

# The Progress of the Upright

by Don Courville

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God and living according to His ways, as it brings internal worth and eternal good.*

**Duration:** 35:17

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 22:22-30, Psalm 44:18, Psalm 119:33, Psalm 119:80, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 11:24-28

**Topics:** "Uprightness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing the story of Josiah, who became king at the age of eight and ruled for 31 years. Josiah was praised for doing what was right in the sight of the Lord and following in the ways of his father David. The preacher then transitions to discussing the importance of having an upright heart, which involves being willing to give oneself out and go the extra mile. He shares a personal anecdote about going out for pizza with a large group and realizing that thin pizzas were not enough to fill everyone up. The preacher emphasizes the need to look back, look forward, look inward, and look upward in order to have an upright heart. He explains that an upright heart holds on to the ways of God and does not turn back or decline from His path. The sermon concludes with a story about a little boy who wanted a job at a hardware store, but the owner hesitated because he didn't want to disappoint the boy if he couldn't handle the job. The preacher suggests that sometimes we may be upset with ourselves, but we need to have faith and trust in God's plan for our lives.

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## Transcript

2 Samuel 22, starting in verse 22 and going down through verse 30. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and as for his statutes I did not depart from them.

I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanliness in his eyesight. With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright.

With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself unsavoury. And the afflicted people wilt thou say, but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou must bring them down. For thou art my lamp, O Lord, and the Lord will lighten my darkness.

For by thee I have run through a troop, by my God I have leaped over a wall. Let's pray. Father, as we are here together today, after a busy week, many things, many blessings, many experiences, many trials, many times we've spent with you praying and working through things as we listened to you this week, as we obeyed you or maybe disobeyed you.

We come up to this morning, and maybe we have a wall to leap over, or maybe we have a heart that needs to hear from God, or maybe we have a challenge that we're considering taking. Whatever it is, I'd ask that thy Spirit would minister to us this morning, that we would understand that you love us, and that you have bent your ear toward us, as your Word says, and that you're listening to us. And now, Father, we want to bend our ear towards you, and to listen to you and what your Spirit has to say to us.

In Jesus' name, Amen. May we be seated. As we were having our introductory remarks, there were just so many things that I wanted to share, so we better just stop and get to the message that God has for us this morning.

The title of this message is, The Progress of the Upright. The Progress of the Upright. The Progress of the Upright is God's Delight.

Now, this isn't original. I've taken this from an old Puritan. This Puritan was Thomas Brooks, and Thomas Brooks, he gave the message in 1648.

I think that's what, about a few years after the King James came out. And the government there, the leaders, asked him to, I guess, give them a sermon. And after he gave the sermon, then they charged him to put that sermon in print.

And this is what he titled the sermon. The Progress of the Upright is God's Delight. And he wrote a letter to them, encouraging them in the Lord as the servants of Christ and admonishing them with all of the responsibilities that they had upon their shoulders as the leaders of the land to follow on after the Lord and to seek the Lord.

It's really amazing that the government leaders would have this man come in, who was one of the leaders of the spiritual world at that time, one of the Puritans. And they had him address them and encourage them. Just an amazing thing to me that our England had that type of background.

And then out of that was birthed the great missionary movements in the 1700s and 1800s. And then they turned away from God. And the Progress of the Upright stopped.

Out of that struggle and out of their turning away from God came the movement of the Puritans and the pilgrims to our country. And then was birthed this great land out of men that were seeking God. Most of the men that were the founding fathers of our country were men that sought God, sought his word and prayed and looked to the Lord.

And so God blessed the Progress of the Upright. God blesses the Progress of the Upright as long as the Upright seek God in their progress and in their way. My challenge to you young people, thinking about all of you having birthdays as you are progressing on in years and you are growing up, is that you will continually seek the Lord among all things.

And that's why we're going to share these thoughts with you this morning and maybe some more in the weeks to come. Actually, this is just an outline. I read a story one night this week after we came back from

our traveling and you're so tired and you got all of these thoughts and and but as you read this little story, my wife has shared with me how good it was.

So I read it and I can't remember the names, but it was about a little boy, just a small little boy. And he wanted a job at the hardware store and he went to the man and the man was a very kind man. He was known to be sort of grouchy, but they said he was grouchy at himself.

Maybe that's the problem we have sometimes. We're just upset with ourselves. But he said, no, you can't have a job.

And the problem was he wanted to give the little boy a job. But he he didn't want to have to give the little boy a little the job and then then tell him he can't do it because he he looked at him. He said he's just too small.

He can't handle a lot of heavy things to lift, a lot of responsibilities and things like that. And the little boy persisted. Oh, but I want this job.

I need a job. I want a job. No, no, no.

You can't have it. But please, I'd like to have this job. I'll be responsible.

He says, I think you're just too small. And then the little boy got an idea. A bright idea.

He said, let me work for you for one week without pay. And the owner of the hardware store can't remember his name, but he thought, well, that's a good idea. This little boy just see he can't handle the job.

And he thought, OK, it's a deal. One week without pay. And so that was the deal the little boy wanted, and he said, OK, and the little boy just shot off like a dart.

He went over there and picked up some clothespins he had noticed out of the corner of his eye. These things had been spilled, picked them up, went around, dusted off things, straightened up things. He just did that all day long.

And the owner just kept his eye on the little boy out of the corner. He was always watching them all day long. He did that.

Went home that night. The next day, came back. Same thing.

He's just industrious. He saw this that needed to be done. He changed a sign in the store window that needed to be done.

And all week long, he was just a busy little beaver. And all week long, the owner of the hardware store watched him. Come up to the end of the week, payday, he he's going around to the different ones, giving them their paychecks.

He come to the little boy and handed him a check. Here's your paycheck. By the way, I want you back here Monday.

He said, well, I don't want a paycheck. I just I just he says, you proved yourself. You are very valuable to me.

I want you to take this. And then he found out the story of why this little boy wanted this job. That was because their family was very poor.

The father had died and they had always pitched in to take care of the rent. And now one of the sons wanted to go off to school and get an education so he could make a better living. And the little boy said that he wanted to earn some money to help his brother out in that way.

And this really affected the shopkeeper. Why didn't you just tell me so in the beginning? And they went on and has more conversation of why he wouldn't do that. God has you in a process.

Of life. And many times we'll come back and we say, God, I see where you have me right now. I understand now.

But why didn't you tell me at the beginning? Why didn't you tell me at the beginning? I would have understood more of what you wanted to do. The progress of the upright is God's delight, and it must become our business to be delighted in God's ways with us because his ways are not our way. Right.

As we were sharing earlier before we started the message about Eli and first Samuel. It just does. It was just a grief to my spirit.

And to 22 was where God sent a prophet to Eli. And we've talked about young people and putting our young people under certain tutors and situations of learning. We were wondering if this training that Samuel had under Eli did not affect his family life because Samuel's sons, even though Samuel was a godly prophet, he was an upright man.

His sons washed out. And we just didn't couldn't help but wonder, was it because Samuel grew up in the atmosphere of Eli, a man that was not obeying God and his sons that were known to be vile, ungodly young men. If this doesn't affect him in first Samuel to 22.

As I was reading about this man, Eli, who was supposed to be the example of an upright priest. God sent a prophet to him in first Samuel to 22 to 27. Now, Eli was very old and heard all that his sons did and all Israel and how they lay with the woman that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And he said unto them, Why do you such things? For I hear of your of your evil dealings by all these people. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear you make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man, one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him.

But if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding, they hearken not unto the voice of their father because the Lord would slay them. And the child Samuel grew on and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men. And then 27.

And there came a man of God unto Eli and said unto him, Thus said the Lord, Did I plainly appear into the house of thy father when they were in Egypt and in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at my offering, which I have commanded in my habitation, and honorest thy sons above me to make yourselves fat with the chieftess of all the offerings of Israel, my people. Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me forever. But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me for them that honor me.

I will honor in they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Take that part there for them that honor me. I will honor and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed to despise the ways of God will be to despise God.

Then that honor me, I will honor and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. And Brooks said this, in all your ways may Christ own you. In all your ways, young people, may Christ own you.

In all your ways may Christ own you. Ownership means that Christ is the Lord. This thing of, this thought of having no will of your own, having no will of your own when you come to decisions over the years has greatly helped me when there would be decisions, maybe conflicts between two different individuals, two children, to come to the point to have no will of your own is a great help to get God's will.

May Christ, in all your ways, may Christ own you. In Job 17, 1 through 8, I want you to turn back to Job for just a second. I don't have a lot of these marked, but I'm going to take you around a little bit.

And then I'm going to come to the text and we're going to go through the outline. Job 17, 1 through 8. Actually, the whole chapter 17 would be good. It's a short chapter, but Job is talking, and I'll just pick up in verse 7. Mine eye also is dimmed by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow.

Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. Now, the thing that was said about Job in the very beginning in verse 1 of chapter 1 is that Job was an upright man. And it was mentioned again in Job chapter 1, and in chapter 2, it was mentioned again that Job was an upright man.

So if God takes an upright man and stirs up his nest, Job is saying, upright men shall be astonished at this. But he said, here's how you can pick out the hypocrite, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. That the hypocrite is going to be the one that does not consider and does not see God in the ways of a man.

And he puts himself up because he's trying to cover up his own fallacies. Psalms 44, 18 is going to be our text. And you might think, why is this the text for the progress of the upright? As we go into it, I believe you'll begin to see it.

Psalms 44, in verse 18, there's one verse, Psalms 44, 18, and the whole chapter, again, it'd be good to take the time to read through the whole chapter because there are four aspects of the life of Israel involved in this chapter. And in the heart of a man. Psalms 44, 18, our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.

The four aspects that are in this whole chapter that have to do with the walk of an upright man are this. There is the look back. An upright man will have the look back.

But an upright man will also have the look forward. He is able to make the progress forward because of his look back. And when we fail to look back, that's when our faith fails.

When we fail to look back, that's when looking forward may dismay us or discourage us. But there's the look back and there's the look forward, but there's also the look inward. And then fourthly, there's the look upward.

We look back, we look forward, we look inward, but if we don't look upward, it all goes to smoke. It just all doesn't matter. When we look up, that's the look of an upright man.

He can look back and see God. He can look forward and he can see God. He can look inside and see he's got to have God.

And then he looks up and it all fits together. In the upright man, the progress of the upright man, there are four things concerning an upright heart. And I'll just give you these by way of an outline.

An upright heart will hold on in the ways of God. I haven't given you the four things yet. The upright heart has the ability to hang on and to hold on to God himself.

This is the distinguishing mark of an upright man. Matter of fact, this was brought out twice and so I'm going to read it twice to me in the last day or two. About the Apostle Paul.

And I noticed it because I was meditating and looking at the area of responsibility in 2 Corinthians 11. He was talking about all the things that came upon him, 2 Corinthians 11, 23. He said, Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool.

I am more in labors, more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in debts often. This is his lifestyle. Been in prison because of his preaching the gospel, being beat, laboring, having to labor, working night and day.

And he goes through these things. Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes, save one. Verse 25, Thrice was I beaten with rods.

Once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I have been in the deep, in journey and soften, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness.

The job description of an apostle. You want to be a missionary. There it is.

In perils in the sea, in perils among the false brethren, in weariness, in painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Then he says this, Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of the churches. Care of the churches.

There's the responsibility. Here was an upright man, given his job description of all the things that he had to go through, preaching the gospel. After he had preached the gospel, people would get saved.

The enemy would get in there and turn them against him. They wouldn't even take care of him. They wouldn't feed him.

He had to work for himself. He was put in jail. Nobody come visit him.

He had his demons to forsake him and all of this. And then he comes out with this. Here is the mark of an upright one.

That which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. The heartbeat of a man that walks with God is that he has concern. He has God's care.

He goes on, who is weak and I am not weak, who is offended and I burn not. There are four things concerning an upright heart. This was the heartbeat of the Apostle Paul.

His heart beat for Christ, thus his heart beat for the lost. He beat for the church. He beat for others around.

These four things by way of an upright heart. And these things are given out as a challenge to all of us. And the first thing, and this one we've heard, we've heard it this week and we'll hear it again.

We'll hear it over and over. But I think we need to hear it over and over. Four things concerning an upright heart.

First thing, a heart that hates sin. Now, it's not just that we hate sin. Get this.

It's a heart that hates all sin. All sin, that's the catch. All sin, even those he cannot conquer.

He must hate it all. Even that which he has not got victory over yet. And not only that, it goes along with this because they go together.

He hates all sin and he loves all the truth. All the truth. Even that which he cannot practice yet because he's still striving to attain it.

To hate all sin and to love all truth. The reason men change the word of God is because they do not love all the truth. I heard a statement this week and it really struck me how the New Agers are really intent on removing the basis and the foundation and all evidence of Christianity in our country.

Is it no wonder that they own the copyrights to these other Bibles? Is it no wonder that they are behind this movement to destroy the word of God? Another thing, by the way, Proverbs 23, 23 says, By the truth, by the truth, also wisdom and instruction and understanding. Proverbs 23, 23. And I had a little note for myself I wrote down.

At all costs, by the truth. You young people, at all costs, invest in the truth. In every situation you're in, in every decision to make, see what the word of God has to say to you.

If you do not know what to do, if you're going to make a leap, if you're going to make a decision, make sure it does not go against the word of God. You'll never go wrong by sticking up for the word of God. By the truth, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.

The second thing concerning an upright heart is this. An upright heart will serve God and seek God. Now I'm going to say that again.

I like Brother Daniel, when he would repeat things, many times after he repeated them, about the third time it really hit, the bell would ring loud. Oh, I see why he's doing that. He'd repeat it over and over again.

I like that. They serve God and seek God, and here's the parts to this. More for the internal worth and eternal good.

You seek God and you seek to serve God. You seek God and you seek to serve God. More for the internal worth of who God is, than just to do it to please Him.

You're doing it because of who He is, just to satisfy yourself. More for the internal worth and eternal good that is in Christ. And secondly, along with that, you serve God and you seek God more than the external

good you will receive from it.

Many, many pastors, and I share this because of my pastoring and my preaching, has washed out on this area of doing it for what they can get out of it. And I guess this is why God has had to discipline me for many, many years to not live on a salary. Even pastoring churches, not to live on a salary.

And I see the wisdom of that now, I have not always seen the wisdom of that. That way I will serve God, whether I'm paid or not, because I get my income from God. There have been many that, because they looked to man to supply their need in this area, would not preach the whole counsel of God because of the fear of man, and other things, all kinds of things.

So you serve God and you seek God more for the internal worth and eternal good. In other words, because of who God is, and not what you can get out of it. Job 121, how Job said he was stripped of all.

I won't go back to that. Job is just full of the basis of this, because Job was classified as an upright man. And when God took an upright man and did what he did with him, when he came out, he was going to be even more upright.

Third thing, upright hearts are more concerned about the inward man than the outward man. How much time did you spend this morning fixing your hair up, getting dressed, getting your shoes shined, getting ready to come to church? How much time did you have feeding your body, getting yourself to look good? Did you spend at least that much time getting your inward heart ready? Did you? Okay, we'll move on. Or maybe we ought to hang up here a little bit.

Let me read you a couple of verses out of the Psalms. Psalms 86 and verse 11, I think it is. Psalms 86 verse 11.

Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth. Unite my heart to fear thy name. You know why you might have spent more time on your hair and getting yourself all fixed up and everything? It's because you didn't want others to think, wow, I look like a slob and you're not supposed to look like a slob.

I want others to see that I look really good and everything. But David says, teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth. Unite my heart to fear thy name.

To fear God and to be more concerned about how He thinks about you and how's your heart and your attitude. The reason I believe many do not get much out of churches is because they do not come to church to get much from God. They come to church to get much from man.

Psalms 119, 33. 119, 33.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. David went to God for his heart. Verse 80.

Let my heart be sound in thy statutes. If your heart is as good looking as your outward appearance, you're doing good. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.

Verse 112. One more on there. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes all way, even unto the end.

I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes all way, even unto the end. Just to point out his heart. He was always concerned that his heart was right.

More concerned for the inward man than the outward. And this fourth thing. And I'll share a little something with you and then we'll close.

An upright heart. An upright heart is one that is on a constant course. It's one that's on a constant course.

And that's not to say that you might not get off the course a little bit. But you might be just like the airplane that flies by the computer. It is continually being corrected by the computer system to keep it on course.

You may not realize this, but boats and airplanes do not go in a very straight line. They're always having little corrections all the time to keep them. And if you were to measure it on a Richter scale, you would see the zigs and the zags just the same way as our life is.

A constant course does not mean that you are perfect, but it means that you stay on course. And what should bother you is if you could be singing glory to God in the highest on Sunday morning, but on Monday, you're off for the glory of yourself and you don't have God anywhere in your thoughts. Your course is different.

But when you get up on Monday, oh God, help me to stay on course this day. Help me to keep my mind on you this day that will keep me in perfect peace. The constant course.

And it should bother us about the one that has the facade of a Christian on Sunday, but yet, boy, they're off way out there. And that's what would bother us about some of our relatives and some friends and whatever we see like that. We just don't see a course after godliness.

A constant course. 2 Chronicles 34.2, last verse, about Josiah. You remember what it said about him? And these kings, they really had a tough time.

Sometimes one of these days we're going to hear about a king. 2 Chronicles 34.2. Good challenge from Josiah. What a testimony.

Starting in verse 1. Josiah was eight years old when it began to rain. And he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord and walked in the ways of David his father and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.

The upright heart. You know, we have to make decisions. I'll share this little thing with you.

It's just a common everyday thing that happens. An upright heart has the heart to always be willing to give itself out and to give a little bit extra and to make sure that everything is right and taken care of. We had a good time yesterday.

We went out to Pizza Hut for Sean's birthday. And I learned a lesson yesterday. I learned you can't fill kids up, teenagers up with thin pizzas.

We need to get the pan pizzas to fill these boys up. There were 22 of us and we had eight pizzas. And I don't think we got filled up with eight pizzas.

They were too thin. Well, I learned a lesson. But when we were done, we were all gathering up the money to get it all paid for.

And I noticed this as we were getting it that a couple of the elders just pitched in a little extra to make sure everything got covered just right. We had a lot of people there and we were needing to get going and everything. And in my heart, the Spirit of God said that's the mark of an upright man.

He walks right. We give. You know, let every man give according to the person in his heart.

And he can give freely. And it doesn't hurt, even though it may hurt. And everything was, as far as I was concerned, worked out just right.

But an upright man knows because he's walking with the Lord just what to do in little situations. So it's just not some pie-in-the-sky type of stuff, but it comes back down to being in the pizza parlor, also knowing how to live right. You young people, God has given you a wonderful opportunity to be raised in Christian homes.

Do not despise the chastening of your mom and dad. Do not live in rebellion in your heart because it will come out in your life. If you have a rebellious attitude, you need to go to mom and dad and say, I have a rebellious feeling.

There may be a stronghold there. God may use that to cleanse you and maybe also show them something that they need to deal with. Let's pray.

Lord, we praise You. We want to start off our prayer with praise and thanking You that You gave us the example of an upright heart in the Lord Jesus Christ. What a God You are that You would die for us on the cross that You would want to come down and live in this old dirty world.

You got Your feet dirty. You smell the dirty smells. You saw the sights.

You received all the rebuke and everything. What a wonderful God You are that You revealed Yourself to us. And now, Lord, I pray that Your Word would burn in our hearts as it did to the disciples walking on the Emmaus roads.

Did not our heart burn within us? That our hearts would burn within us. That we want to be upright. That our hearts would be broken about that unright area in our life.

That we would cry out to You. That we would cry out to You continually. That we would stay on course.

That we would not turn to the right hand nor to the left. And Lord, I thank You that You have told us in Your Word, faithful is he who calls us who also do it. That Thou would perfect that which concerneth us.

That we don't have to look to ourselves to be righteous. We look to You. We don't have to look to ourselves to be perfect, to stay sinless.

We look to You to continually teach us and show us the way. And as we obey, there will be less sin. As we obey, there will be more joy.

As we obey, there will be more of the testimony in our life as an upright boy, an upright girl, upright man, upright woman. Thank You for teaching us this morning from Thy Word in Jesus' name. Amen.

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