

# Overcoming Sexual Lust

by Don Currin

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with God and the need to guard one's heart, character, and teachings diligently. It warns against the dangers of falling away from the faith, highlighting the significance of having a good conscience, pure character, and unwavering faith. The speaker shares cautionary tales of well-known individuals who did not finish well in their faith journey, urging the audience to stay close to Christ, immerse themselves in the Scriptures, and cultivate a character that reflects Christ's likeness.*

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 4:16, 1 Timothy 1:5, 1 Timothy 1:19, 1 Timothy 3:9, 1 Timothy 6:11, Hebrews 6:4, Psalms 92:13, 1 Corinthians 9:24

**Topics:** "Guarding the Heart", "Perseverance in Faith"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Let me just begin by saying I hope you're not here from food. I really pray that you came to hear from the Lord this morning. We're grateful for those who prepared the food, it was outstanding.

But please this morning, I really encourage you to listen to the Word of God because this is something that will make all the difference in your life. Unlike physical food, it is only temporary. I pray that what you will see this morning will have eternal benefit and implications in your life and your beliefs.

I want you, if you have a copy of God's Word, perhaps even on your cell phone, maybe that's what you have, convenient. That's the only thing you have this morning. Even look at your copy of the Scriptures on your cell phone but follow with me if you would as I read from 1 Timothy chapter 4. And I'm just going to read through verse 16, the whole chapter.

To get the proper context. Now before I read this, I'm going to give you a heads up that what I'm going to share with you is a six-part series in two messages. Okay, so I'm really going to try to focus on the

Scripture and then make a little application and exhort a bit and then we'll move on to the next message.

But basically we're going to look at six different messages packed into two. So let me read the text here beginning in verse number one of 1 Timothy chapter 4. Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving or is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

If you put these things before the brothers you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you are following. Having nothing to do with irreverent cynicism rather train yourself for godliness. But while bodily training is of some value godliness is of value in every way as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For this end we toil and strive because we have our hopes set on the living God who is the savior of all people especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things.

Let no one despise you for your youth but set the believers an example in speech in conduct, in love, in faith and purity. Until I come devote yourself to the public reading of scripture to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have which was given you by prophecy when the council elders laid their hands on you.

Practice these things immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in them for by so doing you will save both yourself and your heroes.

This is our primary text, verse 16. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in them for by so doing you will save both yourself and your heroes.

The King James Version reads take heed unto yourself and to the doctrine continue in them for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. I was asked to speak once again at our heart-to-heart conference in Eastern Europe. And so we convened on a location there in Romania.

So each time all the missionaries, their spouses and all the children as small as they were came to the conference. Serene Ferdinand, who is our Eastern European coordinator, asked me after the conference was over, he said, well Don, you were pretty direct. You were pretty harsh and very austere in your delivery.

And I just wanted one. And he gave me the impression, why do you think our missionaries need such a strong exhortation? And I told him, I said, well here's why, brother. And I cited a very close family relative and then cited a couple of other people.

One was another minister as well as a layperson. And I quoted before him the specifics of their downgrade, their spiritual retention. And I was real concerned that they had utterly fallen away from the faith.

And they immediately responded and he said, I understand. I said, Serene, I put a great deal of stock in the providence of God. God has made me privy not only to these people that I've shared with you, but also

to a myriad of other people, some preachers and some laymen that I never in my wildest imagination would have thought that they would have apostatized from the faith.

But they have. And as I mentioned last night, I'll say again, Robbie Zacharias and Josh Harris and James McDonald and a host of Armenian people as well as Reformed people are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to this great falling away from the faith in these days. You understand this morning that as I address you, some of you dear, precious brothers, some that I don't know very well, but if God doesn't rescue you from yourself, you too will be a casualty of the conflict.

You will utterly turn away from the faith to a point that there will be no recovery. The scripture speaks very clearly with great conviction, very succinctly when he says in Hebrews chapter 6, for it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. There is a point of no recovery.

And you see this in the scripture. Now this morning, we want to focus on this one verse and what is so interesting about it is that what you're going to do is take the verse and you're going to use it as a springboard and not refer back to it or not talk about the context of it. No, friend, it's interesting to me that in 1 Timothy, Paul is not only charging Timothy to warn those to watch over their soul with all diligence and their teaching, but as you see, you find that he's charging Timothy himself.

He's taking nothing for granted. Receiving all the reality in the world, Timothy exudes a conviction that he's genuinely born again. But Paul, not knowing his heart, knows that Timothy is not immune to this insidious plague of being drawn away from the faith.

And so it's a warning not only to those that Timothy has stewardship over, but to the young man himself. And it's a message to all people, no matter what your age is. Paul gives Timothy this sober warning.

It confronts both his life and teaching. These areas of concern are of equal importance, for each have eternal implications. Now let me begin by explaining the text.

When you consider the content of the letter, you sense that Paul is tremendously concerned for Timothy's work and well-being. And it's interesting, brethren, the very first thing that we see is the sound phrase, take heed, or keep close watch upon yourself. The expression here, listen now, means to hold on, to detain, or pay careful attention to.

You see, the idea is to take precautions as to how you live, to guard yourself from those evil objects and patterns of lust that you know your heart is inclined to. Sexual lust is every man's battle. And if you have a problem in this area, you need to exercise extreme discipline and diligence in making sure that you do all that you can to avoid any sexual temptation.

I remember being at a McDonald's one morning with Paul Washington. And the lady came over and said, can I help you? And we placed our order, and then she set a tray down and placed a paper placemat in the tray. And on the front of it, it was an advertisement for the Rocketeers, which was a dance, a woman's dance team, and they were immodestly clad.

And Paul immediately reached over, took that placemat, and he turned it upside down. Can you do that? Can you turn the television off? Can you set some parameters for yourself when it comes to the internet? I'm not going there, because I know from experience it is a broken well, it is a broken cistern that can hold no water, and it can easily lead my soul into great peril, as I worship the God of sensuality. Peter warns in 1 Peter 2, in verse 11, Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims in this life, abstain from fleshly lusts

which war against the soul.

Listen carefully. The next thing we see here are the two areas that he has commanded Paul charges Timothy to watch over. They are his life and what he teaches.

They are vital in every servant of Christ as they have eternal consequences. Both are extremely important, as a matter of fact, they affect one another. Think about this.

The care of the soul affords greater conviction for what we teach, and a value for the teaching makes us more watchful over our own personal soul. However, if I neglect my soul, it will negatively affect my teaching. And if I'm careless toward what I teach others, it will diminish, listen, my watchfulness over my life.

So they fuel each other. They complement one another. Now the reason I've chosen this text is because I'm deeply troubled over the growing number of professing believers that are falling away from the faith.

And I've already mentioned a few of them to you. But listen to this. It matters not whether you're male or female, minister or people, young or old, or many are Calvinists, many are making shit rag in this present hour.

And some have fallen away by heresy, some by immorality, and others, among many other things, bitterness. Paul's admonition here to take heed to yourself is as relevant in this hour as it was in Timothy's day. As a matter of fact, there has never been a time in the history of the church that this warning has been so applicable.

Interestingly, brothers, the scripture is replete with this same warning. Now, before we move on, let me just give you a partial listing of these warnings. It's all summed up in many of the English translations of the Bible in the phrase take heed.

Take heed. For example, you go on to chapter 4, verse number 9. Only take heed to yourself and diligently keep yourself lest you forget the things your eyes have seen and lest they depart from your heart all the things of your life. In Joshua 23, verse 11, take heed to your love for God.

The text says there, therefore, take careful heed to yourselves that you love the Lord your God. Moving into the New Testament, Matthew chapter 6, verse 1, take heed not to perform your deeds before men. He says there in the verse, then Jesus said to them, take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

In other words, guard yourself against the leaven of self-righteousness and Phariseeism. In Luke 12, verse 15, how about this for the day? Take heed and beware of cavities. Christ said to them, take heed and beware of cavities, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.

In other words, closely examine your life. Closely watch. Guard yourself.

Watch carefully because these things will come upon you unawares. So enough of that. Once again, this is only a partial listing of the sober warnings to take heed.

Every one of these exhortations to watch affords a foreboding sense of danger. And so it is in this text. Paul warns Timothy to keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching.

And then he exhorts him, persist in this. Persist in this. In other words, continue with great diligence.

For by doing so, you will redeem yourself. You will save yourself. And you're going to save those who hear you.

Now he's not talking about that we are saved by our diligence. We are saved by watchfulness. But once again, he speaks of perseverance.

If we're in Christ, we will persevere. And the way to heighten our consciousness of persevering, the way to increase our diligence in persevering is by paying heed to ourselves. What is the benefit of that? Our soul is preserved by the everlasting life.

And those that we influence and instruct, like our children, they are so, so preserved. So you don't let your kids and your grandkids go to hell because you're too lazy to watch for your soul and to watch for their souls. Please understand the meaning of what the Apostle is saying.

He cautions Timothy here and us to faithfully guard ourselves in our teaching that we're instructing others with that we may protect ourselves and others from apostasy. And with this said, let me stress, just in passing, the importance of guarding your conscience. Here's the six messages.

I'll give you at least the titles, okay? First of all, there are three messages on the importance of guarding your heart, guarding yourself. So I talk about the importance of keeping watch over your conscience, keeping watch over your character, and keeping watch over the counsel that you give yourself as well as others. Then in regard to the teaching, you see all this laid out here in the Sapphisal.

But then I talk about warning the teaching. What do I mean? Guard the gospel. What is amazing to me is both lay people and even ministers, because they do not consistently familiarize themselves with the tenets of the gospel of Jesus Christ, all of a sudden, they start tweaking things or they start dissenting things.

And when you really challenge and own it, what you're doing is you're preaching a gospel that's been watered down, dumbed down, and therefore, it loses its power. So take heed to the teaching. Take heed to the gospel.

Take heed to sound doctrine. And then, this is so important, take heed to experiential truth. And I tell you today, there are many reformed people that are apostatizing in the pulpit because it's all scholarly.

It's all cerebral. It doesn't make their heart dance. They don't internalize it.

And therefore, these people, they accept the fact that, well, I've got a good grasp of it in my understanding. I know what it is. I've got my mind around it.

And they assert that there's nothing beyond that. And the Bible does not give us these glorious truths in theology as an end in itself. It is a means to an end to show us Christ and to help us know a felt Christ and a felt truth of that.

So this morning, the most important thing I'm sharing in this six-part message, which I will condense in these two, is the scriptures that are relating to verse 16. First of all, if you would, if you've got your Bible, look at 1 Timothy 1, verses 5 and 6. Paul underscores the necessity of a good conscience. A good conscience.

Listen to what he says, 1 Timothy 1, verses 5 and 6. Once again, take heed to your conscience. He says, Timothy, now the end of the commandment is love, sharing of the pure heart and of a good conscience and a faith that is genuine, of which some, having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jailing. Now listen.

We live in a day, brothers, when maintaining a good conscience is a thing of the past. I don't know about you, but a generation ago, we heard a lot of preaching on the importance of maintaining a good conscience between God and man. Conscience was preached on Paul.

Not today. Not today. Some people, on occasion, might reference it, but you don't hear sermons on the importance of exercising yourself to have a conscience more than it is between God and man.

But think. A compromised conscience has been the destruction of many souls. It is interesting that Paul mentions the conscience here in this epistle four times.

Why? Because a sound conscience, a healthy conscience, a competent conscience is crucial for the preservation of the believer's soul. Verse number five and six emphasize the importance, Watson says, of a good conscience. According to the verse, brethren, a healthy conscience deters vain talk and irrational conversation.

Now look at another reference here in the epistle. It's found in First Timothy chapter one and verse 19. It says, Paul is exhorting Timothy, holding faith, and there he's again, a good conscience, which some, having put away concerning faith, have made shit right.

Here we see, don't miss it now, that the prelude to perdition, this fall of the life of the faith, is from the neglect of one's conscience. The phrase put away means to reject or to consider unimportant. What's the big deal? My sin's all over the blood.

And I've heard that makes me so sick. I love the blood of Christ. But I tell you, brethren, yes, Jesus paid it all once and forever, but listen, it doesn't negate your responsibility to clear your conscience and asking people to forgive you.

Apologizing to your wife for your wrongs. Paul has seen too many men devalue their conscience to the extent that they've rejected the value of it altogether. Consequently, listen, they spiritually shit right.

The word, interestingly, in this text, in 1 Timothy 1.19, he says, holding faith, and a good conscience, which some, having put away concerning faith, have made shit right. That's what he's talking about. Apostasy.

The Greek word for shit right means to suffer destruction. As with a pastor in Pennsylvania years ago, we were talking one day, we were very transparent with each other and sharing things, and he told me about an evangelist. The guy was a very gifted communicator.

And everywhere he would go, people were helped and they were edified. And one day this guy had a major health issue that left him bedridden, this evangelist. And my friend told me, he said, his ministry, as far as physically speaking, preaching, was all over.

He said, one day I was traveling through his neck of the woods and I decided to stop in and see him. His wife opened the door, ushered me into his bedroom and the man's laying there in bed. He's bedridden.

And he said, Brother Don, what was so amazing to me is that before he lost his ministry, he was in a crystal of joy. Such a positive perspective about everything. Would talk about things and talk about people with great enthusiasm and just such a, an embodiment of zeal.

And that day when I went to his bedroom and I sat down beside his bed and talked to him, he had transformed into a cynical, horrid, unforgiving, self-absorbed individual. And I said to my buddy John, my pastor, I said, well, what was your assessment of it? He said, Brother, I don't know this for sure, but I believe he spent all the days of his ministry building his relationship to his ministry, but not to Christ. I said, listen to me, the Psalmist said in Psalm 92, that they that are planted in the house of the Lord as Christ, that God plants in the house of the Lord that they're genuinely born again, God keeps saving you from need.

And they that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of their God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age. They shall be fast, spiritually speaking, and flourishing to show that the Lord, he is upright.

So for this guy, who formerly was an epistle, joy to transform into the cynical monster, was not a good sign that he had been planted in the house of the Lord. Look at another reference, in 1 Timothy 3 verse 9, once again, the emphasis is on conscience, where it says, holy the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. The apostle here stresses the importance, of a pure conscience in relation to holding firm with gospel.

From this text, we see that belief and behavior complement one another. A man is a hypocrite who preaches sound doctrine and lives a holy life. You come to a very pure gospel church, you hear pure gospel preaching, but do you live that in a hypocrisy? Or do you have an abusive view of what some people call headship, or hyper-patriarchy? What do you mean by that? In other words, you're constantly reminding your wife that she should be submissive to you.

You're brutal, you're insensitive, you're selfish, and you do it all in the name of God, using the word of God and therefore you're blaspheming God. All the time you're reminding her, you need to submit to me, you need to submit to me. And some of us, while we've not experienced a divorce geographically in our marriage, of our wives leaving us, that would kill the spirit of our marriage.

And now we cry ourselves, well, not like this, God, she submits to me, and what you've done is you have so abused her, you've manipulated her under your control. And it's wrong. You've totally crushed her identity.

A man is a hypocrite who preaches sound doctrine and lives an unholy life. And from this we see the fatal disconnect and opposition between profession and practice. Secondly, the final reality that Paul sets forth is that a man, even men in the pulpit, can depart from the faith.

The fourth and final time conscience is mentioned in the epistle. It's in 1 Timothy 4.2, and this is what Paul said, on this occasion, he speaks of it in a negative way. He writes to those who depart from the faith that they speak lies and hypocrisy, watch now, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

So they compromise their conscience so much that what they've done in the process is they've made it insensible, they've killed their conscience. Think about this. Their desire is revealed in their giving heed or adhering to impostors and erroneous teaching.

They gather around themselves teachers that will confirm what they've been preaching to their wives and others. But the reason they do it, they don't check out to see if the teaching is accurate, which it's not, is because they have gained leverage with their loved ones and they're using their false teaching to control them. It's interesting, but seared with a hot iron here conveys that their conscience is desensitized beyond any ability to feel their own guilt.

So the bashful loved ones, the bashful others, they've got to have it their way, they feel their own kingdom and they don't even have the ability to feel the weight of their own guilt. And they're moving down the road to apostasy because they've compromised their conscience. Well enough about them.

Let me give you just some thoughts on the second message concerning maintaining this good conscience but also maintaining a good character. In 1 Timothy chapter 6, once again, verses 1 through 20, we focus back on specifically the text, which is verse 16. And then here he says, once again, to take heed to yourself.

And in taking heed to yourself, you'll find throughout this letter that there's once again overwhelming emphasis on taking heed to yourself. Now please listen to this. I don't know how many of you are familiar with a preacher by the name of Al Martin.

Of course, he's retired now. He's just an old man living up north in the states. But God greatly gifted him and used him in his day.

And he wrote a number of different pieces that were tremendously encouraging. And he wrote a little book that's called *What's Wrong With Preaching Today?* Now listen to this. It is no surprise to me that preaching has fallen upon bad days when the clear priorities of these ministerial requirements that Paul lays down in Timothy and Titus have been set aside.

In ordination councils, men are grilled for hours in an attempt to discover their ability to review heritage or finding theological points, whereas seldom, now listen, whereas seldom is any question asked regarding advances in personal and domestic holiness. Which factors, he says, the apostle Paul placed at the top of the list of ministerial requirements. So we check him out doctrinally, but maybe we need to ask him, tell me about your devotional walk.

Tell me about your walk with God, what does that look like? This same preacher said that he traveled in an itinerant ministry and being among some of the best men in churches to do conferences or preach church meetings, he said that the years that he traveled, he found only five pastors that had a consistent devotional walk. That's what you feed your people. You're not feeding your people or your family by what you know, you're feeding them by what you are.

So here you find, in chapter three, Paul gives Timothy a list of qualifications that should be evident in a potential elder or deacon. Interestingly, now listen, some of them are character qualities. Those he calls attention to for pastors are self-control, good behavior, being non-violent, non-argumentative, and non-courageous.

While for those who are considered to serve as deacons, he stresses the character traits of reverence, honest speech, moderation in the use of wine and use of money, and not being inconsistent in profession and practice. Listen, brothers. In verse nine he says that they should be holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

What does this mean? This underscores the importance of integrity of hearts. As Bowen said, listen, a near orthodox faith was not all that was necessary, for it was possible that a man might be, are you tracking with me now, listen to this, are you tracking, that a man might be firm in belief of the truths of revelation and yet be corrupted. So on the outside, his testimony is exemplary, but on the inside when it comes to character, he's corrupt.

Let me explain. You see, first of all, this reference to character in 1st Timothy chapter 4, verse 12, where Paul challenges Timothy himself as a young man, let no man have contempt towards you as a youth, despise your youth. But watch what he says, but be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in love, in faith, in purity.

Now hold on to your seatbelts, listen to this one. This time he mentions character. The apostle charges Timothy personally because he's so young.

Timothy is challenged to cultivate a character, that will not cause men to look down on him for his youth. His exhortation consists of at least five areas of character that men will censor him. Once again, let me reiterate these and then just make a brief comment about an implication of each.

But he's talking about six. The comments he makes and the questions he raises, first of all, is his behavior. In other words, his moods, his gestures, his actions toward other people.

Does he get angry or become cynical? His love, which is unconditional love toward the brethren. His faith, not referring to the gospel or truth, but to a composure of unwavering confidence in the face of trials. He can still maintain in the face of the most violent assaults of the enemy that comes from flesh and blood a composure that's exemplary of the character of Christ.

His moral purity, a testimony of watchfulness. In other words, you don't see this man when a woman walks by and his eyes are open to watch his countenance. I've been in the presence sometimes of men and all of a sudden a waitress walks by.

She's a lovely girl, a very pretty woman, and the man will divert his eyes from me to watch her. The challenge is sometimes when you're sitting in the privacy of your home and you let your guard down, something comes up on television, you don't turn the channel. You fixate upon the female actress or actresses in that sitcom.

Take time out from your lustful indulgence to look around the room and see who it is that's watching you. Your wife is beholden to your observation. And as your kids get older, they'll see what you take pleasure in by the way you're fixating your eyes upon these icons.

And you wonder why they have no heart for God. It's because of your duplicity your hypocrisy that they're turning off the Christian channel. Think about this.

There's another reference in 1 Timothy chapter 6 verses 11 and 12 that speaks of this character. Paul says, But thou, O man of God, flee these things, follow after righteousness, godness, faith, love, patience, meekness, these character qualities, these character traits, fight the good fight of faith. Here's the implication again.

If I'm watching for myself, I'm teaching others because I'm watching diligently over my soul, and here, by giving them proper teaching, the implication is I'm saving myself and those who give me because it

occurs. Let me say, as we read on, fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold, lay hold, earn with lust and faith eternal life.

Wherein to, thou art also called and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. Does this make sense? You guys understand I'm skipping ahead so much and I hope that I'm not depleting from what I'm sharing with you so much that it doesn't have a flow of understanding to it. I only wish that we could look at these things more specifically and really consider some weighty illustrations.

But think about what Al Barnes said. In the light of a passage like 1st Corinthians chapter 9 verse 24 through 27 that I referenced last night in the message, Paul said, Do you not know that those who run and race all run? We're racing toward eternity. We're racing toward glory.

But only one receives the prize. Listen to this now. Run in such a way Everybody's running.

Everybody's hoping. They're trusting they're going to make it to glory. But he says, Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

And everyone who competes for this prize how about this one? Is self-control in just a few things? No. This is a character of your life. Is your control in all things.

Listen to this. He goes on to say in that text, Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we get a perishable crown. Therefore I run not with uncertainty.

The idea there is not like one that beats the air or shadow boxes. Brother Paul's talking about I draw back my efforts in faith to make every lift count for the glory. He said thus I fight not as one who beats the air, but I discipline my body and I bring it into subjection lest when I have preached to others I myself should become disqualified or cast away.

Once again I remind you what I said last night. The Greek word is adakimos. Paul's not talking about losing a reward then.

He's talking about the potential of losing your own soul. I said this to the Mark class staff the other day. I'll immediately go to Paul Walsher and respond to this in a while.

Once again this is a comment from Al Barnes. I pray it will be adopted here. Listen to what he said in light of that text.

He said quote Many an effort of Christians is merely beating the air. The energy is expected for nothing. There's a lack of wisdom or skill or perseverance.

There's a failure of plan. They just do it aimlessly. There's no objective in mind.

Or there's a mistake in regard to what is to be done and what should be done. There's often among Christians Listen to this now. Among Christians or Christian ministers very little aim or objects.

There's no plan. And the efforts are wasted scattered inefficient efforts so that the cause of their life many men may say that he has spent his ministry or Christian force mainly beating the air. Listen to how he explains this.

Besides many set up a straw a straw man, a metal straw and fight that. They fancy error and heresy of others and a protract. They become heresy hunters or they oppose some irregularity in religion that if left alone would die by itself.

Or they fix all their attention upon some minor evil and they devote their lives to the destruction of that alone. Now this is what's so subtle. Please don't miss this.

Listen. When death comes to that man he may have never struck a blow at one of the real and dangerous enemies of the gospel. And the sacred record of the tombstone of many ministers and many proud Christians might be.

Here was one who spent his life beating the air and staggering. That's what you've done. You've lived 25 years.

You've lived 35 years. You're in your 50s now all your life. You've never struck a blow before.

You've spent all of your time trying to regulate. When God sufficiently provided for you in your family but you haven't had more. So it costs you time.

Times of rest so you can be prepared in your family the word of God and display in the form of the realities of what God's word conveys in Lord's wonder. All of your life, all of your ministry you've spent in secondary issues just beating the air. Let me move to the third thing and we'll take a break.

I must share this with you. Some of you are familiar with Conrad Murrell. He's had a great impact on Brother Paul Washington as well as other men like Bob Jennings and myself.

I was at his camp years ago in Bentley. This is quite honestly, Conrad Murrell reminds me of the combination of Arthur King, brilliant, but he was so Christ-like. So Christ-like.

A man of few words, such an epistle of wisdom. But he used to write an article consistently and one day he wrote an article entitled Old Prophets. You remember the account in the Old Testament of how this young prophet was given a commission, he was given an assignment to deliver a message and he was to leave the city a different way.

He was not to talk to anyone, he was not to retreat to anyone's home. But when he left the city, an old prophet's son was informed by the old prophet that this man had come to deliver the word on the behalf of Jehovah. And so he goes after him.

And he says of all things, let's have the Lord come back to the city. He comes back and he has a meal with this old prophet and then finally leaves and when he dies he's killed by a lion. And so Cunningham draws out some application from that story and he talks about Phillipine, even someone who has the greatest of reputations as a minister of the gospel all of a sudden they begin to deviate from the truth and what it can cost you.

But he talked about men from church history, some of you know, you know their names, you know their reputations and you've been blessed by their books and their preaching. I'm not going to call them names, but let me just give you three things before we move on here. Three different illustrations.

One is a man that was converted to Christ in his youth and became a devoted plain evangelist. His ministry included some marvelous revivals in Eastern Europe. A number of which countries now are

locked up behind an iron curtain at that time that he wrote this article.

He is the author of scores of inspirational books, Mr. Murrell said, biographies and booklets centering around true evangelism, revival and the Holy Spirit. His entire ministry was characterized by joyous victory. But listen to this.

Yet in the last few years of his life he became a cringing, wild picture of defeat. He was convinced that the Lord had forsaken him, feared the trumpet of people and was in constant depression. Not so long as hundreds, literally thousands of people came to Christ under his ministry as a young man.

And in the latter years, all of that's left him. And it put him in such a state of depression that I know this personally that he even questioned his salvation. Another example, this man was a prolific writer of great stature who was not fully appreciated until he died.

Wrote some of the best books and commentaries from the reformed viewpoint of his century. As he grew older he became increasingly bitter and intolerant of those who held views contrary to his own. Before he died he was known to have a serious drinking problem.

Fortunately, because he was an isolated part of the world and he was not accepted as he is today, his latter years of deterioration was not long in coming. Sadly, the reputation is invalid. Not allowing him, no need not, that comfort shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

How about this man? Another famous preacher and writer of the deeper life books. Though more in his Armenian persuasion has been used in one of the foremost missionary societies in Britain. In his own age, his lectures and at least one of his more recent books is nothing less than thinly veiled pantheism.

He stoutly declares, it is not. What is pantheism? That God is everyone. That post is God.

The cherry you sit on is God. The birds are God. Everything's God.

That's what he taught. He stoutly declares it is not, but it has all the main elements of the ancient heresy. This man is still a strong voice in the deeper life moods of that day, along with his false doctrine.

Pure ministry of the gospel! Great fruit from his ministry and now all of a sudden at the end of his life, he becomes a heretic. How about this one? Some of you are going to recognize who this is, as I believe they cannot. Here is another man, a powerful evangelist from the old country.

His story has stated his type of preaching which once stirred thousands is no longer heard seriously. Even though his preaching ministry is for all practical purposes finished, he is still in demand as a novelty or as a drawing feature in conferences and in some churches. But he is lonely.

He's lonely in his rejection. Sick and disillusioned over the apostasy of the churches. He has been associated with a number of evangelical associations.

Dissenters soon are drawn to him through his powerful influence and strong prophetic denunciations. A split soon follows in some of those churches. He continues to attract malcontents and soreheads who mistakenly associate his severe denunciations with their own hatreds and prejudices toward churches and toward authorities.

He in turn mistakenly identifies their hatreds and prejudices with his own holy indignation at the apostasy of churches and evangelism. In such a way, he strengthens the hand of the wicked in their uprising and rebellion against spiritual leaders. It's the same.

I'm not saying that these men, that all of them fell away from the faith and apostatized, but brothers, they didn't finish well. You know, when you read these accounts and I've got others here, what's in the root of it all is pride. They get to a point that they can no longer submit to anyone.

They cease to search the Scriptures and repent of themselves. I say this. I mean, this would be a good stopping point.

It's just the first few messages and I'm going to try to finalize four in one section, but listen to this. Please don't miss this now. I said all this to say this.

Don't you dare think it could never happen to you. Stay close to Christ. Immerse yourself in the Scriptures daily.

Discipline yourself in the Gospels. Learn to receive your proof even in your life. If you're wrong, acknowledge you're wrong.

Maintain a good conscience between law and man and also cultivate a character that resembles more Christ and not some moralistic mentality. But there's no doubt, Laura, even though I monitor every congregation and this is no exception, Laura. I've seen in the faces of those who have the mirror to look at I know it's troubled.

I know it's disconcerting. But I pray, O God, that beyond this content that has been very petty that these men will know that I love them. Even as Paul said, if I look at your enemies because I tell you the truth, I go farther from personal experience than a man who doesn't tell me the truth doesn't love me in the direction I love him.

So I pray, Lord, today that you might use this content to help me, to strengthen me, to rescue them from themselves. That Christ might be praised and glorified. In another word, that this could be a defiant moment for some of you this morning.

It could totally transform your life. Lord, it could result in them being set on a road that is so straight and narrow and yet difficult. Yet they will praise you for all eternity because you've used this to draw them into the kingdom of the Son you love.

So help these brothers know how much you care for them and love them. And how much I love them. Thank you.

Thank you, Sister. Amen.

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