tragically, many, many Christians judge their spiritual growth by how they feel.

They judge it completely on feelings, and this is where Satan can totally deceive and seduce you. This is, well, this has been a life-changing word that God's been speaking into my heart for a number of months, but I'm just now laying hold of it, and I want you to see it, and I pray God help me to show it to you this morning. Most of us claim we walk by faith and not by feelings, but in all practical truth, when it comes down to the real issues, we do live primarily and judge our spirituality by our feelings and not by faith.

We say we walk by faith, but we get down and discouraged because we are judging who we are and what we are in God, and we're judging our growth in Christ by how we feel and our feelings. I'm talking about Christians who doubt that they are growing spiritually. People who read the Word, they pray, they go to church, and deep in their heart, they love the Lord, but as one told me recently, he said, I just don't see much progress in myself.

I should be so much stronger in the Lord. I should be more heartbroken. I used to weep and pray, but I don't retain much of what I hear from the pulpit and what I'm taught, and I really feel I'm stunted in my spiritual growth.

A lot of us feel that way. We judge ourselves, and we hear so many sermons. We hear so much of the Word, and we retain.

We feel like we retain so little of it that it does not cause the growth that we believe it should have created in us or caused. Let me give you a few insights on this matter of spiritual growth and how to judge it properly. I'm not going to yell at you.

I'm not going to scream at you. I'm going to be a teacher this morning, hopefully. If you believe that, that I'm not going to yell or get excited, you've never been here before.

First of all, I believe you can be growing in grace and not knowing, and not being able to discern it. For example, don't turn up in Colossians 2.19. Paul speaks of the body of Christ being nourished in every joint and fiber of the being from the head, the nourishment. Now, I want you to know the head is Christ, and He never sleeps.

And I want you to know right now that He is life. He is emanating life. Christ is always emanating.

The life that is in Him, if it's not giving, if it's not nourishing, it's not life. Life produces life. Jesus Christ, if you're abiding in Christ, you have a life flow in you.

I'm going to tell you something right now. If you have Christ in you, you're abiding in Christ, and you're trusting in Him, and you love Him with all your heart, you're growing even when you're sleeping. You may wake up in the morning, and I don't care how you feel.

I don't care how blue you feel, or green, or yellow, or any other color. It doesn't matter, because there is a life force in you. When you are picked up out of the kingdom of darkness, you are planted in Christ, the Bible said.

You're translated, and you're planted like a tree, and you take roots. What do roots do? They draw. They suck life out of that good soil.

You've been planted in good soil. You've been planted and rooted in Christ. It's impossible to be rooted in Christ without drawing life, because He's the one who puts the life in you.

He's the one who, in other words, infuses you with that life power. He is an emanating life, always giving, always flowing. And He said, He shall be in you through the Holy Spirit.

What? A river of living water springing up. You don't pump it up, it springs up. It comes because you're in Christ.

It's a natural life flow. Christ is also manna, the Bible says. Why didn't Israel suffer all of the plagues of Egypt? Why is it that in the wilderness, they went for 40 years, and all around the people were dying of plagues, the Canaanites, Philistines are dying, diseases that they knew nothing about.

Why is it that they weren't dying left and right? God said, I'll not put on you the diseases of Egypt. Why? Because manna was angels' food. It had every nutrient to build up the immune system.

They had nutrients, natural nutrients flowing. Now, they may have gotten tired of manna burgers and manna for breakfast, and all kinds of... what a cookbook that would have been. The manna cookbook, trying to spice it up.

But I would tell you, they didn't know it, but there were nutrients in there, and you can't see it, you can't feel it, there are no signs of those nutrients at work. I take barley green in the morning, I take 10 or 12 different kinds of nutrients, vitamins, every day, and that's why I look so good, and that's why I feel so good. Gwen's going to lecture me at lunchtime, I know.

I don't see those nutrients at work in me, but something is happening in my body and my immune system. Thank God, and I give God the glory. I haven't had a cold since I've been doing that, and I'm enjoying good health and strength in the Lord.

But the Lord told me to take these nutrients, and that's what happened in the... When you're planted in Christ, you can't see it, but you're growing in this special way that God is building up your immune system against sin. He's building up your immune system against the disease of sin and all these things, and you don't see it, but I'll tell you what, why is it that right now, you're not thinking of X-rated movies? Why is it now that when you're out walking the streets here in New York, you're not thinking like anybody else is thinking? Why is it that they're thinking, it's Thursday, and they're thinking, tomorrow night, party time! And you're walking there, tomorrow night, prayer meeting! Saturday night, they're thinking about all of the vile things they're talking about, getting drunk. They call that a good time.

They vomit half the night after, and then they go to work and say, I got a headache, and that was a good time. And you're walking the streets Saturday and said, three services! Why? Because he's been, while you've been sleeping, while you've been getting these messages, he's been building up your immune system. And you don't think like the world, you don't talk, you're growing! You may not feel like it, you may get up and say, I feel backslidden.

I feel backslidden half the time. I don't believe a word of it, but the devil will try to tell me, you're not preaching like you used to preach, you're not as fiery as you used to be, you don't cry like you used to cry, but I bleed better than I've ever believed. I don't have to go around worrying anymore about whether I'm retaining anything.

Because you see, he's a constant flow, there's life, there's something fresh and new every day. I may have forgotten what Pastor Carter preached two weeks ago, but I know he's going to be here this afternoon, I'm going to get another fresh word, another revelation, I don't have to worry about what I'm retaining. Because when you're walking in Jesus, you start from the ankles and the knees, and then you're finally swimming.

Don't worry about it, folks, you're going to be swimming one of these days. You don't have to worry and let the devil tell you, well, why don't I retain everything I hear? Oh, you didn't retain everything you heard in school either. You didn't retain hardly any of what you learned in school.

Why is it that you grieve over sin now? Why is it so difficult? Why is it that when you even sin and when you fail, you are grieved as you've never been grieved before? Because you don't know it, but you're growing. You don't sense it, but you're growing. Hallelujah.

Look up when you go out at night. Now, you can't do it in New York with all these lights. But you can see the moon, you can see the sun.

Occasionally here in New York, you see stars. Not the walking kind on the streets. I'm talking about the ones up there.

But you ever notice, you look up, they look like they're fixed. They're not moving. There's no sign of movement.

But I want you to know they are racing hundreds and hundreds of miles an hour, racing through the heavens. They're set in their orbits and they are moving constantly. And so it is with those that are planted in Jesus Christ.

Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. Now, that's a covenant promise. When you are in Christ and you're simply believing His word and you say, He's my Lord and He's my God.

He has made you a promise that you're going to flourish. And that word flourish means bloom like a bud bursting with life. You shall flourish.

You're going to bloom. You're going to burst out with life. And you shall be bearing fruit even in your old age.

Some of you were there, I ought to say amen to that. Whether you see it or not, whether you feel it or not, God has made a covenant promise to everyone that's in Christ Jesus. You are rooted.

There is life flowing in you. Whether you feel it or not, whether you sense it or not, whether you discern it or not, there is life flowing in you. You are changing.

And He said, you will flourish in the house of the Lord. You will have life bursting out. And you don't know until one of your children or one of your friends are in trouble.

And suddenly they call upon you and you go to their house and when you thought you had not learned anything and you thought you were spiritually dry, out flows a river of comfort and compassion. Things that you have learned when you need it, it's there. Come on now, right or wrong? I noticed Gwen in Indianapolis the other night, the minister's conference.

I called all the ladies forward, pastors. I felt such grief among many in need of healing. And Gwen hadn't been feeling too good that day.

And I know she wasn't feeling very spiritual. Because the way she was talking to me. Number two, strike number two.

What I'm saying, when she went to service, I'm sure she was not feeling physically. I know she wasn't feeling well. But I noticed, I looked down and she was ministering to a pastor's wife.

The pastor's wife was just weeping and broken. She was ministering. Life was flowing out of her.

No matter how she felt, it was there. There had been nourishment over the weeks and the months here in this congregation and walking with God. And Gwen, you know, if you'd ask her, how do you feel? I don't feel very saved.

I don't feel like I'm growing. But folks, there was life flowing out. And that woman's life was transformed.

It was there. Glory to God. And secondly, we falsely judge our spiritual growth because of the repetition and sense of boredom that's common to all men.

The repetition of life. The things that we do over and over again that sometimes become boring to us. It's common to all men.

We get this feeling. Let me say it like this. I must not be growing or increasing in grace because I'm doing the same thing I've always done.

I've been praying. I've been doing that before. Nothing has changed.

I read my Bible. I go to church. I sing in the choir or I'm an usher.

But every Sunday I get up. I do the same thing. And I hear the word in every service.

I search my heart. But I've always done that. I've filled my capacity.

I do what I'm supposed to do in the church. But I don't feel like I'm doing anything special for the Lord. I don't feel like I'm accomplishing anything special for the Lord.

There's no variety. That's a lie from the devil. This can get you into more condemnation and it can rob you of the grace of God.

And this is something you've got to understand. When you go to the job, for example, you get up. It's kind of boring and repetitious.

You usually get up the same hour. You eat the same kind of food every day. You know, there are thousands of restaurants in New York.

I end up right down here where I've been. I eat there every day. I don't even have to have the menu.

I am so stuck. I'm so monotonous about eating. I eat the same thing.

Chicken, Pollo Castelli in Spanish, and Veal Marsala. I walk in and as soon as I walk into the restaurant, I know. I know you have to order.

I'm bored. I am stuck. It's repetitious.

You're the same way. You take the subway the same way. You see the same people.

You stop at Starbucks. You drink the same kind of coffee. And you go over and over.

And it gets repetitious, doesn't it? Same thing every day. You sit in the same place in the choir. Most of you sit in the same place here.

Same boring thing. No husband, no wife. I'm not trying to be facetious, but folks.

Most of our lives, most people have jobs and life is rather boring. It's repetitious. I dare you to get up tomorrow and try to do everything different.

Don't shower. Do everything different. And that's not going to change anything.

You're going to go back the next day the same way you were before. Now let me talk to you about what it means to grow in grace along these lines. It's not in doing other things or greater things or more spectacular things.

It's not in doing a great variety of things. True growth in grace is doing the same thing over and over again and doing it better each time with more heart assurance and more love for Jesus. Now, when I was in first grade learning to write, all I did for the first two months was draw circles and lines.

Come on now. Some of you don't remember? When you were learning. Now this is English.

I don't know about the hundred other languages that are represented here. But in English, you drew big circles and you drew lines like this. And then you did capital letters.

Great big A. Took the whole page. A. Another page. B. And C. And then it took a long time to put sentences, words together and then sentences together.

And folks, that's soon, even though you're using the same letters and you're doing the same thing, you're writing. Now you compact it in and it becomes easier. The words become smaller.

You make sentences. It's doing the same thing. It's same repetition.

But you're learning. Something is being accomplished. And eventually some of you might write a book or a novel.

But you're learning. Grace is learning to please God. And grow where you're planted.

And not allow the devil to put a spirit of boredom on you. Or saying, I'm not doing anything special for God. To every usher.

To every teacher. To everybody listening to me. The most important thing in the sight of God is that when you are planted in a place and you're taking root.

That you do it as unto the Lord. No matter how sick you are. No matter how weary you are.

And the devil tells you, you're not accomplishing anything. Folks, I came home from a conference preaching to hundreds and hundreds of preachers. I'm not doing anything for God.

The feeling of, I'm still not reaching out and accomplishing what I really want to accomplish. That's in all of us. Folks, set all of your accomplishments and all your desires to do something for God.

Focus in on learning to love Jesus from your heart more than ever before. That's what he's looking for. I do this because I love him.

I'm planted here. I don't judge my spiritual growth by any feelings of repetition or boredom. I don't do that.

Do you understand that? Glory be to God. You can be growing in grace, yet feel that you're not increasing because you think you've lost your fire and intensity. Because you feel you've lost something that you had when you were first saved.

When I was first saved, someone says I was so on fire for the Lord. I had such freedom, such great joy. I wept.

I was so tender. I was easily moved. My heart was always broken.

When I prayed back then, I seemed to be so intense and on fire and so strong. I testified to everybody. I felt so alive.

But now I feel my heart is lukewarm or cold. There's a deadness compared to my early years. It's harder to move me now.

I don't weep much anymore. I don't believe I have that simple tenderness I once had. I'm going to tell you now.

And I want you to listen closely. For all of those weary hearted people who think that way and judge their spiritual condition by comparison to the time you were first saved. When you get first saved, that's a sudden spectacular thing.

It's a wonderful experience. There is brokenness. There is weepingness.

Now God must love tears because he bottles them. That's a good sign. That's a wonderful thing to have.

But it's not an ability. It's not something that you can conjure. It's something of the work of the Holy Spirit that usually comes.

These exciting emotional experiences are compared to a child learning to walk. Now, I've gone through this with four children and 11 grandchildren. It's a wonderful experience to see the baby take its first steps and especially to walk across the room.

There is such excitement in that room. And that little baby is the center of attention. Come on baby, you can do it.

And so you pick him up and stand and he wobbles. And you hold your hand. I've done this over and over again.

You know how many? Come on, come on, come on. Come on. You can do it.

And so he takes two or three steps. And everybody claps and he falls. So you go pick him up.

Here we go again. He takes four steps. Everybody's clapping.

Everybody's cheering. All the other kids are in there saying, Good boy. Good girl.

And finally, here that little child comes right across the room, smiling and giggling, laughing because he made it. A wonderful emotional experience. And then mom gets on the phone, calls mom, dad, grandma, grandpa.

Hey, Bonnie just took her first walk across the room. She's walking now all through the house. Two days later, that little girl is in the kitchen, tearing every pot and pan out of every place.

There's no excitement anymore. She's not the center of attention. It's not an emotional experience now.

It's time for discipline. You see, the Bible says you're not to stay a child. There's one thing of learning to walk rightly before the Lord.

You've got to be taught that that little child has to be taught you don't go out in the street and just walk across the street. You don't walk into a fire. And you see, a lot of people judge themselves.

I had such, there was such excitement every time. The Lord had to give you special attention because you were a baby. You didn't know how to walk.

And every time you fell, he had to pick you up. Now, three days later, get up. You pick yourself up when you walk because you're walking by faith now.

You're looking around for somebody to pick you up. There's nobody there to pick you up. You've got to stand on the word now.

You've got to stand and walk by faith. You're not a baby anymore. Yes, it is possible to lose first love, the Bible said, to grow lukewarm, slothful, careless.

There are many Christians in that awful state. But Satan has done a lot of damage to Christians by making them believe that they're not as good, they're not as faithful, they're not as righteous as they once were before that they have lost something in the Lord. But you see, all of these scriptures in the Bible that warn against lukewarmness and sloth and carelessness and losing first love, all of those scriptures have nothing to do with those who are fully planted in Christ and walking by faith.

Those scriptures don't apply to you because the very fact that you're concerned about it is proof that you're growing. You wouldn't be thinking that. You would be sitting in pride and thinking everything is alright, but you see, you are concerned about it, you're thinking about it, you're praying about it, you say, Oh God, I don't want to lose that first love.

You're concerned about that. But that very concern is evidence of growth. Is anybody understanding what I'm saying here?

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