

Friends of the Bridegroom (Pt. 1)

by Michael Koulianos

Michael Koulianos explores the profound nature of being a friend of the bridegroom, emphasizing the connection between friendship, trust, and obedience to God.

Duration: 52:35

Scripture: Genesis 5:24, Genesis 6:9, Exodus 33:11, Matthew 9:15, John 3:29, John 15:15, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8, James 2:23

Topics: "Bridegroom", "Friendship with God", "Hearing God's Voice"

Description

Michael Koulianos teaches on the concept of being a 'Friend of the Bridegroom,' emphasizing the importance of hearing God's voice and developing a deep friendship with Jesus. He highlights that while salvation is a free gift, true friendship with God requires trust and intimacy, which can be costly. Koulianos warns against the dangers of merely participating in religious activities without genuine connection to God, and he encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship characterized by obedience and humility. He draws parallels between biblical figures like Moses and Abraham, who were known as friends of God, and stresses the significance of living under God's authority and guidance.

Transcript

Take your Bibles to John chapter three. I'm gonna change the dial here and begin teaching on, I'm gonna actually teach this for a few weeks. And it's in line actually with hearing the voice of the shepherd, which was the last, kind of our last journey together.

And then I'm going to, in the fall, begin teaching into the incarnation of Jesus. And you're gonna leave with your faces fried. You'll probably have to hand out aloe vera because God is gonna fry you when we hold the wonder of a God who became man and is still man and fully God at the same time.

This is awesome and this is our king, say amen. But I wanna get into this next teaching here that is called A Friend of the Bridegroom, or Friends, I should say, of the Bridegroom. So in John chapter three, verse 29, the scripture says, this is John speaking, he who has the bride is the bridegroom.

But the friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is fulfilled. Amen is right.

Now, I want you to underline two words there, friend and voice. And you're gonna see that these two words are amazingly related and connected when it comes to friendship with God. Matthew 9, 15, turn

there.

You're gonna get a lot of Bible today, is that okay? Yeah. You don't mind if we teach the word in this house, do ya? All right. Matthew 9, 15, and Jesus said to them, amen, can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them.

But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. In Matthew 9, the Pharisees, or the religious Jews, are challenging the Lord, saying, how come your disciples do not fast? And in other words, why don't they do more spiritual, why aren't they accomplishing more spiritual discipline? And this is when Jesus says, look, I'm with them. And then in another passage, he talks to them along the same lines and says, you cannot put new wine into an old wine skin.

And this is part of the issue with much of our preaching is that we're telling the world to live like Jesus before they receive Jesus. We're expecting them to live according to the scriptures prior to the word with a capital W possessing them. And that's just behavior modification.

Now, morals are proper, morals are godly, but Jesus does much more in us and for us, and he's accomplished much more than to simply introduce us to a new moral code, though his word is non-negotiable. All right? So obedience should become more natural for the believer. Disobedience is natural for the unbeliever.

And so here the Lord is addressing. Now, I've heard some people say, the reason I don't fast, this is interesting, the reason I do not fast is because the bridegroom is with me, he promised to always be with me. I'm like, dude, you can't claim that one.

What Jesus is pointing to here is the fact that one day he will ascend and be enthroned and be seated. We call this the eternal session of the Lord, that he will be seated at the right hand of the Father, and during that time, his disciples must fast. So you can't claim that one.

It doesn't work. You'd be shocked at the people I've heard actually hold onto that just because they're hungry all the time. Men will do anything to justify eating a piece of meatloaf.

John 2, 23 through 25. Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover during the feast, many believed in his name, and they saw the signs which he did. Now this one, I'm gonna hold onto for a little while, and we're gonna camp here.

The signs which he did, but Jesus did not commit himself to them because he knew all men and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for he knew what was in man. Now, look back down at those verses, three verses, 23, 24, and 25. Did Jesus work signs and wonders among them? Yes or no, come on, talk to me.

This is not a funeral. Or a soaking session. All right, did Jesus work signs and wonders among them? Yes.

All right. Does that necessarily mean in the heart of Jesus that he trusts them? No. What this tells me is that signs and wonders seem to be, according to the Scriptures, a few miles out from the realm of friendship and intimacy.

Am I saying we don't want them? No, of course not, we're gonna see them this morning. But don't think for a second that because God works among us that he trusts you. Did you hear my verbiage? Don't think for

a moment that because he works among us corporately that he trusts me, the individual, with intimacy.

That is one of the great traps of a move of God. So, I've been in environments, had the joy of serving great moves of God, and one of the things I noticed is that much of the church, I would say 90% of the people that I spend time with here, especially ministry school environments, can quote their instructors and can move with the wind corporately. Now hear my language, but the wind never gets on the inside of them to change them.

So, a language is embraced, a way of doing things is embraced, a way of worshiping is embraced. And all of this is caught. Now Lou owns that, but there's a lot of people who do it who don't.

I've been in this a long time. So what happens is you embrace the activity the external, but it's not a reality because the internal has not received what God is doing in the room. And that's the numbness, we call it inoculation.

When you can come into an environment like this and never get to the place where you go, I wonder how the person who's talking to me right now actually received what they're saying. We never take the time to get out of the shallow end and plunge into the depths and go, I love what they're saying, but I'm gonna have the guts to ask how they received from the Lord what He has clearly given them. And then once they tell me, as long as it's biblical, I'm doing it.

So oftentimes in environments like this, we can quote our leaders, but not the Bible. Tragedy, it's a tragedy. So Jesus is looking for friends.

Now I wanna go back to this scripture, let's have another look. But Jesus did not commit himself to them because he knew all men. And had no need that anyone should testify of men.

In other words, he didn't need Peter to go, let me tell you about human beings. And the reason he didn't need that is because he created them. For he knew, listen, what was in man.

And so this morning, I wanna talk about the beauty of being a friend of the bridegroom. Now you should be best friends with whomever you marry. And so I love the language here, friends of the bridegroom.

Because our bridegroom is unequivocally looking for friendship. Now, how many of you believe salvation is a free gift? This is not a trick question. Oh God.

Oh God. How long shall I suffer with you? As Johan used to tell our team in his Swiss accent. How long shall I suffer? How long shall I suffer? Can I ask that again? How many of you believe salvation is a free gift? All right, if you don't, let me read this to you.

For the wages of sin is death. This is Romans 6, 23, let's put that up. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God, the gift of God, notice it's not a wage, say thank you Lord.

The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Write that down, Romans 6, 23. Welcome to Bible school.

Ephesians 2, 8. Turn there, Ephesians 2, 8. For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Is there anyone in the house this morning who is grateful they do not have the responsibility of their own salvation? Thank you Jesus.

Thank you Lord. We wouldn't know where to start. We would start with every symptom.

Hopefully, maybe, actually we'd probably start by blaming other people. It's what Adam and Eve did, so it's pretty likely we'd do the same. But aren't you glad it's a free gift? No, while salvation is a free gift, friendship with Jesus is costly.

Friendship is costly. If you're gonna be trusted as a friend of the Lord, what do I even mean by that? Well, go to John 15, verse 15. If you're there, say golf.

Good. You felt the atmosphere shift, huh? No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends.

For all things that I heard from my father, I have made known to you. Again, his voice is connected to friendship, and friendship is connected to being entrusted with his voice. So what he's saying here, now I will share with you what I have learned and know from my father.

Even in human interaction, you cannot walk closely with people if they determine in their hearts to hold back what is vital regarding communication. In fact, trust is expressed when we share what is dear to our hearts with another person. And I'm gonna get into this in the next few weeks, but do you remember the old, we need to hear preaching like this again, because I'm just not sure we realize how holy and how clear the Lord's sight is and how he hears everything we say.

I think we've lost that. It's as though the Lord is only able to see during church. The Lord is not blind.

He's not deaf. In fact, the scripture says, has he who formed the eye, can he not see you? Has he who planted the ear, same verse, can he not hear you? It is healthy to feel like you are living under the all-seeing eye of God Almighty, because we are. You say, they're talking words.

No, I'm speaking about friendship. I just told you that salvation is a free gift, but friendship is not. Any friendship depends on trust.

Listen to me. Trust is the front door in, breaking trust is the way out. Now, typically, with an unrepentant heart, when we break trust with brothers and sisters or leaders, we blame them.

We blame leadership style. It's the trick of the garden. Rather than Adam going, I sinned, he said, she told me to do it.

And rather than Eve saying, I'm jacked up, I misused my influence that you gave me, Lord, to turn my husband's authority in the right direction, I misused that influence and turned him towards the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Instead, she said, the serpent did it. Do you know the devil can't make you do anything? If you're born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, he cannot make you do something, but you can say yes to it.

And so the natural, the MO of the carnal nature is to go, they did it, they did it. I did this because. But that's not biblical repentance.

Biblical repentance is, I screwed up, I'm sorry. I'm gonna go as low as I know how to go. And if you don't handle it properly, that's on you.

But I'm going low. If you kick me when I'm down, God will exalt me. I'm going low.

That's Christian maturity. So friendship and God's voice are two parallel tracks. They're forever married.

And so, do you remember the story of Moses, Miriam, and Aaron? Now, I'm gonna get into this next week. Basically, what happened is, I don't wanna get into the details this morning, but basically, what happened is, is that Aaron and Miriam went too far. They just went too far.

And next week, I'll teach in detail as to where that line was. Are you hearing me? Now, God stuck up for Moses. And part, and this is the challenge that I relate to you with, is that I've been, I spent most of my life in a seat, not up here.

And when you, if you spend hours on social media every day, you're gonna be filled with tragedy. How pastors mishandled authority, how pastors did this and did that, they slept around, all this stuff. And you know what? It is running too rampant.

I know people who struggle to even listen to worship music because they know the person singing it, is living like a demon. I share the same struggle. And you don't even have to be discerning.

You just look at a picture and go, I'm not listening to you. Too much for you this morning? You're like, I didn't get to eat yet. All right, it's good you didn't eat.

It might come up by the end of the service. But I understand the challenge. Nonetheless, nonetheless, nonetheless, God stands behind God-given authority.

God himself stands behind it and protects it. And so he speaks up to Miriam and Aaron. And what they said prior to God speaking up was, Moses, you're not the only prophet in Israel.

Which is one of the pitfalls of an empowering, activating ministry culture that we need to do. But I'm just saying there's a ditch on that side of the road. And here's the ditch.

I can do what you do. Therefore, I don't need to hear what you have to say. And God steps in and I want you to hear how God deals with Aaron and Miriam.

He says, I love this. Hey, reality check. You're our prophet.

All right. But let me tell you how I talk to you. With you, I speak in riddles, visions, what the scripture calls similitudes, dreams.

But not so with your brother. With your brother, I speak face to face. He said, God would never do that.

That would create competition in a family. There were all the body of Christ. God would just never bring anyone closer to him than someone else.

What Bible are you reading? And how does God, listen, what grounds does he use to prove the difference in proximity? I feel the Lord so strong right now. Wow, you're lucky I'm preaching. This could get really sloppy.

Get me a beanbag to soak, no. All right. What grounds does God use to teach them about who he is closer to? The answer is this, how he speaks to them.

Voice and the way in which he talks. And that's where Jesus points to here in John 15. I no longer call you servants, I call you friends.

This is why I'm talking to you now about secrets that I couldn't talk to you about before. Say voice. Voice.

And friendship. Thank you, Lord. Exodus, while we're talking about Moses, can I have 10 extra minutes this morning? Exodus 33, verse 11.

You know, I grew up on these kind of teachings. When I read Spurgeon or I read some of the great writers of the church who I love to read, this is the stuff they taught. And the problem is today, because of culture, because of culture and how we are wired against the holy calling of submission, not realizing there is glory and honor in it and safety in the shadow.

We are not a generation who enjoys the shadow. We are a generation who has no business preaching, so we start, not everybody, but we are, some of those people have no business preaching. So since they don't have a platform, they start it on social media, and we're finally a generation that can actually create our own platform.

Therefore, someone telling us what to do goes against the grain. But Christian living is all about lowliness. I would rather be told what to do in the wrong way than never be told what to do.

My father-in-law sent a text, a loving, correcting text to me last Sunday, to Jess, while I'm sitting in the seat. And I love every minute of it. How many of you had a grandparent pass away? Or a parent, have you ever heard this term? Man, they spanked me good, but I would do anything to get spanked by them again.

How I miss them. My grandmother could throw a slipper that turned corners. Didn't negotiate, and then if I went next door, my grandmother lived here, my aunt lived, her sister lived there, my aunt lived behind her, her brother lived on the corner of the block.

And I remember getting spanked and running to my uncle, his name was Andrew, and he said, why are you crying? We lived in this little Greek town I'm from. And I'm, why are you crying? I said, yeah, you spanked me. Why'd she spank you? Because I talked back to her.

You didn't spank me. You did what? And then he gave it to me. My cheek hurt, both sets of cheeks hurt at that point.

And we don't even realize that it's impossible to submit to God unless we're trained to submit to people. That's the Bible. But these types of teachings, listen, protect your soul.

They protect your future. They protect your experience at the throne. You hear, you get what I'm saying? That a judgment is coming where we will give an account and such teachings hold us.

And the Bible says God exalts the humble. He gives grace to the humble and resists to the proud. One thing I guarantee you, if God resists you, you're not gonna win.

It is a force you do not want. He is a force you do not want resisting you. You can't win.

Even if you think you're right, you will not win. It's impossible. And so many people live their life swimming upstream because the flow of God is resisting them.

Because, listen carefully, that nature contradicts the character of the lamb. The lamb never swims upstream. The lamb has no desire to accomplish his own will and resist and push against the will of his father.

And people who achieve more, people who are overachievers, which is the work of the Spirit, if God gets a hold of your life, he'll take you so beyond your natural gift set. He'll do so much more to you than what makes sense. And so much of that is just determining the river God has called you to and yielding.

Going low enough to be lifeless. How many of you like those lazy rivers? You get your Virgin Pina Colada, hopefully, and you're floating down that thing. You can go around and around and around.

You just cover so much ground. And you don't have to do anything. Just, whoop, whoop, whoop.

Right? Your kids drive you nuts, they're snorkeling under you, they're going under, they're arguing. All that stuff. And you're just relaxing.

You're not even working. You're not striving. You're in the will of God, taken over by the current of God.

You Jesus School students have heard this many times. You cannot generate the move of God. You yield to the move of God.

You surrender to the move of God. You cannot generate a river, but you can join it. You can get in.

I love what Dave said last week. Papa VC, he said, let me tell you about God's plan for you. God's plan for you is in Christ Jesus.

We've been grafted into the plan the Father has for His Son. But this generation thinks God exists to make my dream come true. No, God has a dream.

And God's dream is to exalt His worthy Son. And God's dream for you is to graft you into that dream. And then once you join that dream, it blows you away.

No eye has seen, no mind conceived, no ear heard what God has in store for those who love Him. And for those who are called according to His purpose, the Scripture says. But this is the antithesis of what this generation receives.

This generation is the generation that says, you can't tell me what to do. Well, as a leader in those cases, a wise leader goes, fine, teach them, Lord. Then that's hard.

That's hard. So, the Bible teaches us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. You wanna do that.

Do you know why you wanna do that? Because He loves you. Say, Jesus loves me. This I don't know.

Jesus loves me. Jesus loves you enough, listen, to not leave you to you. What do I mean by that? If you don't humble you, He'll humble you.

Why? He doesn't wanna leave you to you. He has a job to do in you, to mold you into the image of His Son. And if you don't humble you, life will and God will.

This all right? I'm trying. Exodus 33, 11. Mark, verse 11, I wanna tell you a quick story.

I was on Daystar, it's a Christian network, years ago. And at the time, Marcus Lamb was, he hadn't gone to heaven yet. And he was interviewing me, and Marcus, in fact, not probably, he loved golf more than me.

And, which is hard to do. But I think he picked it up in his 50s, and actually turned into a pretty good player. And I enjoyed playing with him.

And in those days, gosh, I can't believe I'm 44 right now. But back then, I was in my early 30s. And I would always hear, there were like five guys who were supposed to be really good preachers.

And they're like, oh, this guy's good. And I was like, okay. So I would just dink one of them off at a time, very lovingly, but in my heart, I wanted to crush them.

And so one of them was like, do you know who's gonna beat you? It's me, John Bevere. And I was like, and that's usually all it takes. And then a former athlete is like, they need fuel.

If they don't have the fuel, they're just not gonna burn. But they actually look for somebody to try them. They need it.

If you ever followed Michael Jordan's career, you saw that like he looked for stuff that didn't even exist. Like somebody could say hi to him. He goes, did you say something about my mom? Did you? Like, no, I was saying hi.

You said something about my dad too? I'm gonna kill you tonight. That's the way he thought. So Pastor John and I went out to play and it went well.

So, and I love him to death, but it went well. And I go on Daystar and Marcus Lamb brings it up. And he's like, Michael is the greatest golfer I've ever played with who's not on the PGA Tour.

And I said, wow. Oh, Marcus, you shouldn't say that. It's live.

I'm like, oh really? Let's say it again. What'd you say? This monitor's not working. Could you say that again? So I actually said that because let's locker room talk for guys.

They get after each other. They mess with each other. They mock each other.

They challenge each other. And so I was like, oh, say that again, Marcus. And then I said, Marcus, do you think I'm better than John? And he goes, for sure.

And I said, Marcus, could you look into the camera? Now it's like my show. I'm like, Marcus, do me a favor. Could you look into the camera and say that publicly? And he goes, yeah, sure.

Well, my spiritual mom, Joy Dawson, was watching all the way from LA. Well, it was just a joke. It was guys being guys.

Seriously. My phone rings. I said, she goes, I just watched you on Daystar, sweetie.

And I did preach the gospel and people got healed. In fact, guy in the control room got radically healed, healings broke out all over. People were getting saved.

The prayer requests were coming in. It was a glorious time. God was working wonders corporately, but Joy had a better goal, friendship with God for me.

My phone rang. She goes, I watched you on Daystar. I just finished.

I said, wasn't that powerful? Did you see how God moved all the signs and wonders? She goes, yeah, thank Jesus for that. But, she said, how old are you? I said, 33. She goes, what is wrong with you? I said, what do you mean? Did you see the guy get healed in the control room? Ran out telling everyone? They actually did like a little testimony, like a film little deal on the guy.

A very short video testimony. She goes, yeah, yeah, yeah. But let's talk about you.

She goes, explain to me why you, a 33 year old little rookie, took two of the 18 minutes they gave you to talk about a stupid game rather than you going after souls. And I said, Joy, you're a woman and you don't understand how guys are. She said, I could give a rip if I'm a man or a woman.

And, in my opinion, you dishonored a father as a 33 year old rookie, a man who's been doing this as long as you've been alive. I said, Joy, it's just what guys do. She goes, not under the anointing they don't.

She said, what was the root of what you did? And I said, fun. She goes, eh. She was like 80, she died at 94, 33, 11, she was 83.

So, she goes, wrong. I said, I wanted to challenge him. She goes, deeper.

I said, I'd like to win, I'm competitive. She goes, why? She goes, it's called pride, son. I thought, whoa.

She said, what did I teach you about the fear of the Lord? And I told her, she goes, God, she's like, have we been talking this long and you still don't get the basics? She said, what is the fear of the Lord the beginning of? I said, wisdom. She said, then what's lacking when you do something that's unwise? I said, the fear of the Lord. She goes, congratulations, darling boy, you just ministered without the fear of the Lord.

And I thought, oh my God, I'm going to hell. There was no way out of it. It was so beautifully abrasive that you really can't do that anymore because if you say something truthful, people will, about them, in their life, you're discipling someone, everybody wants to be discipled until somebody says, don't do that.

There's a big difference between a pastor and a cheerleader or a father, a mother who just goes, like a seal at SeaWorld, throw me another sardine, good job. Or a penguin. That's not parenting in the spirit.

That's not leading. She said, so what did I teach you about repentance? I said, well, she goes, is there a difference between forgiveness and repentance? I go, yeah. She said, what did I teach you about restitution? I said, well, restitution means it's part of my repentance process and I have to go back and actually fix what I screwed up.

She goes, that's exactly what you're going to do. You write Marcus a letter right now and tell him you want to go back on Daystar and apologize to the world for being a bonehead. And I'm like, dude, I'm not going back on that set.

I don't even live in Dallas. She goes, you are. If you're going to be good with God and me.

Oh, I thank God for such women. I wouldn't be here without that kind of stuff. So I reached out to Marcus.

I'll never forget. Hey Marcus, have you heard of Joy Dawson? He goes, yep. I said, yeah, she just spanked me real good.

And I don't quite understand it all. I just know God is in it. She showed me the word.

It doesn't feel real good, but I need it. Can I come back on your show? He goes, to do what? I said, to apologize to Pastor John. He goes, no, that'd be the worst show ever.

I'm not, we don't do shows like that. He's like, you didn't have some moral failure. I'm like, I know, but Joy's telling me I need to do this.

And he goes, no, not happening. So I called Joy and I thought I was like off the hook. She's like, Marcus says no.

And it's his network. So I said, no. And amazing how that worked out.

Thank you, Jesus. And she goes, oh, okay, well, I'll never forget this. She goes, we need to honor Marcus's spiritual authority.

If he says no, it's no. You did your job, but here's what you're gonna do. You're gonna write John a letter.

And you're gonna be so detailed with it. And so I'm writing this letter and Pastor John is as competitive as me. He played college tennis at Purdue.

He's a great athlete. He's fiery. So in my head, I'm like, he would do the same thing.

But that wasn't my, that wasn't my issue. It was a wisdom issue. It was a lack of the fear of the Lord issue.

So I write him this letter, I'll never forget it, thinking that when I hit the send button, he's gonna go, this kid has lost his mind. This is an extremist. Like, has he been in a cave fasting? What's wrong with him? I'll never forget his response.

His response was, Michael, I'm so proud of you. And I know what you meant. And I also know what joy is trying to do in you.

I know what God is calling her to do in you. God has raised up that woman to protect you from the great P word, pride. He said, now I know your heart and don't think anything of it.

I completely received the letter. God is working in your life. That is Christian discipleship.

That. We've gotta get there again if we want to carry the glory of God. Because carrying the glory of God requires humility.

And humility is worked out in us through the process of the Lord. Let me give you two more passages and then I'll pray and we'll receive communion. Exodus 33, 11, you should already have that marked.

So the Lord spoke to Moses. So the Lord spoke to Moses. So the Lord spoke, voice, to Moses.

Face to face, that's the how, that's clarity. That means the veil got thinner and thinner. As a man speaketh to his friend.

Friendship and voice, again, connected. So the Lord spoke to Moses. As a man speaketh to his friend.

James 2, 23, are you enjoying this? This will help you. James 2, 23, and the scripture was fulfilled, which says, Abraham believed God. In other words, he heard the voice of the Lord and acted upon it obediently.

And it was accounted to him for righteousness. And what was he called? The friend of God. Say friendship.

Say Jesus. Make me your friend. Do whatever you need to do to make me your friend.

Before I give you another one, I know I lied, but this next one's so good. If you become a friend now, you'll be his friend forever. In glory.

And everyone will know. Everyone will know. When you get up there, you build a friendship here.

The saints, the elders, Jesus himself, Father and the Spirit, all will know forever. Listen to me, listen to me. Help me there, Ludie.

Forever and ever and ever, all in glory will know they are friends. You want that? I said, you want that? You want that? You don't think you want it. You want it, I promise you, you want it.

If you don't want it, you need to want it. It's so important. It's so holy.

It's so beautiful to think that in the age to come, you will be considered a friend of the one who sits on the throne. This life is the training ground to become friends now so that he can trust you in the age to come. Genesis 5, 24, and Enoch walked with God.

Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him, took him early. That word took, as many theologians would say, is the same Hebrew word that you would pray in a marriage or say in a marriage. I take you to be my lawful husband or lawful wedded wife.

God married Enoch early. He goes, you're walking with me so closely now. I'm gonna do in you what the rest of the world will have to wait thousands of years for.

Come on up. Lastly, Genesis 6, 9. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations.

Noah walked with God. Before we receive communion, don't open it yet. Just hold it there in your hand.

Do you receive this this morning? Yes. Could we just stop passing it out right now? Just everyone look at me. Just for a moment.

Now, everyone just lock eyes with me. Listen to what I'm about to tell you and take it to the grave with you. Criticizing what you have no godly authority in or over will destroy your destiny.

It will destroy your destiny because of God's opinion of it. Now listen carefully. And I'm not uncovering Jess in any way.

I'm just letting you into her life. A few years back, Jess, I remember, I don't even know who she was talking about, but we were laying in bed and she was talking about something or someone. And I said, you know, babe, and I'm sure I've done the same.

I said, babe, I don't wanna hear that. And on her mom's side of the family, they speak in third person often. So Jess, you'll say to me, I'm just speaking to my husband.

And I'll go, isn't that me? Well, I'll be like, here's your husband. So I was like, that's me, right? Yeah, I'm just speaking to you. She goes, can't I just vent to my husband? I said, not about that.

Not about that. Because sin is sin if you say it to your husband, your wife or your child, it's sin. And you say, that sounds really intense.

That sounds holy. So God doesn't put the blindfold on when you're at home. God doesn't go deaf when you're at home.

And I said, I'll never forget saying this to her. And the poor thing, she's been married to a pretty and, she would give me up for days at a time to seek the Lord. There are no wives like this woman.

She'd say, go away, seek the Lord. Probably because she's like, she needed a break. She'd be like, drive out of town, go get a hotel.

But really in the early days, she took care of the kids. She'd be like, go seek the Lord, days at a time, days at a time. God's given me an amazingly spiritual, holy, wonderful wife.

But we're human beings. And we've learned this. And that's why I'm bringing you in this deeply as a people because this kind of thing will destroy a church and quench the fire of the Spirit in a move of God.

And I'd rather die than see that happen. And so I remember laying there going, gossip is gossip, whether it's to me or to somebody you don't know. I don't want to hear it.

Has he who formed the eye, can he not see you? If we can become a people who reject the seed of the scoffer, that's not us, and refuse to sit with them, we will be planted by the river and bear fruit in season and out of season. If you don't think, listen carefully, that the devil can use somebody who's quiet and smiles and cries, you need to go back through the Bible. The devil can use someone who weeps or who seems shy.

And if you don't think the devil has the ability or the know-how to divide a people, to divide your marriage, to divide your family, the devil destroyed the friendship between Adam and God. You don't think he can mess with your relationships? And how did he do it? How did he do it? I'll paraphrase, Eve. Did God really say that? You know what God's really after? Keeping you down.

Doesn't want you to flourish. God doesn't want you to soar. God knows if you'll eat this, you'll become like him.

And if you become like him, God'll have a problem. He's afraid of you. And how often times do we hear that in these contexts? Oh, I love our pastors, I love our leaders, but you know, they're just holding, there's more, you're anointed, they just don't see it.

Go somewhere where your gift is honored. They don't recognize, they're blind, they don't recognize the anointing on you. That's called Satan.

That's called Satan. Satan will always ask you to go get what you've already been given. Did Moses not say that to Korah's clan? You've been given the Lord, he's your inheritance.

Now you want the priesthood too? Well, does Paul not write, you have all things are yours. All things are yours in Christ Jesus. Let's lose the grasping game.

All is yours.

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