

# Balance Between Doctrine and Devotion

by Ernest C. Reisinger

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*The sermon discusses the vital balance between sound doctrine and heartfelt devotion in the life of a Christian, emphasizing their interdependence for true faith and effective evangelism.*

**Duration:** 1:00:28

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 9:1-3, 1 Corinthians 9:27, Titus 2:1, Titus 2:7-8

**Topics:** "Doctrine"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a right doctrinal foundation and a devotional life. He highlights the need for believers to have a personal encounter with God and to truly know and experience the Son. The preacher warns against a superficial and hypocritical form of Christianity, urging believers to live a disciplined life that reflects their faith. He emphasizes that true holiness and evangelism can only come from a genuine relationship with God and a deep understanding of His grace.

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## Transcript

This time our brother Ernest Griesinger, our itinerant deacon, will lead us in the meditation of God's Word. I'm one of those fellows who has a private opinion about it. It's a joy for me to see a lot of faces that I see all over the country.

There's old Tom from Canada, Bill from Roanoke. Last time I saw Brother Bolton was across Holiday Inn in Houston, Texas, had a little breakfast. I could just go down these lines and rejoice to see some of the dear friends from various places.

The only thing that grieves me is that I won't be able to spend a couple of hours with each one of you as I look in your face today. But that's not my job to, just now at least. If you have your Bible, I'd like you to turn as a little springboard for the assignment that I have on this program.

I'd rather be first than be last on the program. I was last on a program once. I remember we had some of the eminent speakers, and I was trying to describe my feelings of myself.

I had Dr. Gray and Mr. Clowney and Don Hill, and I was fourth on this program. And I kind of got shaky, and I was wondering how to describe my feelings of myself. And I thought, oh, I know, it feels exactly like I used to feel when I played ball.

I was a poor batter, I was a pitcher, and a poor batter. And I had that same feeling when every now and again over the years the bases would be loaded and the old pitchers would be up. And I felt bad.

I don't have that feeling this morning. Let the fellows come later and take care of that. Now, would you turn to Titus chapter 2, verse... I just want to try to tie these two thoughts together and use this text as a springboard to do it.

Titus chapter 2, and I want to read verse 1 and verse 7 and 8. And before we look to God's word, let us bow our heads in our hearts and pray that he would send his spirit to do that which he alone must do and can do. Let us pray. O Holy Ghost, sanctifier of the faithful, be pleased to come and assist us not only as we speak, but as we hear.

Give us hearts of discernment to know that which is of heaven, to know those eternal verities that thou hast ordained to change us and save us and sanctify us, and to know the chaff that comes in among those eternal verities because of our ignorance, because of our flesh. But today, blessed spirit, and in those meetings that follow these days, be pleased to help us to know that which is of heaven. O take our shorthand, our withered hand this morning, blessed spirit, that always seems to fall short of that which we reach for by faith.

Take, O Holy Ghost, that withered hand and somehow fasten it unto the tassel of that robe from which flows virtue, and grant that that virtue that flows from him whom we love would flow out from us to those feet that beat the streets around us. Men and women who are eternity bound, grant us these days that which will help us and encourage us to take that pure gospel to them which is able to save them by power, even thy power. Hear our prayer, for Jesus' sake, amen.

The subject that I've been assigned is a balance of doctrine and devotion. And I didn't know whether I ought to read a paper or try to speak. Maybe I'll just kind of mix it up a little.

But I will say, I'm not trying to put on some preaching demonstration, but I'll stay pretty close to too many notes that I have. May I read these texts, because I believe they are a good springboard for such a subject as I've been assigned. But speak thou the things which becometh sound doctrine.

And then he has a word for the aged men and the aged women and the young men and the young women. And then he has this exhortation. In all things show thyself, not only these old women and old men and young men, but in all things show thyself a pattern in good works.

I believe this is devotional life. In doctrine, showing uncorrupted reverence and sincerity. Now we can't speak sincerity.

We can't only speak uncorruptedness. We must show it. My assignment, believe it or not, I wasn't even in this part of the country where it was assigned to me.

But my assignment is my burden. Brethren, this morning for the Church of Jesus Christ, especially in those circles that are familiar with those doctrines of grace that we hold dear. So I say my subject is my burden this morning to combine sound doctrine with experience.

To combine the knowledge of things with the power of things. In experience, this is my burden for my own. Somewhat my burden for Christ's Church and his people and his servants.

Well why this burden? Combining sound doctrine with a sound life and sound living. Why the burden? It's because I believe with all my heart that it's out of this rare combination, what many of you long for and pray for, and that is God to visit his Church in power and in saving sinners. It's out of this combination.

This combination that alone can give true service to Christ. In worship, stewardship, and more especially in evangelism. That is it would, out of this would come that kind of evangelism that God sent.

Out of this combination would come divinely revealed message that would follow the book. And when it takes us to election and predestination, we'd follow it where it takes us and no farther. Out of this, a God revealed, but a God revealed message.

Pregnated our nation. Out of it will come some God honoring methods. I say out of this combination, why? But if it has no doctrinal, he said it's like cut flesh.

That's why we insist. Is there anything less than doctrinal truth applied by the Holy Ghost to us? Is that Christian experience? Doctrinal truths of God applied to our heart by the Holy Ghost. That's Christian experience.

Now, as we look around us, at least as I look around. I don't know what you see when you look. I remember Dr. Van Til when he addressed the graduating preachers this year at the seminary.

He told them they better look around them to see what kind of a world this is. They're going to preach it. And he gave a vivid description of all that.

Now I think if we want to do anything, we ought to look around. As I look around, thinking in terms of this combination that I'm speaking of, doctrine and devotion. I don't see any large scale of it.

I see extremes. But there's one group of men that seems to me, above all others, to have had a measure of this combination. One group of men, above all others, as I read church history.

And that's a group that, though they're despised, misrepresented, ridiculed in our college classrooms today, yet they live on. That's the Puritans. We who know them, and know their doctrines, highly esteem them.

We long to emulate them in piety and devotion, if we know them. However, many who would long to emulate them in experience are ignorant of their doctrines that produce such zeal and experience. I mean those men like Bunyan.

Those men like Baxter. Aline, who was described as being greedy for soul. I mean George Whitefield, probably the greatest evangelist since the day of St. Paul.

I mean John Olin, the prince of Puritan theologians. I mean those men who died at the stake, like Bishop Latimer and Nicholas Ridley. Some of these men.

Men in that great period of 1600s, they seem to have a combination of it. Not only those men of the 1600s, but I see it in the men who dip their souls in the same stream of divine truth. Therefore I see it in Bishop Lyle.

Therefore I see it in John Brown, that great Presbyterian that taught Greek exegesis. I see it in Charles Adams Spurgeon, because they dip their minds and their beings in that same stream of Bible divinely



I don't want to be vague about this discourse. I mean that the Spirit's gift is not just enlightening men, but also regenerating. It includes the regenerating work.

Taking away their stony heart, giving them a heart of flesh, renewing their wills by His blood. Determining them and freely being made. Expressed in Section 65, verse 4. Oh, blessed text.

Listen. Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causes to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts. We shall be satisfied with thy goodness of thy house, even thy holy temple.

That's what I'm talking about. And in that sense, God's grace proves irresistible because it destroys the power to resist. I copied a stanza or two down from one of Toplady's psalms that expresses it.

What thou, I cannot break my chains, or ever throw off my load. The things impossible to men are possible to God. Who, who shall in my presence stand? Or matchless, oh matchless omnipotence.

Unfold the grasp of thy hand, the sinner bent. And he goes on in the third stanza. Faith to be healed thy fame would have.

Oh, might it now be given. Thou canst, thou canst. The sinner saved, and make me meet for heaven.

Wesley expressed it. Charles Wesley's hymns are better than John Wesley's theology. Wesley expressed it this way.

Long my imprisoned spirits lay. Fast bound in sin and nature's night. Thine eye diffused the quickening way.

I woke, the dungeon fumed with light. My chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

Now, my dear brethren this morning, we do not suppose to the world the covenant of grace, God's decision rather, to save a man by a decree leaves a man passive and inert. No, no, we don't mean that. It is the opposite that takes place.

The covenant of grace does not heal man. It does not regard him as a tin can or a piece of wood, but it lays hold of his whole being. It doesn't destroy, but it frees it from sin.

It does not stifle or obliterate his conscience, but it sets them free from darkness. It regenerates, recreates man in his entirety, and renewing him by grace. That's what grace does.

It's power in the blood, power in the gospel. All these doctrines that show the cross as revealing God's power to save, not his impotence. The cross does not demonstrate God's impotence, that God's plan was frustrated.

The cross is not a place where God's impotence is manifest, but his power is manifest. The cross was not just a place to make salvation possible, but actually to secure the salvation of sinners. We see that very truth expressed in the great prophetic passage Isaiah 53, verse 11, where it says, Old William Comper knew it when he wrote, There is a fountain filled with blood, and he put in that third stanza, Till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more.

Oh, may I be more specific. I'm talking about those doctrines that set forth the condition of man, total depravity. Man's not sick and needs a little lift, and needs life.

He's blind and can't see. He's deaf and can't hear. And only God can raise the dead, and give sight to the blind, and take the wax from people's ears.

Only God. That's what I'm talking about. I'm talking about that unconditional election.

Particular redemption, if you like. That God had a purpose in Christ. My old southern friend says, Election is the doctrine that buttresses the gospel.

And I believe it with all my heart. I'm talking about unconditional election, particular redemption, limited atonement, if you like. The covenant between the father and the son.

The father gave some people to his son. My sheep hear my voice. Jesus said in John 10, You don't hear me, because you're not my sheep.

The father gave the son some playmates. Some sheep. He didn't make him a shepherd to have no sheep.

There's some sheep. And they'll come to know him, by preaching and by prayer. I'm talking about that grace that's irresistible, as I've described it now, because it releases man.

It comes to the sinner, and convicts him of his sin. And the Holy Ghost, the work of the Spirit in salvation, it comes to him and convicts him, and convinces him. Yea, bless God, it converts him.

I'm talking about that kind of grace. I'm talking about those doctrines that God, by his Spirit, would preserve his people. That same sheep that he saved.

It's not the father looking at one group, and the son died for another group, and the Spirit applying it to another group. It's all the same people. The one that the father planned, the one that the son purchased, and the one that the Spirit applied.

It's all the same people. Perseverance. Well, these doctrines drove the Puritans.

They'll drive us to proclaim. These doctrines will drive you to proclaim that all men are sinners. They're not just sick, they're dead.

It'll drive us to complain that Jesus Christ, God's Son, is a perfect, able, and willing Savior for sinners. Even the worst, yea, described by Paul, the chiefest. It'll cause us to proclaim that the Father, and the Son, has promised that all who know themselves to be such sinners, and put their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord, shall be received into favor, and not cast out.

It'll cause us to proclaim that God made repentance and faith, not this idea, just trust Jesus, trust Jesus. When Paul went from door to door, Acts chapter 20, verse 21, he said, he testified, repentance toward God and faith. It'll cause us to proclaim that God has made repentance and faith a duty, requiring every man who hears the gospel to fully cast his soul upon Christ and the promises as an all-sufficient Savior.

And again I say, ready, able, and willing to save all that come to God by Him. These doctrines are the doctrines that demanded that the Puritans, and that demand us, to display Christ. Explaining man's need of Christ.

One, explaining Christ's sufficiency for that need to save him. And explaining his offer of himself in the promises to be a Savior to all who truly turn to Him. Coming to Him is not just making a little decision.

Coming to Him in this sense, my dear, is resting upon Him. Turning from sin and self-effort to the question, maybe ask us, what do we say to men? What do we say to the question, what must I do to be saved? We have no other answer than Paul's answer, believe on the Lord Jesus. But what does that mean? Ah, it means more than some hot shot evangelist telling a few tears to roll down your cheeks about mothers some day.

Believe me, it's a little more than that. It is knowing yourself to be a sinner. And it is knowing that Christ, casting yourself wholly upon Him, exchanging that all-natural enmity and rebellion against God for a spirit of grateful submission to His will.

That's all embodied. You say, well, how did the Puritans go about this? You say they combined doctrine and devotion. How did they go about this? A man to believe on Christ.

Things didn't seem to be so. I'll tell you what they told them. Look to Christ.

Seek Him. Cry for Christ, just as you are. Cast yourself in His mercy.

That's what they told them. Ask Him to give you a new heart. That's what they told them.

May I read to you something from Pilgrim's Progress? My patron saint, John Bunyan. This is a case where they were in this enchanted ground, and they were a little lonely. And I said, well, let's have a little conversation.

Tell us how you got in the way. And so I asked Hopeful to tell him his testimony. Now, you know that Hopeful was saved through faithful martyrdom in Vanity Fair.

And so when he asked him to share his testimony, I've copied down his testimony. This is his testimony. Hopeful is recounting Christian how he became a Christian.

And I want to read it verbatim so you get the point. You'll see that this is a little different than what we tell them today. Hear it.

Hopeful recounting Christian how he became a Christian. Hopeful. I made my objections against my believing for that I thought I was not willing to say.

He was not willing to say. And what did faithful say to you then? Notice this. Our evangelists and our personal workers, of course, ought to include this instruction.

What did faithful say to you then? This is what he said to his sinner. He bid me go to him and see. Then I said it was presumption.

But he said, no, for I was invited to come. Then he gave me a book of Jesus, his indicting to encourage me more clearly to come. And he said concerning that book that every... Then I asked him, what must I do when I come? Oh, just take this little course.

No, he didn't say that. And he said, and he told me, I must entreat him upon my knees with all my heart and soul, the Father to reveal him to me. Then I asked him further, and how I must make my supplication

to him.

How do I make my supplication to him? And he said, let me go. Thou shalt find him on a mercy seat where he sits all year long to give pardon and forgiveness to them that come. I told him that I knew not what to say when I came.

And he said unto me, this, to this effect, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and make me to know and believe in Jesus Christ. For I see that if his righteousness had not been, well, if I have not faith in that righteousness, and hast ordained that thy son, Jesus Christ, should be the Savior of the world, and I am a sinner indeed, Lord, take therefore this opportunity. Well, somebody huffs to him off.

He needs help. If God doesn't do anything for him, he's gone. See, he says, Lord, take therefore this opportunity to magnify me.

Christ, amen. Christian. And did you do as you were bidden? Hopeful, yes.

Over and over and over. Christian. And did the Father reveal the Son to you? Hopeful.

No, not at the first. He wasn't in our revival meeting, was he? Not at the first. Nor the second.

Nor the third. Nor the fourth. Nor the fifth.

Nor the sixth. So I continued praying until the Father showed me the Son. That's what our churches need.

Our people that sit in our pews. They need the Father by the Spirit to show them the Son. And it feels like most churches I get in, you've just got a whole church full of people that have never seen the Son.

They're playing church and don't know anything about what I'm talking about because they never heard it in this fashion. They say, oh, this is not something new. No, sir.

So that's what we tell sinners. Now, we say to sinners like the songwriters, let not conscience make you linger. Nor your fitness fondly dream all of fitness.

He required is to feel your need of Him. Now, I spent a time on the doctrine. Just be patient with me here, brother.

That's only part of this message. I know a lot of people that know that are pretty straight on that. But they don't know anything about that Puritan devotion.

And these things that I say under this head are the next two heads, devotion and discipleship. I don't say it in some unthoughtful, scolding, sensuous way. I say it more out of a painful acquaintance with my own heart and not to scold my brother.

I say what I have to say now more out of a painful acquaintance with my own heart in the area of personal religion. When Paul left the elders at Ephesus, he said the same thing he said to Titus. Acts chapter 20, verse 8. Take heed to thyself.

That's personal religion. That's devotion. Take heed to thyself.

When he spoke to Timothy, the young preacher, he says, Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine. That's kind of pretty guided. That's putting it together.

The Bible puts it together, dear. The Bible puts it together. That church in Revelation, that church at Sardis, they were described as having a name, living a name, but they were dead in experience.

That's what it is to have all doctrines and no experience. Dead. They had the name.

I know a lot of people that can ring the changes on the doctrines of grace and they haven't witnessed anybody in the last ten years. And I'm not God. I don't know if they've cried out to him in prayer, but it seems like if they would, they'd put a little feet on him once in a while and be concerned about a sinner or two.

They got the name, but they're dead. What's your experience today, dear? Most of you, I believe, would believe the doctrines of grace. That's probably why you're here.

That's not the question. That's part of it. That's don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.

But what's your experience in grace today? What's the power of things? What's the power of things in our lives? I tell you, it's an awful thing to preach and witness an unreal Christ. And he can get unreal awful fast if you don't keep short accounts with God. Christ can get unreal awful fast.

I say this again, I repeat, by some acquaintance, Christ can get unreal awful fast. And how awful it is to preach and to witness an unreal Christ. Devotion gives the power and the unction to our commission.

In our Lord's prayer, John 17, he not only prayed that they would be sanctified, and I say to you with all the passion and all the pathos of my soul, take heed to thyself. We must taste, then see that the Lord is good. And we must taste before we can tell efficaciously, powerfully.

We must bear this message of grace upon our hearts, like blessed John, that which we've seen and heard declare we unto you. Reality is what I'm talking about. That's what devotion is.

Reality. A thousand wonderful sermons. Get around some of these people for a while, and you'll see that very thing.

Oh, they've got wonderful sermons on holiness, but they've got a cold, carnal, and I say a holy sermon, but a holy life is a perpetual sermon. A holy life is a perpetual sermon. Baxter said to the ministers of his day, or in his little book to the Reformed pastors, I think it was, a minister's life is the life of his ministry.

You got that? A minister's life, that's devotion, is the life of his ministry. We deacons need to say it in another way. A deacon's life is the life of his deaconess.

A Christian's life is the life of his Christianity. Devotional life. Personal religion.

It's strongly brought out, I think, in what may be, or appear to be, the best church of that Revelation church, of those churches, where Jesus Christ commends them, a church at Ephesus, where he commends them for their service, in those first four verses, he commends them for their service, they worked, labored, he commands them for their sacrifice, they did it sacrificially, he commands them for their suffering, they suffered for the name of Christ, all in four verses. Not only that, he even commends them for their separation. They were ecclesiastically separated.

So he commands them for their ecclesiastical separation. Boy, they had it. They had it.

Ah, but he said, your devotion, thou hast left thy first love, and you can chase all the commentaries you want, I'll beat you there. And you know what it means? I'll tell you just what it says. Isn't it strange that the Bible does mean what it says? That's exactly what it means.

I've chased commentaries up and down my shelves to try to get some great message on what it means to lose your love, and that's just what it means. You just cooled off a bit. Devotion, that's what it means.

Now, you say, well that's fine. Lack of love. Boy, you can have the doctrines, but only God the Spirit can make them warm, give us love, care for sinners, care for his people, care for his church.

What equipment does this take? Quiet place, that's not so hard to find. Quiet hour, but a quiet heart. That's a little more difficult.

That's all your devotional life takes. Quiet place? Yes. Quiet hour? Quiet heart.

You see, some people in my circles, in your circles, I told the Ministers Institute this last week, and I'll repeat it again. A lot of my Reformed brethren are straight on the second part of Romans 9. They're quite clear on Romans 9. He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. Jacob and Elohim, and they got that straight.

But I don't know how is it that they've never read the first of Romans chapter 9. May I read them to you? May I read you? Because Paul had this combination of doctrine and devotion. May I read them for you? Out of the 1901 Bible. For I could wish that I... I'm quite aware that we cannot... It's not within our reach to save a soul.

It's not within our power to... If souls are your... And you are separated from your desire... Rachel, give me children... He still had the pain. She had the pain in her heart. That's the other half of the coin.

Eh? Did you ever try to comfort a lover that was jilted? When some girl had for the object of her... Did you ever try to comfort them? I'll tell you, the object of their love was past their reach and power. And when they were severed from what it was not without. And don't you tell me souls is your object and ring the changes on the doctors of grace and be separated... And your ability without knowing a few drops of tears in your heart.

As they beat our streets. You can just wrap up your little Calvinism and carry on. But you don't know anything about Paul's Calvinism.

Paul had a Calvinism that said... Don't tell me he wasn't straight on it. If he wasn't straight on... He had a Calvinism and he had an object. He was separated from that object.

Horatius Bonar says that's how you cover error with truth. He said to his preachers in his day in that little book you have. That's where I got the thought.

Discussing, we were talking with Al Martin and I about it. It's in that little book Words to Winners of Souls. Horatius Bonar said that's just what he said.

You can't be separated from your object. And he said these ministers hide the truth of a cold and indifferent heart with the great truth of the sovereignty of God. Don't you do it.

The danger of covering error with truth. No. My dear, we have to have the... We have to have the devotion.

Psalm 116 says They made me keeper of the vineyards but my own vineyards I have not kept. The New Testament passage I think is corollary passage to that. They made me keeper of the vineyards but I have not... How do I say it? I've got to quote it down here.

They made me keeper of the vineyards but my own vineyards I have not kept. The New Testament passage is found in I think 1 Corinthians 9.27. Don't read Schofield on it. Read Charles Hodge.

But I keep unto my body and bring it into subjection lest by any means when I preach to others I myself... That's it. That's it. Lest I preach to others I myself... In case you haven't looked on Hodge and that's interesting.

Oh, what am I trying to... I'm trying to say that we can never be satisfied with being the instruments of grace without being the subjects of grace. We can never be satisfied with being the instruments of grace without being the subjects of grace. I heard Dr. Glenn Walters the other year.

I think our fellow deacons were with me and maybe my dear pastor too. But we heard Glenn Walters address the opening of the seminary to young preachers. And as he gave them seemingly heart warnings and he's a great man for alliteration.

He said, he warned them of laziness. He warned them of looseness in their living. He warned them of lethargy.

And then he warned them of lethargy. And I'd never looked that up. I had some idea what it meant.

You know what it is? Morbid. Drowsiness. Profound sleep.

A state of inaction or indifference. Synonym, languor. Inertia arising from soft living.

That'll kill your devotion. All those things. What'll kill it? Laziness.

Looseness. Levity. Lethargy.

Languer. Devotion. Now, that brings me to my last thought.

It's wonderful to talk about being straight on the doctrines. It's a little more painful to talk about personal religion. Devotion.

But let me tell you something. How do they both come about? I think I'd be remiss if I didn't make a suggestion on how they both come about. Both of them.

Either one. They both stem from a very root Bible principle. Do you know what it is? It's that pill my brother told me about about my weight.

He hadn't taken any himself, but he told me about a pill that you take for your weight. And I said, what is it? He said, suffer denial. I tell you, you don't get you don't get to understand the doctrines of grace reading the baseball scores.

You'll never understand the doctrines of grace in front of that boob tube. You're going to have to miss an hour or two to study what they are. Spend some time reading and praying.

Discipline. That's my last point. Discipline.

If you want to know the doctrines of grace be straight on doctrine. You're going to have to study. Does it seem credible that a fella who least thinks he's sincere could be a Christian about 10 or 12 years without having a clue what the doctrines of grace were? Huh? At least thought he was sincere.

No, it's going to be a little self-denial. And when I say self-denial I bet it can't be a minute. Because I'm not talking about that area of things that are sin.

That's not self-denial. That's a command. Anything that's clear that you shouldn't do that doesn't count.

You know where I believe self-denial comes? I think it's all practically under the areas of Christian liberty. Sin is a command, not optional. But it is optional if you spend an hour at the television, maybe.

That's optional. Neither good nor bad in itself. Nothing wrong with the golf, Bill.

We're going to try it this week. Nothing wrong with this. Optional.

But if it all together robs me of that time I ought to be studying to get more clear on the doctrines of grace then I'm not exercising the discipline that is required to have a good doctrinal foundation. Self-denial. That's what I'm talking about.

You know what self-denial is, I think? It's subordinating every secondary point to a primary object. Subordinating every secondary point to a primary object. I think the Bible would call it singleness of mind.

Singleness of mind. And my dear brethren, whatever chills your fervor I don't care how legitimate it is. Whatever dissipates our mind reading or television or whatever it is whatever diverts our attention whatever occupies a large portion of our time or interest may be the way I that we are called to pluck out and catch.

Now I am not talking about no diversion. That's an extreme. Because there's the other extreme and that is, as one old Puritan said rendering the ball useless by always keeping it bent.

So I'm not talking about no diversion because you can render the ball useless by always keeping it bent. Legitimate thing is where most good men go down. Most good men don't go down on the obviously evil where God's clear in His command.

Most good men go down on legitimate things. Home, family, house, garden, car, sports, TV you name it. Most good men go down in these areas.

And you know a good test for us to put to our hearts now and again as deacons as pastors is just this. It's simple. What has a supreme place in your affection? We'd be embarrassed.

What has a supreme place in your affection? I wonder why no soul's the same. What has a supreme place in your affection? What is the dominating power in your life right now? What is it that has the molding influence on your life? That's all. I won't even offer any more.

That'll answer it. You don't need me. What has a supreme place in your affection? What is the dominating power of your life? What has the molding influence? You know, I've never known of a case.

If you do, you tell me this week. I've never known of a case of apostasy from the faith where it's been connected either in doctrine or practice where it's been connected with a prayerful, diligent study of God's

Word. Do you? I never know of a case of apostasizing from the faith where it's been connected with a prayerful, diligent study of God's Word.

And let me say, as I come to the end, if the great doctrines we've mentioned at the outset of this little message do not produce and develop true zeal, holiness, self-denial, evangelism, you can be sure they are not held right or they have become an end in themselves. And I wouldn't want to leave this platform without saying when any good thing, and there's nothing better than the doctrines of grace, when it becomes an end in itself, it becomes wicked. They were never designed to become an end in themselves.

They were designed as a means to the end that we might live and serve and witness and carry out God's commands to the ends of the earth. And if they, these doctrines, do not produce and develop holiness, self-denial, evangelism, you can be sure they're not held right. Now what have I said? I've said we must and cannot settle for less than a right doctrinal foundation.

Secondly, we must build on that foundation a devotional house and the cost of this, these two things, is a disciplined life. A disciplined life. No shortcuts.

I wish you could get it at the altar. I chase people from California to Chicago trying to take the leap to solve all these disciplined problems. And I'm ashamed to tell you that I have to put the alarm on the other side of the room almost 50 years old.

I've got to put the clock on the other side of the room to discipline myself to get out of bed. Wish I could tell you a sweeter song. Wish I could tell you some short route, but I don't know it.

The words to sanctification and disciplined life and devotional life as far as I'm concerned, are what Bishop Ryle said was the words of sanctification. Run. Wrestle.

Fight. Run. Fight.

Now my Keswick brother wouldn't like that, and I can't speak out. Lord Jesus, help us to love you more. Lord Jesus, give us power and grace to obey you in taking the gospel to our neighbors and friends and relatives.

And Lord, by your Spirit, may this flow out of that devotion to thee that it's natural for us. Hear us for your namesake. Hear us for your namesake.

Have mercy upon us and forgive us our sins. Blessed Savior, in thy name we pray. Amen.

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