

# The Discipline of Danger - 2

by Jack Hibbs

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*The Disciplines of Danger series teaches us to confront the dangers of deception and live a courageous Christian life by being bold in the Lord and disciplined in our faith.*

**Duration:** 50:12

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 6:11, Acts 2:41-45, Philippians 1:27, 1 John 2:27

**Topics:** "Discipline"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the disciplines of danger that Christians should be aware of in the last days. He emphasizes the importance of the logos of God, which is the word of God found in the Bible. The preacher also highlights the pathos, which is the passion and courage needed to face danger and achieve victory. He warns against the dangers of materialism and possessions, urging Christians to prioritize God and His work rather than being consumed by worldly desires. The preacher encourages listeners to read and study the Bible to navigate the challenges of the last days.

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## Transcript

We've come here for the Bible, we've come here for your word, we've come here for the worship, we've come here for you. And Father God, we pray in Jesus' name that you'd anoint now your word to our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name and all God's people said, Amen.

Well, grab your Bibles tonight and turn, if you would, to a very, very precious portion of Scripture, and that is the book of Nehemiah chapter 6. Nehemiah chapter 6 this evening, as we are looking in our series of the Disciplines of Life series. And we are now in part 2 of a 31-week series. And tonight we're looking at the Disciplines of Danger.

What does that mean, the Disciplines of Danger? Nehemiah chapter 6, verse 11. We'll talk a lot about Nehemiah tonight. Nehemiah chapter 6, verse 11.

And there Nehemiah says, And I said, quote, Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life by hiding? I will not go in. The context is this, that Nehemiah was under attack. He was commissioned by God.

Church, listen. He was commissioned by God. He was empowered by God.

God provided for him all that was needed for a good work. Nehemiah was committed to that work. And as soon as Nehemiah embarked upon that work, he began to be attacked.

And then as the work advanced, he was attacked more. Listen. And as the walls of Jerusalem were being strengthened, and not yet though had Nehemiah hung the doors on the gates, but he was getting really close, it was evident that God was doing a work in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, that the enemy launched the attack even more.

Church, Christian, listen. Whenever you as a Christian in the disciplines of life grow, you get stronger. You can say right now tonight that you're one year stronger with Christ than you were this time last year.

You are growing, as the Bible says, in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. You're advancing. That growth will be challenged by the enemy.

And you just need to put on your big boy pants or your big girl skirt, and you need to understand that that's the way it is in Christianity. It is absolutely awesome. And frankly, I wouldn't have it any other way.

And I'll tell you why in this study tonight. The disciplines of danger. The Bible says we're living in the last days.

How far along in the last days are we? I don't know. But the Bible says we're living in the last days. And so because of that, my Bible gives me all kinds of warnings about what to watch for regarding this faith of ours.

There are three practical aspects that I want you to consider in our study tonight as we go through this. And number one, by way of introduction, it is this. There is the Logos of God.

L-O-G-O-S. Logos. You know what that word means? It's Greek for the word.

The word of God is called the Logos. Jesus was the Logos of God. And the Logos, or the word by which Christians live, is the Bible.

Number two is the Pathos. The Pathos is the passion of our lives. The Logos, that's in us, the word of God, creates a passion.

A Pathos. And Pathos is the passion that the Christian life is lived in this world regarding. It would look to the world that it is our fuel.

It's our cause. And every true Christian has the cause of Christ in their heart tonight. It's what concerns you.

You have a Pathos. And as a Christian, Christ is first. And then thirdly, it is the Ethos.

Ethos is that word for life or lifestyle. Ethos. Logos, the word.

Pathos, the passion, which all generates or creates within us an Ethos. And that Ethos is the new lifestyle as a Christian. And that lifestyle is a style of living that we are set upon.

The Bible calls it a pilgrimage in this life. Tonight, if you're a Christian, you have a lifestyle that you are now living to the glory of God. In fact, that's what the Bible means when it says that whether we eat or drink or all that we do, we do to the glory of God.

What is that all about? That is the Ethos of my life. We can also use the word witness. It is my testimony.

If I'm a Christian, I have a testimony. That is, I can tell people how I was saved, how Christ delivered me from this world. That generates a witness.

That is all about my Ethos. My lifestyle is governed by what Christ has done in my life. Mark it down.

1 John 4, 17. The Bible says, Herein is our love made complete, our perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. What a tremendous statement.

We are representatives of Jesus Christ in this world. And church, that being true tonight means that the disciplines of life for us will generate a danger. Matthew 16, 24.

Jesus said to the disciples. We looked at it last week. We'll probably look at it every week.

If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. So how do we fight the dangers that come against us as Christians? And what are they? That's the question we're asking tonight. We are all about on these Wednesday nights about discipleship being disciplined regarding life.

And this is a very practical study. Again, I'm inviting you to invite, encouraging you to encourage others to come with you on this discipleship Wednesday nights. Why? Because in discipleship, we will learn the disciplines of what it is to be a real Christian.

I think we're going to have fun. So Nehemiah chapter six, verse nine says this. For they all were trying to make us afraid, said Nehemiah.

Their hands will be weakened in the work and it will not be done, they said. Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands, was Nehemiah's prayer. He goes on.

And Nehemiah's friend, Shemiah, the men who are said to him, the men who are trying to kill you are coming out after you. You must hide in the house of the Lord. Verse 11.

Then Nehemiah said, should such a man as I flee? And I love that. That's the spirit that I want all of us to be baptized into tonight. Are you a Christian tonight? I'm going to ask you again, pretend you are and say yes.

Are you a Christian tonight? Then listen, that is an awesome thing. And I'm very emboldened by your witness tonight and your testimony. Shall such a man as I or you flee when we're brought under attack? If people are going to come against us as they came against Nehemiah.

If the government or if the society is going to say, boo, I am not going to go into the temple of God and hide. That is, I'm not going to run to the church and close the door and hide. Nehemiah's is no way.

Nehemiah says, I'm called by God. Nehemiah says, my God sits on the throne. Nehemiah says, I am not going to turn and tuck tail and run.

No way. The life of the believer should be a bold life because God has called you. Listen, those of us who shouted a moment ago that we're Christians understand this.

Until you get to heaven, God wants to use you and I to bring as many men and women, boys and girls with us as possible. It's not just to have a ski boat or to pay your bills or to climb Mount Everest or whatever you

want to do. It's to take others with you.

If you're going to climb Mount Everest, take a nonbeliever with you and pray with them. Take the first spiritual laws. Give them a Bible.

If you're going to go do whatever you do, remember Jesus is with you. Take a nonbeliever with you. Somebody asked me today about a certain person.

Are they a Christian or not? I said, I don't know. But I'm treating him like he is one. I'll say, hey, let's pray.

I'll say praying for you. I'll say God bless you. I'll say this or that.

You know what? I don't know if the guy is a believer or not. It doesn't matter to me. I'm going to treat him like one.

See what happens. Maybe he'll catch it. Because Christianity, I think in this day and age, Christianity needs to be caught rather than sometimes blabbed.

I can't even say the word. Blabbed about. Let them catch it by our lifestyle.

Nehemiah says, I'm not going to hide. Nehemiah was a man just like you and I, the Bible teaches us. But the difference was that he knew his purpose.

A disciplined life knows that that life has been given to us to live for God. His calling was for his life to be an honoring thing to God. And that he had no doubts about what he was supposed to do.

Imagine for a moment right now, if every one of us tonight had no doubts about what God wanted us to do. Guess what? That's the way it should be. God has given us enough for us to be busy about our father's business without any doubt whatsoever.

He's given us enough. Church, listen. Life is full of dangers.

Can we just agree to that? Life is full of dangers. There's no doubt about it. There's physical dangers.

There's emotional dangers. There's dangers at home. There's dangers on the road.

I don't need to remind you of that. There's dangers at work. There's dangers at play.

Life is full of dangers. The fear that creeps in because of the possibility of danger has wrapped people up and sequestered them. It's called phobia in Greek.

You ever heard that word before? Phobia. It strangles people. Can we be Christians and be wrapped in phobias? The Bible says no way.

The Bible says perfect love casts out all fear. Do you have any phobias? Listen. Understand that the love of God conquers all that stuff.

Now, I'm not talking about phobias like you don't like to get too close to the edge of the Grand Canyon or stuff like that. I mean, I love that feeling. You know that feeling where it's like, yeah.

Some of you go, I can't do that. That's not what I'm talking about. But there are some people who they love Jesus, but the enemy has bound them.

They don't want to go outside. They can't talk to anybody about God. They're terrified.

They're timid. Did you know that when you study the word timidity in the Bible that it's a sin? It's not a virtue. Look, he's so timid and shy.

Yeah, he needs to repent. We can be, listen, introverts, which I'm not. But you could be where you just want to.

OK, you're like this. But let me tell you something. That's a big difference than being timid.

Timid is fearful of everything. What are they going to think about me? What are they going to do if I say this or that? We need to be bold in the Lord. Dangerous.

They cannot be avoided. But here's the cool thing about dangers. Being a Christian, they can be prepared for.

They can be prepared for. Are you prepared for the battles? Nehemiah and his struggles are a perfect example of the dangers that come against the people of God. And yet without the attacks, listen, without the attacks, our faith and our ministry would have no effect.

Think about it. The enemy will attack those who are advancing. Think about it.

So here we go. Point number one. The disciplines of danger.

Number one is this. The dangers of deception. Now, I'm only going to give you four of them.

There's an infinite number of them. But we'll go with four tonight. The disciplines of danger.

This way. Dangers of deception. They're huge and they're in our culture today.

Mark down this verse. Galatians chapter 6 verse 7. Paul the Apostle told the church in Galatia. Do not be deceived.

You've got to circle that word in your Bible. Deceived. Don't be tricked.

Do not be, in Greek, says stop being deceived. The Bible says that we have a propensity to be tricked, to be fooled. The Bible says stop being deceived.

God is not mocked. Even when somebody's making fun of God, that's one thing of mockery. But when someone's living a life that is not right according to Scripture, the Bible says God's not going to be mocked.

That witness may be bad, but God will not be mocked. Follow along with me. For whatever a man sows, throws out by seed, as it were, into the soil.

Think about it. That's a lot of seed going out. If you decide to recall those seeds, are you going to get them all? No.

You'll miss one. That he also will reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption.

But he who sows to the Spirit, capital S, the things of God, will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. Man, let me tell you, this is cool stuff. Because if you obey this right here, God will bless your life.

Man, if you're out goofing around and doing the things of the world, number one, and you call yourself a Christian, you've deceived yourself. You've tricked your mind into thinking you're OK with God when you're not. God says, no, listen.

If you're sown to the flesh and then show up on Sunday or Wednesday and say, I'm good, I'm good, and you have no intention to change your life or to have God, I should say, change your life, then you've been deceived. Deception. It's coming against all of us.

All the time. Deceptions in thoughts, deceptions in what we see, feel or hear. Deceptions bombarding us.

That's why we need the Bible. Romans 7, verse 11 says, Paul said it regarding sin, that sin is a deceiver. He says, For sin, having taken occasion by the commandment, deceived me.

Did you know that sin will deceive you? God commended Moses because Moses did not butter up to the pleasures of Egypt for a season, but forsook them and walked with God. The Bible says sin is pleasurable for a season, but it's going to come home. It's going to sprout roots.

It's going to sprout a stem. It's going to grow up. And then it's a weed that will strangle out the word of God in your life.

Paul says that sin deceived him. And we don't often think about the dangers of being a disciple of Jesus Christ regarding all manner of sin. It's a dangerous move when we begin to see some sin is bad and some sin is not so bad.

It's like you have a little cobra. My daughter was showing me pictures of snakes yesterday. I hate snakes.

And she goes, look how beautiful they are. I said, they're not beautiful. They all should just die and be dead.

If they were real, I'd kill them right now. And she goes, well, look how pretty they are. Well, snakes are funny because when they're little, she goes, oh, look.

You know how things like when they're puppies, they're cute. Even like a pit bull is cute when it's a little puppy. Look at them.

Even a Sharpay. You know those wrinkly dogs? They're cute when they're little. Everything's cute when it's a little duck, a little kitty, okay, a little puppy.

And then it grows up. A snake. Have you ever seen one? Look at the little snake.

Isn't it cute? Did you know if you had a little baby rattlesnake, it'd kill you dead? It doesn't know how to regulate its venom, so it releases everything when it gets you, and it will kill you more than an adult. Oh, but it's so cute. Look how cute the little snake is.

It'd kill you. Oh, it's just a little sin. Nobody knows.

Just a little thing. It'd kill you. It'd come after you.

The dangers of deception are very real. And behind every deception, there's a deceiver. Think of that.

Revelation 12, verse 9. Listen to this. This is an amazing verse because it gives you four names, four titles for Satan. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the devil, and Satan who, what? Deceives the whole world.

Wow. That's tremendous. 2 John, chapter 7 says, For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

That's an awesome statement, by the way. Jesus, the Christ Messiah, according to the Scripture, has come in the flesh. That means you've got to confess and believe that Jesus is the Jesus of the Bible as revealed in the word or you are a deceiver.

It says this is a deceiver and an antichrist. Yikes. 2 Corinthians 11, 13.

You guys okay? You're awful quiet. You all right? 2 Corinthians 11, 13 says, For such are false apostles. That cracks me up.

Apostles. Where do you think you're going to find an apostle? In the church. In a religious setting.

The Bible says, watch out. They'll be false apostles. Deceitful workers.

Transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Woo. Dangerous thing. Spiritual matters are exposing spiritual deception.

I wrote down just a few things. Number one, deception knows how to talk. It can talk really nice.

Deception knows how to flatter. Anybody flattering you? Get away from them. I'm serious.

That's a scary moment. Deception knows how to entice. It can look really good to my senses.

Think about that. What are you attracted to? Pastor, what? Every one of us are attracted to a flavor. Either something that you want.

It could be sexual. It could be power. It could be money.

What is it? Whatever that thing is, you better market. Somebody might say, well, I'm attracted to short, bald men. Well, then stay away from those short, bald men.

You might say, well, I'm attracted to tall blondes. Then stay away from tall blondes. You say, Jack, are you serious? I'm serious.

Be careful. Now, if you're attracted to tall blondes and you're married to one, then fantastic. But that's the only one you're allowed to be attracted to.

Did you know that? What else? Deception knows how to be religious. That's the scariest type of deception. Most dangerous.

It can seem spiritual. Deception knows how to create a false faith. It can make promises.

Deception. Trust in me. Follow me.

Watch out. Just like this government currently right now wants us literally to trust them without knowing what the bill says. They won't let us read it yet.

But trust us. We have no idea where we're going, but follow us. That's scary enough in government.

Think about things regarding God or gods. Follow us. Where are we going? We don't know.

We'll tell you when we get there, but watch out. Deception knows how to flatter. It can sound encouraging.

Watch out. 2 Corinthians 10 verse 4 says, For the weapons of our warfare are not of this earth. Not meaty.

Or I should say, they are meaty. Carnal. They're mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds.

Casting down arguments. Listen to this. And every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

That verse alone. I tell you what. That verse alone, back in my early Christian days, saved my life.

I had this on my car. I had it in my bathroom. I had it in my living room of my apartment.

That verse right there. Bring every thought under the captivity of Christ. Do you ever have weird thoughts? Four of you guys do.

You and us four. We all have bizarre thoughts. What do you do with them? You arrest them.

And bring them under the captivity of Jesus. When that picture flies up in your head. Lord, take it out now in Jesus name.

Lord God, take it out. You fight it. You say, Pastor, how many times in a day do I do that? How many times does that thing flash up in your mind? What do you do? Do you give up after the third time? Well, you know.

No. You fight, fight, fight. Listen, being a real Christian is really something.

Man, if you're here tonight. You know, Christianity is easy for me. It's easy.

There's no problem. I don't even think about it. Man, I tell you.

We need to get together. Come with us when we go to a house and someone's head's spinning around and green soup's flying out of their face. It's like, easy.

Come on. Or somebody says, I'm dying and I don't believe in God. What are you going to tell them? I tell you what, it's amazing.

The dangers of deception are real. And deception has as its goal compromise. Compromise is fine in politics and sales, but it can never be allowed in spiritual matters.

Compromise is killing Christians today. And it constantly comes against all of us. I fight it all the time, I'll be honest with you.

In the pulpit, counseling with people, in sermons, in messages, it's easy to be bold when you're studying for a message and you write it down. Oh man, you know what, and you read that or you pray, God, what

do you want me to say here? Wow, and you write that down. And then when I come up here, it's like, what? I can't say that.

Somebody might get offended. You can't do that. You can't do that.

It's a very dangerous thing. What about dealing with deception then? Stay focused, Christian, on what's true. Know the Bible.

Know your Bible. You hear that every week here. For example, what does the Bible say about my situation? What situation are you currently in? Every Christian is in a situation right now.

Here's the cool thing. I thank God for them. Why? It makes you go to the Bible.

It makes you get the answer. The Christian will be driven to the Word of God. What? The situation? Are you in one? Then ask God, Lord, what is it that you'd have me to learn from this situation? And that very thing is going to result in you knowing what to do.

1 John 2.27, one of the most comforting verses in all of the Bible. 1 John 2.27, know it. It's a great one.

But the anointing, it's a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit, which you have received from Him who abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you. But as the same anointing teaches you, that's a reference to the Holy Spirit again, concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. Every Christian, that's a great verse.

You know what's so cool about that verse? I can see somebody who comes, accepts Jesus Christ right here, and in 10 minutes they'll say something like this. Yeah, you know what? It's awesome. I just accepted Christ a moment ago, and I gotta tell you, these people have been knocking on my door for weeks, and they started talking to me about God, and it was just really odd, and then now I know the truth, and that what they were saying was wrong.

Happens in a second. You wanna know why? The moment a baby's born, that baby is not only that birth mom baby right there, she witnessed the birth of it, but there's a cord attached. The moment you're born again, the Holy Spirit attaches you to the things of God, and the brand new believer has an instant wisdom from Heaven.

I've seen it a thousand times. It's glorious, the work of God. He doesn't abort any of His kids, and He doesn't leave any of His kids off to the side of the room.

He's there, and the Bible calls that an anointing. Stay focused on what your calling is. Christian, please, if you don't know what your ministry is to the body of Christ, you've got to find that out.

Right now you're shooting blanks, or you're wandering in the wilderness, or you're driving without a steering wheel. You're sailing without a rudder. Yes, you're a Christian.

Yes, you're going to Heaven, but no one depends on your life spiritually. And you're not making a difference spiritually, and God is saying, come on. More on that in a moment.

Philippians chapter 1, verse 27 says, let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, listen disciples, so that whether I come and see you, or I'm absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, and in one mind, striving together, that's church, for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way are you

terrified by your adversaries, which is to them, watch this, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you, it is the proof of your salvation. Isn't that awesome? Wow! Man, when you stand up, and you're the only one standing, and you say, this is what the Bible says, and so that's what I'm going to say. This is it.

And everybody comes against you, know this, your stance, are you listening? Your stance, though you may not know someone personally, they've listened to you, they've heard you make that comment, they know what you believe, and what you believe is Biblical, so you don't have to defend it. The Holy Spirit will defend you if you're Biblical. That's cool.

So you stand there, and you say it. Proclaim it. He'll back you up, and guess what happens? People will either come against you, and condemn you, and contradict you, and by doing so, they are proving the fact that they don't know God.

Or if they do agree with you, then it causes those covert undercover believers to step up. Think about that. I once had a high school kid tell me years ago, Pastor Jack, I wish somebody on my high school campus would have announced that they were a Christian, because I felt like I was the only Christian on campus.

I didn't know any other believers. What if there's 20 believers in your high school class, and you guys are all covert undercover? There's a real story. I don't want to go too far off of this thing, but it's the band Kansas.

Remember the band Kansas? Is it Cary Ludgrew, or whatever his name was? Dust in the Wind? Are We Ours, Dust in the Wind? He wrote that song after he got saved. And then he wound up leaving the band after a year and a half. After he got saved, he wound up leaving the band a year and a half later.

And when it was all done, the drummer said, what are you leaving for? He goes, I can't live this lifestyle anymore. It's been killing me. I'm a Christian.

And the drummer goes, are you kidding me? I'm a Christian, too? I've been a Christian. How come you didn't tell me you were a Christian? Two guys in the same band, world famous band, Kansas. Two Christians that never shared with each other.

Isn't that funny? I thought it was funny. Tragically funny, I guess. Number two, the disciplines of danger, danger of perception.

Number two, dangers of perception. Nehemiah chapter 6, verse 5. Then Sambalot, he was a goofball, bad guy, sent his servant to me, as before, the fifth time with an open letter in his hand. And it was written, it is reported among the people.

And it goes on slandering Nehemiah. This knucklehead's walking around town. Gonna take this letter to Nehemiah.

It's for his eyes only. He said, I don't understand an open letter. Blogs.

That's the new open letters. Any form of public communication. You can say anything.

It doesn't have to be true. It was not true against Nehemiah. Sambalot made up this story, began to publish it all around the place, trying to stop the work of God.

Nehemiah. Oh, read the book of Nehemiah. It's awesome.

There's a point where all the guys love it. There's a point where Nehemiah shows up, grabs the guy by his beard, throws him out in the street, takes his furniture and throws it all over out in the street and on top of the guy and everything else. He's like, yes! Perception.

The danger of perception is this. It tries to breed intimidation. And intimidation leads to control.

And if you are under the control of somebody. It leads to falsehood. The Christian has been found.

Listen, the Christian has been found, delivered by God. But the world would try to have you have the wrong perceptions. And sequester your heart, your mind, your faith, your voice.

Nehemiah would not be silent. Nehemiah was attacked by his enemies with an open letter. That's the epitome in that day of gossip.

Huge! There's a great danger in inciting emotions. The emotions of others. J.C. Riles speaks of in his book.

There's a great danger to inciting the imagination of others. Think about that. Quote for a moment.

Things like this. Well, you know, I can't tell you everything about Suzy right now. But I'll just say you really need to pray for her.

Did you know that if that is done by someone, that that is a sin so huge, God will so judge that person. It is gigantic to say such a thing. It's draped in religiosity as you begin to put into the mind of the innocent an insinuation or a picture to cause that person to be viewed in a bad light.

God says, I'm going after that person who does that. He hates that. Read the book of Proverbs.

He says, I hate that. False witness. Wow! Be careful.

Why? Because perception is what we would call today also peer pressure. The danger of peer pressure is killing people. Throughout the ages, God's people have always been under attack.

It's always going to be. And listen, if you're doing a work for God, you're going to be attacked. But we're in good company.

I'll just name a few people who were attacked by their peers. Joseph, Daniel, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, on it goes. Matthew 5 verse 10 says, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs are the kingdom of heaven.

And blessed are you when they revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you. Here it is, falsely for my sake. Wow! It's like Jesus knew all about the web.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. It's amazing to realize there are people deployed among God's people, says the Bible, so as to cause harm and destruction.

Why? Jesus said in John chapter 10 verse 10, The thief does not come except to steal, to kill and to destroy. But I have come to give you life and that more abundantly. John 8 verse 44, You are of your father, the devil Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees and the desires of your father you want to do.

Listen to this. He was, that is Satan, a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him and when he speaks he speaks a lie from his own resources for he is a liar and the father of lies says the Bible. Wow! Avoid the dangers of perception by identifying yourself with Jesus Christ.

Number three, the dangers of approval. Mark it down. The disciplines of danger would mark this one.

The dangers of approval. Approval, I mean that by people. Jesus Christ himself never pursued the approval of people.

Have you noticed that when you read the Bible? It is awesome. Are you guys with me? We are almost done. Are you here? He never asked anybody, what do you think? Do you think I am doing okay? Was I a little harsh on that one thing to the Pharisees? He knew his calling.

You say, well, come on. He was God in flesh. Of course he did.

Well, the Bible also says he learned his obedience to the father just like you and I do. But look at the life of Peter. Look at the life of James.

Look at the life of the believers throughout history. When they knew and had confidence in the Lord, they didn't look for the approval of others. And I need to be careful about what I say here.

Let me be clear on this. We have been designed by God to be encouraged. I am not knocking that.

Church, we need to be encouraged and we need to encourage one another. It is biblical. But there is a way to be encouraged.

Pull your toes in, because you're going to get stepped on here in a second. There's no such thing as you've heard me say before, spectator Christianity. But then why is there? Because beautiful, wonderful Christians are fearful and they recoil from going out to the edge and taking it on for Jesus, okay? Why? Because somebody might criticize them.

For some of you in here tonight, maybe this matters to you. But it's only after I came to Jesus could I look back at my discombobulated past and say, I thank God for the way I was brought up. I thank God about this area of neglect in my life.

I thank God that this happened when I was young. I thank God. And only in Jesus can you look back at all of those things.

I've got to tell you something. Not much of my life that was really pleasurable and easy has translated into spiritual character. Are you listening? It's those things that I thought would kill me when I was before I became a Christian.

It's those things that build spiritual character. When people mocked and made fun of me and had me stand up in front of class on the desk and read because I stuttered. The whole class busted up laughing.

Now I don't care who laughs. I don't care who's listening. I've already gone through all that stuff.

It's as though I'm a dead man. You can't kill a dead man. He's already dead.

Well, I don't like what you said. I love you as long as I'm getting my orders from God. That's the way it's got to be.

And here's the cool thing about it. Whatever hardship you've had in your life, were you abused? Were you beaten? Were you neglected? Were you ridiculed? Only in Jesus can those things become incredible badges of honor. I'm getting goosebumps talking about it.

I wouldn't change a thing. Will Jack, your mother, try to abort you on December 15th? Yes, I know that. And I survived to January 15th.

I wanted to hear right then. I wanted to hear the theme to Rocky. I don't sit around and cry about that.

I thank God. Oh my goodness, Lord. Wow, your Bible says that Paul and Jeremiah, they were ordained from their mother's womb.

Me too? Well, my dad didn't talk to me much when I was little. Well, guess what? You've got a Heavenly Father now that won't be quiet. He's talking to you now.

When we operate in fear, we deny the Lord Jesus Christ, His Word, and His ability to provide for us. Why are we fearful? The danger of this will destroy us. We have His approval, church.

Andrew Bonnard, great Puritan preacher, was rejected from his pastorate position. Applied and rejected. Applied, rejected.

Applied, rejected. And he wrote to his father and he said, after all my learning, after all my study up there, all my disciplines, after all my life lived to be ordained minister of Jesus Christ, I've been rejected! And his father wrote him back this short line. Rejected on earth, but approved in heaven.

Isn't that a great statement? I love that. Proverbs 29, 25 says, The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe. Isn't that a great word? Proverbs 28, 1 says, The wicked flee when no one's pursuing them.

I love that. They're always, they're living in wickedness. They're always like, oh what? Somebody after me? What, are you guilty about something? Yes! But then the verse goes on to say, Proverbs 28, 1, But the righteous are as bold as a lion.

It's wonderful. Very quickly. 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 2 Paul says, He sent Timothy our brother and minister of God and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ to establish you and strengthen you concerning your faith.

That, my friend, is an awesome thing regarding this issue of approval. We are to encourage one another in the Lord. There's a way to be encouraged.

And there's a way, when you have your understanding that God approves of you, He loves you. Listen, He died for your sins, not your personality. It's very important.

I wouldn't abuse somebody else. Tough. God made you for a glorious reason.

I wish I was taller. I wish I was... Listen, He died for your sins and mine. He loves your personality.

To encourage one another, we are to encourage each other in the Lord. Now here, I don't want to be... I don't want to upset you on this one. It doesn't necessarily mean that you... Oh, that's a nice shirt.

That's a nice dress. Oh, you look so nice today. Those are niceties.

They may or may not be true. But when it comes to encouraging one another in the Lord, no one can take that away. Do you understand what I'm saying? This is important.

Is there anybody in this church you don't know? What? Well, then you've got a lot of work to do because you need to encourage those that are around you. Encourage them. Dealing with the fear of man.

Listen to this. A.W. Tozer. Look at this quote.

In fact, I think we have it on the screen tonight. One of the deepest testing of a true child of God is for him to stick to his divinely appointed duty when all the while there is a barrage of letters about him. Is that cool? Wow.

I like that. Are you advancing in the cause of Christ? Then you're going to get attacked. Cheer up.

It's okay. Listen to this. Another quote.

Put it on the screen, you guys. Danger feared is folly. Danger faced is victory.

And you think about that. Okay, men, we're going to go into battle. Let's go.

Can you imagine? I can't go. What do you mean you can't go? You've got bullets in your gun. You've got bombs.

I'll hand grenades. Let's go. You've been trained.

Let's go. I can't go. Oh, no, but listen.

Danger faced is victory. Number four, and I've got to hurry on this one. The dangers of possessions.

Now, it's great. We live in a culture where the dollar is completely collapsing and our economy is crashing and people's possessions are evaporating. So God's doing this in everybody's life right now.

But you can still long for possessions. Dangers of possessions. Materialism is always a difficult thing to manage.

And not many people can be rich in this world. Very few, sad to say, Christians can handle money. Isn't that a sad thing? Look, you know me.

I am not a blab it and grab it, word faith preacher kind of guy. You know, God wants you rich and I don't believe in that stuff. But let me tell you something.

I bet you, if Christians decided to really be a disciplined believer in this life, I'm wondering if they, and obey the word of God. Think about it. For example, tithing.

I'm not going to tithe. Well, the Bible says in Malachi, if you don't tithe, God will curse you with a curse. What's the curse? What's the curse? Will I get a wart on my forehead? No, you'll never be able to financially get out of the hole.

It'll pull you down. The more money you make, the more you'll go down. Until you start giving to God and then he picks you up.

It's a miracle. I don't know how it works. He just does it.

So check this out. God wants to bless. I think if Christians put God first, I'm wondering if a lot more Christians wouldn't be more blessed in this world to do the work of God and to help the work of God expand.

But I don't think you can do that because Christians want to just sit on it. It's mine. Don't touch it.

Give it up, will you? Possessions. I'm going to show you what happened today. This is a true story.

I'm going to give you... Put the first face on the screen and then listen to what I have to say. This has really happened today. Now hang on.

It's not what you think. That's my dog today. Watch this.

I'm going to read a verse. Keep looking at the screen. Do not love the world or the things in the world.

Look at... what's at the bottom of her feet. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father, but it is of the world.

And the world's passing away in the lust of it. But he who does the will of God abides forever. Okay? Listen to this.

That's a real hard bone and I gave it to her today. This morning. And she ran over with it, turned around, set it down and looked right at me.

Now this is five pounds of white hot canine terror. Look at the next picture. Notice the legs, the stance.

She, if I walked forward today, she went She was completely normal until she got the biggest bone on the block. Next picture. Look, I tried to get closer.

She moves over by the couch. She won't let me near her. Completely whacked out.

Notice the right leg. Even now more. Next photo.

Look at the teeth down at the bottom of the bone all day long. This is what she did all day. Why? Because she could not handle her possessions.

The danger of possessions causes you to act weird. It begins to be an idol in your life. It will control you.

It will. The very hand that feeds her. She was turning on the very one who blesses you with stuff.

You wind up turning on him. The dangers in this day and age as a Christian. Can we even handle stuff? Or do we think, oh, it's mine.

It's mine. It's God's. Be blessed that he's given you the opportunity to manage it for his glory.

It's my house. It's my thing. It's his.

He can remind you of that in a second. You grab your God says, just checking, just making sure you remember. It's all mine, says God.

Very, very, very serious stuff in the church suffers possessions church. Very, very much listen, and we'll wrap this up in Acts chapter two, verse 41. Last portion of scripture.

We'll share tonight. Then those who gladly received his word were baptized. They got saved.

Then they got baptized. And about that day, 3,000 souls were added to them. That's a fast-growing church and they continued steadfast in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and the breaking of bread and in prayers.

Then fear came upon every soul. That's all, by the way, they weren't walking around biting their nails. They were in absolute awe of God and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Now all who believe were together and they had all things common and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all as everyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house. They ate their food with gladness and simplicity.

Isn't that interesting? Gladness and simplicity is what everybody wants. And they think by possessing their possessions and having their possessions dictate their identity that they're going to have peace and simplicity. And the exact opposite is true.

You and I live in an age and I don't need to tell you, every October, November, December before the Christmas sale we are bombarded with how incredibly stupid we are for not owning this thing and how empty our lives are if we don't have an Audi or whatever the car is. And if we don't get these pants for Christmas, we are losers. And the whole system of the world breeds into us a discontented heart, an unthankful soul.

The disciplines of danger are more than we can talk about tonight. Christian, please, get your Bible and read it and watch what happens. It is a light and a lamp to our feet and to the path in which we go.

Oh my, we need more than ever the foundation of God's word. Will we have a constitution next week? Will we have a government that our founding fathers gave us evaporate before our eyes? I don't know. According to Bible prophecy, it seems to me America's got to be destroyed.

Is this the step? I don't know. But this I know. The throne of God will never be destroyed.

This word will never be destroyed. I am going to make sure that I'm founded on this. Though the mountains and the hills be thrown into the sea and the grounds shake, we'll trust in the Lord because this word will never fail.

Father, we pray right now tonight. We ask you, Lord, in Jesus' name that even now as we worship you in our giving and in our song, Father, we ask of you that if there's someone in this room tonight, in this sanctuary tonight that is not enjoying that personal relationship with Jesus Christ that that would change right now. Lord, let us worship you now in spirit and in truth.

And we pray, Lord God, that in a moment there would be that person tonight that is saying I need to rededicate my life to Jesus. I need to give my heart to Christ and be saved. Let's worship him now and in a moment I'll give you a chance to accept Christ.

Let's worship him in our giving and in our song.

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