

Others Can, You Can't

by Michael L. Brown

As believers, we must recognize that Jesus is the Lord of our lives and respond to His sovereignty by living according to His standards, not our own moral standards.

Duration: 1:30:41

Scripture: Proverbs 3:11-12, Matthew 6:33, John 21:15-17

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Temptation Resistance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of being tempted by unclean and sinful content on television or other media platforms. He emphasizes the importance of guarding one's heart and mind against such temptations, as they can lead to sin and spiritual downfall. The speaker encourages believers to prioritize their spiritual growth and relationship with God over worldly distractions, such as excessive television watching, video games, or idle conversations. He emphasizes that it is God's will for believers to spend their time in prayer, reading the Bible, and sharing the gospel with others, rather than wasting time on unproductive activities.

Transcript

This week at the youth conference, Lord, for the thousands of lives touched, Lord, for the hundreds that were converted, for the hundreds of backsliders that came back, for the vision that was raised, for the tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of lives that are going to be touched in the days and weeks and years to come through these lives. And Lord, thank you, Father, for your grace this morning in our lives. Thank you, God, for touching my throat already.

I appreciate it so much, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. I thank you, Lord, for the faith of your people, our dependence in you.

Now give us strength and give us your word. Give us your heart. Father, I'm asking you today to really be merciful to us because we've never been this way before.

We've never had anyone to guide us, Lord, and to show us the way. So I pray, living God, that the eyes of our understanding would be opened. And I pray, Father, that we would be doers of your word and not hearers only.

Change us. Change us. In Jesus' name, amen.

I want you to, you can be seated. Turn with me to the last chapter of John's Gospel, John 21. John 21.

Sometimes when I preach, I preach with tremendous animation and intensity. Sometimes the burden comes a little differently, and then we may be a little bit more deliberate and quiet, but the scalpel sometimes goes a little deeper. Plus today, I believe it's wisdom that I don't run around here jumping and shouting, and if the Spirit moves on me to do it, then it's His responsibility to make sure the vessel can take it.

But I promise to get under your skin today. I promise to get under your skin today. I'm going to read several passages, but I want to begin here in John 21.

After Jesus has spoken to Peter three times, do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me? You may have heard different teaching on it, Peter's response, and the different Greek words used, and so on. After all of that, and Jesus says, feed my sheep, in verse 18, the Lord says, I tell you the truth. When you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted, but when you're old, you'll stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, follow me. He said follow me.

Jesus told Peter by what death he would glorify God. And he told him, you're going to come to a place when you're older. Now think of this for a moment, Peter was impetuous, and of all the disciples, we know Peter is the one that would speak quickly, put his foot in his mouth, speak first, and sometimes think later.

I'll never deny you Lord. Lord, if that's you, tell me to get out of the water, get out of the boat, walk on the water. Lord, we should make some booths here on the Mount of Transfiguration, often putting his foot in his mouth.

You're not going to the cross Lord, never. Jesus has to rebuke him, get behind me Satan. Peter, who had his strong will, Peter who did as he wanted to do, Jesus says you know when you're older Peter, when you come to the time in life when you should be calling the shots, when you should have people taking care of you, it's going to be a little different.

Others are going to take you and dress you and lead you somewhere that you don't want to go, and they're going to stretch your hands out. You're going to die. You're going to be crucified.

According to tradition, when Peter was crucified, he was crucified upside down, because he said I'm not worthy to be crucified the same way my master was crucified. Faithful, loyal Peter. But what about this one? But what about that one? That's what comes up next.

Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved, speaking of John, was following them. This was the one who would lean back against Jesus at the supper and had said Lord who is going to betray you? And Peter saw him, he asked Lord what about him? And he told me this, I'm going to die. This is how I'm going to glorify you.

Notice it wasn't a question of will you die for me Peter, it was how you will die for me. See these disciples had left everything and they had committed their lives and they understood as the master, so the servant. That's the way it was with the master, that's the way it's going to be with the servant.

They hated him, they'll hate me. They killed him, they'll kill me. Well now Peter wants to know what about John? Jesus answered if I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.

Because of this the rumor spread among the brothers that the disciple would not die, but Jesus did not say that he would not die. He only said if I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? Jesus is the Lord of each of our lives individually and he can tell one stay and tell another go. He can tell one pray all day, he can tell another fast, he can tell another witness on the streets, he can tell one be married and have 10 children, he can tell another never marry.

He's the Lord, he's the boss, he's the master. Throughout the Bible, throughout the New Testament you'll find that Jesus is called Lord more than 700 times. He's called Savior about 15 times in the New Testament.

Our main emphasis is on the Savior Jesus, the Savior Jesus. The main emphasis of the New Testament is on the Lord Jesus who saves us, the Lord Jesus. When you get saved you're not just forgiven, you don't just have a clean slate, you're not just transferred from death to life, from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, from the power of Satan to the power of God, from your destination being hell to your destination being heaven.

It's not just that, all that is part of it and that's wonderful and glorious and eternally great, but we're also transferred from ownership and service. We were owned by sin, we were slaves to the devil, now we are owned by Jesus, we are his bondservants, we're his slaves. We now live to do his will, period.

That's what being saved is. It's not just a matter of being forgiven and now you go do your own thing, God forbid. Being forgiven and now you live however you want to live.

No. I'll make what choice I want to make where I go to college. Who gave you that choice? I'll make the choice I make who I want to marry.

Who gave you that choice? I'll decide if we have kids and when we have kids. Who gave you that choice? I'll decide if I go into ministry or not. Who gave you that choice? Well, I'll decide what I do with my free time every day.

Who gave you that choice? Since when did the Lord Jesus give you the reigns of your life? Since when did he give me the reigns of my life. He is the master. And he didn't say to Peter, now tell me what you think of this, buddy.

We got several options. We got one where basically you become a famous televangelist and you have three luxury sports cars and a private jet. And you'll impact about 20 million and live a good life and your kids will follow you into ministry.

We have another plan where you'll just be a good faithful prayer warrior supporting the rest of the church and no one will really know your name, but you'll be effective in that and you'll also touch several million people. And then we have the other plan where you'll be martyred. And you'll probably be very famous as a martyr, but you will have to die.

So which do you pick, Peter? And then, hey, John, what do you think? You want to do it Peter's way or his? It's your call. No, no, no, no. Now it's outrageous when you hear me talk like that.

It's completely absurd when you hear me talk like that. In fact, it sounds like I'm spitting in God's face and yet that's how many of us live, isn't it? When I first got in contact with Leonard Ravenhill, I'd written a book called End of the American Gospel Enterprise. I went away to seek the Lord in prayer for a few days in 1989 and when I went away, God moved on me to start writing a book.

Themes of this had burned in my heart for about seven years and finally the release came to right. And in a three week period, the book was done. It's a shorter book, but it was done.

It poured out of me in three weeks. And I felt Leonard Ravenhill is to write the forward to this book. Leonard Ravenhill.

I'd read his book Why Revival Tarry seven years earlier. It powerfully impacted me in the midst of a move of God. I talked about that move yesterday.

I heard him preach when he was 76. In April of 1983, a powerful convicting message with weeping and wailing at the altar. He didn't know me from Adam.

At this point now, 89, he's in his early 80s, 82, 83 years old. And God laid it on my heart. He'll write the forward to your book.

When God laid it on my heart, I knew it was the Lord. I knew it was the Lord, but in my head I didn't even know if he was still alive. You ever had that happen? You know God's saying something, but you can't quite equate it.

Well, that's what happened. I knew God was saying it. And then I met his son, David.

Didn't even know his son was out doing anything. Ran into his son, David. Unexpectedly met him for the first time.

Said, hey, what's your dad doing? Said, well, he's actually preaching a little now and still a little active. So I got his address and I sent him a copy of my manuscript. And I didn't ask him to write the forward.

I didn't ask him to do anything. I've never believed in trying to make something happen and promote yourself. I didn't do that.

I wrote to him and said, I would be honored to receive your comments and your criticisms. That was it. I just met your son.

You gave me your address. I'd be honored to receive your comments and your criticisms. The manuscript arrived down there.

The envelope arrived with my letter. Someone had opened the thing and taken out the manuscript and he received something open just with this letter and no manuscript in it, which then encouraged me. It looks like God's really in this thing.

There's a little resistance here. Strange. So he sent me back a note saying, send me the manuscript.

I'll read it. And in that note, he enclosed a little piece of paper with a quote from a man named Hugo Bassi. I have this quote in the book, How Saved Are We? A little quote from Hugo Bassi.

It said this, measure not thy life by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth. It was more to the quote, but it ended with, love's strength stands in love's sacrifice and whoso suffereth most hath most to give. It was a challenging little quote on suffering and service.

And then there was this little track. I'd seen it once before. I'd remembered seeing it at some point.

I don't know that I'd ever read it. Others can, you can't. Others can, you can't.

And he had just underlined different parts in red. And I read this thing and it was pretty challenging, pretty penetrating. I went to my office last night.

We still have some things in boxes that haven't gotten out yet since we moved here, even though we've been here for quite a while. And I went to try to find his letters and I just couldn't find the right box and it was too late. And I said forget it.

About 1.30 in the morning I said forget it. But it's one of these things that you read it and it really got under your skin. And it really challenged and it really made you uncomfortable.

When I did send him the manuscript back he called me the next day. He said I never do this. I read the manuscript and I sat down and read the whole thing right through.

He said I'm going to write the forward to your book. And then just he adopted me really as a spiritual son right then and there. It was a miraculous thing.

And that's how we became close the last five years of his life. And he was to me the greatest champion of revival in the past generation. The most passionate voice for it.

The most persistent voice. The most broken hearted voice. And the one who would preach and often see the whole place break out in weeping and wailing.

And he's the one that linked Steve Hill and me together. And I'm sure that we are experiencing and reaping the benefit of many of his years of tears. Here's what I want to talk to you about today.

Others can. You can't. People can.

Peter, if I want John to stay alive until I come, what's that to you? I've called you to something different. I've called you to take up your cross. I want to say a few things to you.

And this is going to come in different levels. Some of you, God's going to be preaching to you above and beyond my own words. First, understand this.

As children of God, as believers, the world can. We can. There are many things that the world does that we simply cannot do because we are children of God.

You're just going to have to embrace it and accept it and recognize it. The reason a lot of people fall and mess up is because they always get right on the edge. They try to do what the world does, but not as severely.

They try to do what the world does, but not quite as bad. They'll hang out with the same people, but they won't get high with them. They'll hang out with the same crowd, but they won't go as far sexually.

They'll go see the movies, but not the really bad ones only the pretty bad ones. They'll go to the beaches, and when their friends are wearing thong bikinis, they'll wear more modest bikinis. You know, they'll do what the world does, but just try to step back a little, friends, that is spitting in God's face.

It is a denial of Jesus being the Lord of your life, and it is playing with fire. I tell people all the time, I use this illustration all the time, you know, a young man will come up to you and say, brother, you've got to help me, man, I'm so weak. I am so terribly weak.

I mean, I go to the beach, man, I go to the pool, and all these girls running around and they're like nine-tenths naked. It's like, man, my mind feels unclean. I'm tormented by these filthy thoughts, and I have a hard time keeping lust out of my heart.

I'm so weak. I tell them, you're not weak, you are stupid. Stupid.

By the way, if you say, oh, that doesn't bother me anymore, I'm completely used to it. Now you're beyond stupid, you're in trouble. The warning signs aren't even going off anymore.

You're like a person living in a nudist colony that's not stimulated by nudity. Does that mean you're not stimulated by nudity because you're so holy or because you're so hardened? Someone says, man, I used to be an alcoholic. Every time I go to the bar, man, I'm so weak, I struggle.

You're not weak, you are stupid. You flee certain things. The world has a certain liberty to sin, and it leads to destruction.

People in the world can just do what they want to do. They're not under the lordship of God. Oh, they will pay for it, and they'll be judged for it, but they're not under the dominion and the lordship of God.

They're doing their own thing. Look at this picture in Ephesians, the second chapter. Ephesians, chapter 2. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work and those who are disobedient.

Notice, those in the world are called disobedient, and it's the devil who's at work in them. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature, our flesh, and following its desires and thoughts. That's how we used to live.

That's how the world lives, following and doing the desires of the flesh. Want to get high? You get high. Want to get drunk? You get drunk.

Want to go to bed with somebody? You go to bed with somebody. Want to lie? You lie. Want to deceive? You deceive.

Want to hate? You hate. Want to lose your temper? You lose your temper. Want to be a glutton? You're a glutton.

Want to be lazy? You're lazy. What the flesh wants to do, what the mind wants to do, it does. Now, people may have a certain moral conscience within that.

There's the light of God within every one of us, even though it's been marred by the fall. There's still a conscience within us, and people will still only go so far. And then they break that, and then they go a little

further, but they still keep setting up these boundaries.

There are plenty of godless people who are trying to stop smoking cigarettes. There are plenty of godless people who still feel bad about having an affair. There are plenty of godless people that are still trying to make right moral choices in certain areas of life.

They have a certain ethic. You can hang out with alcoholics, junkies, prostitutes, and they all have a certain ethic. When I started hanging out with junkies in 70 and 71, I was amazed by what I found.

I was amazed. You'd have one guy that would steal from his mother. You stole from your mother? Yeah, but I never steal from my grandmother.

That guy steals from his own grandmother. You steal from your grandmother? Yeah, but I'd never hurt her. Man, that guy killed his grandmother.

Everybody had their own ethic. Proverbs 14.12 and Proverbs 16.25 say this, there's a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. Its end is death.

We read elsewhere in Proverbs, all the ways of a man are right in his own eyes, but the Lord judges the hearts. The Lord tests the spirits. The fact is though, when it comes to believers, it's a totally different thing.

It's not a matter of my conscience, my moral standards. It's a matter of God's standards and God convicting my conscience, and I no longer have a right, listen to me, I no longer have a right to gratify the sinful desires of the flesh. Period.

In Jesus we have died to all those things. End of subject. Now you may have a battle.

You may be tempted. You may grow and find that God puts his finger on other areas in your life. We're going to be growing until we meet him face to face.

That's true. But the right is no longer there. We die to it.

Let me tell you something. When God started dealing with me in the fall of 1971 and began to convict me of my sins, I didn't know it was conviction then. I didn't understand it.

I just thought I was feeling guilty. You know, I stole money from my father. I thought it didn't really matter.

He had extra cash around. I just took it. It wasn't for my own drug use.

It was to help out a friend that had a need. \$60 here, \$40 here, \$100 there. I did some really ugly, ugly things.

Lied to my two best friends. I remember one time I had some money we were supposed to buy drugs with, and I used it for some other things for myself, drugs for myself and some other stuff. And then I told a close friend that somebody jumped on me and, you know, stole the money, and I'd been bruised or something and said, here, look, this is what happened.

I mean, I was a filthy, ugly sinner. And when my friends started going to this little Pentecostal church and praying for me, the people in that church started praying for me, and God started convicting me. I didn't know it was conviction.

I just started feeling guilty about certain things. So I changed some of the drugs I was doing so that I wouldn't be up at night, because those sleepless nights really started to haunt me. And then November 12th of 71, something happened.

Going back to one of those services which I never planned on doing again, I went back for a second time, and God opened my eyes and I knew that Jesus died for me and rose from the dead. That presented a problem to me. He said, well, because you were Jewish and your family didn't believe that, your ancestors didn't believe that, that wasn't the big problem.

The big problem was if that's true, I've got to stop shooting heroin. And I didn't want to stop. I loved doing drugs.

I changed a few things, because I was getting the creeps when I'd do some of these other drugs and stand up at night and feeling guilty. So I changed to some other drugs, and I was doing more heroin and some other things and less speed, less LSD. But I didn't want to give it up.

I loved, I loved sin. I loved my drugs. I wanted to be a rock star.

I wanted to play in some band. We had this little band. We played together.

And God was dealing with me, and I knew it was a five-week process of the dealings of God in my life. From November 12th of 71 to December 17th, I knew that I had to get to that point where I took the plunge. You know, it's like you, I was telling somebody last night, a young lady was saying, I'm going to have to make better decisions.

And I said, it's not just making better decisions. I said, it's getting to know God personally, because she's been raised in the faith. I said, it's getting to know God personally.

Nineteen years old. And the other thing is, I said, the decision you need to make is like jumping off a 20-foot diving board. You just, you make that decision, and then that's it.

And once you hit that water, you're thrilled that you did. And see, once you step over, you don't go flying back up. See, that's what it is to follow Jesus.

You make that decision. You step off. Say goodbye to those things.

For life. For life. Others can.

You can't. For life. The big challenge to me was to say the words to God, I will never put a needle in my arm again.

To say I won't do it again or I won't do drugs for a little while, that was one thing. And it wasn't a matter of if I make this promise, will I keep it? Because who knows at that moment, even if you're totally sincere, what's going to happen 50 years later? All you can be is totally sincere, right? If you say, God, I promise not to do it, but in the back of your mind you're thinking I will next week, no, you're not sincere. All I can say was at that moment, I knew that when I had to pledge, I will never put a needle in my arm for the rest of my life.

I had to take that promise. And when I did, I was free. You say, when did you truly get born again? I know that I know that I surrendered December 17, 71.

I know that I first believed November 12, and there was a wrestling for my soul. And it wasn't a matter of a battle, it was a matter of not saying yes to the Lord Jesus. I know that I know December 17, beyond any question, that I was made brand new in the sight of God and free.

You say, were you free from everything? Well, actually I was still, I got high for two more days after that. Not putting a needle in my arm, but I got high. And then repented of that.

And then it was some weeks after that that God convicted me of profanity. And then probably another few weeks before he took out everything else, and I've just been perfect ever since. No, the fact is, we're still growing.

He's still working on me. He's still working on all of us. But there was that surrender of my life.

What I knew was wrong and sinful, I surrendered. It may be like somebody who's an alcoholic, a drunkard, smokes cigarettes and tells lies on his job. But when he's at this altar repenting and saying, God, forgive me, cleanse me, Jesus, save me from my sins.

He knows that part of what that means is I can't go back to adultery and I can't drink. It may be three weeks before he puts down cigarettes. It may be five weeks before he even realizes he's lying on his job.

But if he gets up in this altar and says, God, I know it's sin to lie. I know it's sin to smoke, but I'm going to do it anyway. He cannot call him Lord.

It's one thing to grow in grace. It's another thing to consciously and willfully say no to Jesus and claim him as your Lord. The two are incompatible.

Others can, you can. You have to realize if you're single, you'll never have sex till you're married. Period.

Forget this. You may be in college. Maybe everyone's sleeping around.

It doesn't matter. They can, you can. And they only can to their own destruction, to the degrading of their bodies, to the degrading of sexuality, to the possibility of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, guilt and other things, lack of understanding of what true relationships and true love are, and then final judgment when they stand before God and give account for their sins.

Thank God he spares us from all of that. But I just want you to see it from this side here. They can because Jesus is not their Lord.

You can't. You used to struggle with drinking and you can't drink anymore. You're a child of God.

You're not going to drink. Drunkenness is out for you. Just deal with it.

Maybe you used to be into pornography. Maybe you'd pull it down on the internet. God's dealt with you.

I want all of you. Maybe you're truly saved and then you start to dabble with this stuff and now you're up and down and up and down and up and down. God says, no more.

Either that or me. Say, Jesus, I'm yours for life. That means you never touch.

It's not an option anymore. You and your husband, you and your wife got married in the Lord. You're having some problems.

You're finding yourselves incompatible, having difficulties. I'm not going to get into a major theological discussion of divorce here. Let me just say this.

Let's make it in a way that nobody can argue with me here. There's no adultery. There's no sexual immorality on either part.

You're just having problems. You're disagreeing a lot. You seem to have different visions.

You don't seem to be compatible. Maybe you made a mistake in your marriage. You got married as believers but maybe it really wasn't the best.

Divorce is not an option. Period. Period.

Period. Others can. You can.

You can say, brother, I beg to differ with you. Do it at your own risk. Do it at your own risk.

The Word of God and almost all of church history and believers throughout the world to this day are on the other side of that question. So just being saved means those kids can hang out and do those things I can't anymore. They're doing this.

I remember going back to this place to go talk to somebody and it was the place where I used to go. It was a pond, grassy area around this pond nearby the high school that I went to and we would all hang out there. It was our big place to get high.

We'd just go down by the pond at night and do different drugs and then just lay out on the grass under the stars. I remember going back over there and it so reminded me of what used to happen there. I just had to get out of there in a hurry.

I just couldn't be around. I suddenly saw the lifestyle for what it really was. Just people fulfilling their animal instincts.

Do whatever the flesh and mind wanted to do. You've got to come to grips with the child of God. You are called to be holy.

You are called to offer your whole body and spirit and soul, mind, heart, will, desires up to God. And now written in your heart, written in your mind, the words of Psalm 40. I live to do your will.

You've got to resolve it. If you haven't taken the plunge once and for all, you have to. Let me say this again then I'm going to move on and take it a little further.

You must close the door on the option to sin. You must close the door on the possibility of sinning. I don't mean that you can live a perfectly sinless life.

As you walk through this world, you may have an angry thought. You may speak an angry word one time. It can happen.

You might find greed coming up in your heart, or envy. Something lustful may dominate you for a second, you turn from it. In this world, we're not going to reach total perfection.

There can be pride. There can be self-righteousness. What about all the things we're called to do that we don't do? What about loving our neighbors as ourselves? We're always going to fall short.

But our lifestyle, our habit is following Jesus, walking with God, doing what's right in His sight. Our lifestyle used to be doing what we wanted to do, living how we wanted to live. You know, I'd get up in the morning, and I'd do what I want to do.

If it's a free day, I'd do what I want to do. That's how it was in the world. You know, free day, do what you want to do.

You don't need to pray. You don't need to read the Word. You don't need to think about witnessing.

You don't need to think about spending this day to the glory of God. And even if it's a rest day, then being rested for the glory of God, you don't need to think of that. You want to watch TV 12 hours, you watch TV 12 hours.

You want to hang out with friends, you hang out and just do whatever you want to do. Let that end it when you got saved. It blows me away that people who call themselves children of God still live like that.

It blows me away that people who call themselves children of God will watch television four hours in a day and pray and read the Word 20 minutes. That's, all that is, is a sign of a completely backslidden cold heart, or a heart that's never been ablaze for Jesus. Because it's impossible that the Lord Jesus, with all the needs in the world, and with all He wants to give you and do in your life, and with such limitations, such a short life that we have, and time being as precious as it is, it's impossible that Jesus is going to lead you, that the Lord Jesus is going to will it and desire for your life that you watch television more than you pray or read the Word, or you play video games more than you pray or read the Word.

Or that you can talk on the telephone about nonsense for hours and hours and hours a week and never share the Gospel with anybody. It's impossible if that's the will of God. You say, I differ with you.

You're wrong. I'm right. Period.

And if you're sure that I'm wrong, then you pray and you just go stand on a street corner somewhere and pray that all these people come and hear you so you can set them straight. You can say, the Lord Jesus gives us liberty to watch television as much as we want. The Lord Jesus gives us liberty to play video games as much as we want.

And it doesn't matter if we pray, and it doesn't matter if we read the Word, and it doesn't matter if we witness. He just wants us to be happy and to do what we want. Eat, drink, and be merry.

For tomorrow we die. I'll tell you one thing though. There's a whole lot more happiness in the Word and prayer than there is watching TV.

You need to make that whole lifestyle change. So God began to work in me. And now, you know, my friends would be partying, my friends would be hanging out, my friends would be doing different things.

And then I'd just say, okay, I can't do that anymore. I can't hang with them anymore. They're just going to get high.

They're just going to party. That's not my life anymore. Goodbye.

The door is shut. Why do you hang out with certain people? I want you to think about this, especially young people. You say you want to follow Jesus.

You say you want to do what's right. Why do you go to certain places? Why do you hang out with certain people? Is it because you just want to keep that possible door open a little bit? Is it? I don't want to be with any of these people. I want to live right unless he likes me.

Unless she's interested. Unless I have an option to do this and then how can I resist that? The reason you mess up is because you don't do what Jesus said. You don't cut off your hand.

You don't gouge out your eye. It's spiritual language. People read that.

They read it around the world. They've read it for centuries and they don't go around chopping their hands off, gouging their eyes that they understand what it really means. It's spiritual language for deal ruthlessly with sin.

Cut it off at the root. I'm finishing this book now. I've been working on the last two months.

I'm about 80% finished called Go and Sin No More. And there's one chapter kind of an encouraging, uplifting, upbuilding, happy, feel good chapter called Cut Off Your Hand and Gouge Out Your Eye. A few months ago, my wife was over at our property in the adjoining state and some friends were over there with us and it's a woodsy area and wooded area and friends were driving away and my friend Mike saw this rattlesnake going across the road and got out of his vehicle, found this huge, it was a metal or concrete, you know, made it into a weapon, whatever it was, a big piece of something, big object and he went over and killed that rattlesnake.

Smashed the head once and the thing was just going crazy, just biting into the ground and he killed it. Then he was kind enough to bring it over to my house. Show me.

We have some property that we're building on but this was the house we were living in then. Brings it over to show me. I've never seen a rattlesnake in person, let alone one with a head crushed.

He says, look at this. He had a big Tupperware thing, takes it out. Let me ask you a question.

What would you do in the middle of the night that you're married, you're the man of the house, all of a sudden your wife says, honey, there's something, there's something in this room. I hear something moving around. Yeah, I hear it too.

You flip the lights on. Rattlesnake. You got three kids, little kids down the hallway.

So you see it coming right by and man, it's right, right under your foot. Boom. Just like that.

That thing kind of jumps, shoots under the bed and you say to your wife, okay, honey, I heard it. Let's go to sleep. Let's shut the lights and go to sleep.

I don't think so. With a rattlesnake under your bed that you, you don't know how badly you hurt. I don't think so.

What are you going to do? First thing you're going to do is stand on top of the bed. Turn out all the lights and stand on the bed. And then you're going to get some kind of weapon, something.

And you're going to, you're going to get that snake. When you get it, you're going to kill it. You're probably going to chop its head off.

Then you're going to fill the bathtub with water, throw in the bathtub and electrocute it. I mean, you're going to do what you can to make sure that thing's dead. Dad, it's dead.

Dad, it's dead. And then you're going to send the kids, right? Everybody out of your bedrooms. And you're going to go through that whole house.

Every inch of it. Flashlights in the dark. It doesn't matter if it's three in the morning, you're going to go through that whole house.

I had some friends, some weeks running, the wife kept thinking there's a burglar in the house. Somebody's in the house. Somebody's in the house.

Somebody's in the house. Somebody's in the house. Dear friends of us, former students.

Somebody's in the house. Somebody's in the house. Finally, my friend, the husband's getting fed up.

Getting fed up. And his wife says, there's somebody in the house. I'm telling you, there's somebody in the house.

You need to do something about it. They've got a few little kids. So he sits up in bed and he says, if there's anybody in this house, get out now.

She looked at him, she said, you're a jerk. He was just getting on her like, enough is enough already. You know, will you stop this? That's the way some of us deal with sin.

That's the way some of us deal with the devil. Just like with that rattlesnake. I heard it.

It's okay. The reason some of you are up and down, is because you never kill it. You've got to kill it.

Reckon with what it's going to mean if your friends aren't going to follow Jesus, if your co-workers aren't going to follow Jesus, if your family isn't going to follow Jesus. Think it through. This is what it's going to mean.

They can, you can. You may go home, ma'am. You may be the only believer in your home.

And they're all doing this and watching this. And you used to join right in. And you used to laugh at those filthy sitcoms.

But you can't now. And you used to read right along with them and laugh at the jokes. But you can't now.

And when they, you and your husband, have some friends over and do a little drinking, you can't now. You're just going to have to accept that for the rest of your life. They can't, you can't.

Period. Well, what's the outlet? There is no fleshly outlet. Just the grace of God, fulfilling every desire of your life in Him, in Him.

How do you kill the snake? You deal a death blow at the root, whatever it means. For me, December 17th, I had to go home, 1971, and take all the needles and all the drugs in the house. Cocaine was the drug I had in the house then, primarily.

Take that, and I threw it over a bridge. Went with my friends and said, if I'm done with it, I'm done with it. What do I need it for? Sometimes when you cut off the hand, there's some useful things attached to it.

You got to let it go. Maybe the only cable service you can get in your home brings in some unclean movies, some R-rated movies or some X-rated movies. And every month or two, you end up flipping on the channel and watching something unclean.

What do you do? You cut it out. You cut the hand off. But I'm going to miss sports channel, and I'm going to miss discovery channel, and I'm going to miss weather channel.

Better to go to heaven without those than to go to hell with them. Plus, you live most of your life without those channels just fine anyway. Plus, sports and weather are going to happen just the same whether you watch them or not.

Others can, you can't. Even if it costs you something, deal a death blow. You may lose a promotion at school.

You may lose a promotion on your job. You may lose a relationship because you stand for Jesus. Stand for Jesus.

Stand for Jesus. One night in the revival, I made the statement. At the end of the night, we're talking to people that came up to the altar, and I made the statement.

I said, look, if you're a prostitute and you just got saved, you're going to have to find another way of living. I was illustrating the point. No matter what it costs you, make a break with the old.

Or wouldn't you know if there was a prostitute that just got saved that night that was up at that altar? And she told me a few months later, she says, I was there. You were talking right to me. I was just using it to illustrate a point.

But no, that was God talking right to her. And she said, I found a brand new way of life. She's all excited, pumped, charged, changed.

Let me take this a little further. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 16. This is the general we've been talking about.

Now I want to talk to you about your own relationship with God as a believer. If you're wondering what that was, if you're listening on the internet, you just heard that sound. It was not an angel flying by my microphone.

It was the paper towel on the platform in my hand rubbing against the microphone after wiping the remnants off my mustache. See, we're totally honest here. No exaggeration.

Of course, the tea was brought in, an angel came through the roof. How many of you saw that happen? It just, right? See? See what you're missing by not being here and just listening on the internet? Jeremiah 16, then the word of the Lord came to me, you must not marry and have sons or daughters in this place.

This is what the Lord says about the sons and daughters born in this land and about the women who are their mothers and the men who are their fathers.

They'll die of deadly diseases. They'll not be mourned or buried, but will be like refugees lying on the ground. They'll perish by sword and famine and their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.

You must not marry and have sons or daughters in this place. I called you Jeremiah, and this is something I'm requiring of you. What about the individual calling on your life? What about your individual walk with God? What about your personal intimacy and relationship with Jesus? Others can, you can't.

Three of us got saved pretty much together. First, the bass player, then the guitar player, then me, the drummer in our group, and probably right before them, the two girls that my two friends liked, that's why they started coming to the church. Probably that was the order, the two girls, then my two friends, and then me.

So we all spent a lot of time together now as new believers. And then some of our other friends came to the Lord. In fact, that first year, I think I was able to bring about between 40 and 50 of my friends to that church.

Some of them got genuinely converted. Some came to the Lord and fell away. Others were challenged.

In a couple of weeks, there'll be a high school reunion. I had just been thinking, man, it's 25 years since I graduated from high school, and I got this letter saying there's going to be a high school reunion. I haven't seen any of these people in 25 years, as far as the ones that were in that school with me and that we brought to the church.

Of course, people I got saved with, some I've seen regularly and some not over the years. But I'll be back out there, God willing, just a few weeks, going back to Long Island for this thing, with real interest. In fact, you know, they wanted pictures, you know, they're going to put some slideshow together, so I just I sent out a few of my LSD PhD tracks, and see what happens.

But now we're all saved together. We're all on fire together. We're in church all the time.

We're at prayer meeting all the time. We're witnessing all the time. We're at street meetings all the time.

And yet there were things that God said to me, others can, you can't. I remember there were numerous nights when we'd get back from after church, hey, let's go get something to eat. No, I can't.

Why? I got to go back and pray. I've got to spend more time with God. I wanted to, and I also felt he was requiring me to.

I remember the nights when my friends would be going out, a few couples together. We didn't have a right concept of courtship then, so it was more just dating. But you know, this was kind of a couple, and this was a couple, this was a couple.

I wasn't going with any. And they'd all go out. And I'd call this one, I'm going out with this person tonight.

How about you? No, I'm going out with this person. How about you? No, I got other plans. And then suddenly I'd be smitten by conviction.

Why didn't we ask Jesus what his plans were for the night? It would just be one of those times, because normally we did a lot of stuff together, one of those times when everybody had made other plans already. And I'd just say, Lord, I'm sorry. And I'd shut the door.

My parents always honored if my door was shut not to disturb me. And I'd just shut the door, and I'd just spend the night with Jesus. Just open the word and pray for two, three, four, five hours, and just have a wonderful night with him.

They were doing what they were doing. That was fine. They weren't out there sinning, partying.

They were just out there hanging out. Others can. You can't.

There may be a call that separates you from others. Listen, if you're immature, you're going to judge others and think you're special. If you're immature, you're going to walk around with a self-righteous arrogance that is obnoxious.

How many people know somebody like that? Self-righteous, obnoxious. Oh, they're on fire, but they want the whole world to know it. How many of you think that that person is sitting next to you? No, don't raise your hands.

Don't raise your hands. You're young enough to get away with raising your hand. That was okay.

That was all right. I'm not saying that you should go around like that. This is what I'm saying.

It may be that God is not dealing with somebody else about areas he's dealing with you about. It's not up to you to judge them and be your brother's keeper, your sister's keeper, but it is up to you to be responsible for what God puts in your own soul. Listen, it's only logical if you've been at the youth conference or if you've been at the revival here that God's going to deal with you in a way that he wasn't dealing with folks that weren't here.

With more intensity, with a higher standard, with a deeper call. Your eyes have been opened more. You've met with Jesus more deeply.

God's poured out his Spirit on you. You've been soaked and saturated with the Word and the Holy Spirit in these days. It's only natural that when you get back, God may not let you do certain things that others are doing.

It doesn't mean you go around saying, well, I'm not going to do that. I can't do that anymore. If it's sinful and wrong and blatant, you can say to your friends, hey, listen, this is really wrong.

I used to do this, but I know it's wrong, and God's really convicting me of it. You really need to think about it because you say you're following Jesus. You really need to think about it.

Thanks. Right through the roof, here's more. I'll tell you that we've had some unusual things happen in these days.

It was the one day when lightning struck and the power went out, and it just so happened that I had a computer with a Bible in it that I had just done a word search for all of the verses I wanted to be talking about. I just happened to have the thing with me, so all the lights went out, so I just opened this thing. I mean, why I even brought it in with me, I don't know.

Just opened the thing up and just had all the scriptures, you know, bright there to read from. But because we had no power, people couldn't hear me, so we just, people ran up to the front, and God met us. Another time, we're in here, and all of a sudden, except it's on the roof.

I mean, pounding, pounding, pounding. What's going on? Who in the world is working on the roof? What is going on out there? It was wild. Boom! I mean, pounding, shaking, as if like an angel with a mallet was, boom, boom.

And I thought, maybe it's some sound thing. I shut the, you know, the repel mic off, and it didn't go away. Anyway, there was nobody working on the roof.

To this day, we don't know what that was. Someone listened to the tape and said, it was heavy. Another time, it started raining really heavily, pouring rain, and normally when it does, I stop and say, hey, let's pray for the folks out in the rain out there.

Let's pray for those standing in lines before we had our things set up where there's any kind of shelter out there. Let's pray for the people. But I just decided not to do it.

We just went on, and the next day, I was talking about, hey, how many of you were out on line there when it was raining? And they said, what do you mean? Number one, it wasn't raining outside. Number two, the people that had been in the Friday session verified that they, you know, now it was a Saturday session, they heard the rain also. But this was just tea handed to me by my future son-in-law, so nothing miraculous there.

If your friends are fooling around with sin and claiming to be followers of Jesus, it's right to lovingly confront them, and depending on the relationship you have with them, you know how to talk to your friends, you know how to talk to your peers, young or old. But let's put that aside. Let's say that they're not out there messing around, but they're just wasting time.

They're going to see a movie, and the movie itself, there's nothing unclean or wrong about it, but you just feel you can't go near a movie scene. Or maybe you just feel, wait, they're wasting hours and hours and hours. I could be in prayer and the Word.

Let me say something again to young people, or to those of you who have a little extra time on your hands, listen to me, listen to me. You may never have this situation again for the rest of your life. You may never have this again for the rest of your life.

I had a life high school schedule, so I had hours free if I wanted to use it every day. I wasn't working a job, I was in high school, I was in church most nights of the week, but I had free time every day, hours of free time. What would I do with it? I never had to do much schoolwork that came easy to me.

What was I going to do with it? I began to pray and seek God, pray and get in the Word. To this day, for fun sometimes, if we're on a long drive or something, we'll play a game called Bible Pride. I want you to take on a group of youth pastors just for fun.

It's called Bible Pride because the winner is allowed to be proudful. It's just a silly game we play. But you know, the way you play is this, somebody opens the Bible and points reads and they read the verse.

Whatever their finger falls on it, you have to say it's this book, it's this chapter, it's this verse. And we play the game. I can play that game and win it all the time because of those hours and hours and hours that I spent in the Word memorizing Scripture when I was 17, 18 years old.

I've been in the Word ever since, but I'm telling you the foundation was laid then. Others can, they were just out doing nothing, just sitting around doing nothing, just hanging out at a friend's house, not getting high, not listening to sinful rock music, not watching something unclean on television, just hanging around. God said, no, you spend time with me.

You spend time with me. I remember one time when God had led me on a long fast and I was with a bunch of men and I was just desperately hungry. It was seven days into it and seven days and the hunger still hadn't lifted.

It lifted on the eighth day on a water fasting. It was the seventh day and I remember just being so hungry, just wanting to eat. And it was a men's meeting at a special location, some of the 20, 30 guys together there and they were all having a meal.

And there it was, I remember just thinking they can eat, I can't. They're all eating and I was happy for them to be eating. I administered on Long Island, lived in Maryland then, stayed at some friend's home, was talking to them at the beginning of the fast and came back almost three weeks later at the end of the fast.

And it just hit me. I was back at their house again, I thought, isn't this interesting, they've probably had 40 to 60 meals since the time I saw them. Others can, you can.

And I like that feeling when you realize that God is requiring something of you or calling you higher or calling you in. Because if he can find somebody faithful, he can find somebody who'll be obedient to the things he gives them to do. If he can find somebody who'll say, okay, I'm not going to compare myself to this one or this one or this one or this one.

I'm not going to ask why is it that this one seems to get away with this and why is it that this one seems to not have to go through this. If God's going to put me through his discipline, so be it. I've seen God do things in my life to discipline and chastise and correct me over what seem like minor areas and then somebody that seems to be far more advanced in ministry having glaring faults in these very areas and they've never been corrected.

It seems they never talk about how God changed them in these areas. It seems they're oblivious to these areas even being wrong. You know how that makes me feel? Special, loved, cared for, spared.

I don't think men, they get to do it. No, no, I get to do it. Praise God.

I love the verses from Proverbs 3 verses 11 and 12. The discipline of the Lord my son don't despise. And don't abhor his rebuke.

Because the Lord corrects those he loves. Even as a father, the son in whom he delights. When God singles you out to correct you, to discipline you, to work on you, to not let you get away with things that others seem to get away with, that's a special sign of the love of God.

Anyone here ever been a teacher's pet? They call it teacher's pet. You know, the teacher's favorite and the whole class kind of hates you for it. Sally wouldn't do that.

Joe wouldn't pass notes. You got that right on the test, didn't you Billy? Teacher's pet. What about being raised as kind of the favorite child in a family? Maybe they're stepbrothers or stepsisters or maybe somehow you've always been the good kid.

You get special attention. There can be a wrong side, there can be a good side where there's a closeness and special relationship. When God deals with me about areas that he doesn't seem to deal with others about, that makes me feel special.

It makes me feel like he really loves me. He's singling me out because he cares about me so much. You know, some of you have been raised, you've been spanked the most in your home.

Man, your parents love you especially. Why do I get grounded all the time? Man, your parents must really care for you. Jeremiah, not by his choice, not by his volition, not by his desire, Jeremiah was told you don't marry and have kids.

Why? Because he was called to be a prophet. He belonged to God. The prophet was no longer his own.

The prophetess was no longer her own. They belong completely and entirely to God. They were at the will of the master.

You go back to the callings. Does Jeremiah, when God says to him, you know, I'm going to use you. I've set you apart.

Does Jeremiah say, yeah, I'm the man. I'm just, I'm just a youth. I don't know, I don't even know how to speak.

Not me. Does Ezekiel say, all right, I'm your man, choose me. God says, listen, I'm sending you to disobedient, stubborn people and they're not going to listen to you because they don't listen to me.

What a calling. I'm calling you to pass to this church and it's going to fail because they're hard-hearted and stiff-necked. If they don't listen to me, they're not going to listen to you.

If I sent you to some other city, they'd listen, but these people won't. Thank you, Lord, for the call. So much for exciting newsletters with updates.

It's going from bad to worse. They're more stubborn than I ever could have realized. And God says to Ezekiel, look, you're just going to have to stay in your home basically and you're going to be all bound up by the people.

And the people are so sinful. You've seen my glory and these people are so sinful. I'm going to cause your tongue to stick to the roof of your mouth.

Otherwise you'd go about reproving them all the time. I don't want you to be a rebuker. So you're only going to be allowed to speak when my spirit comes on you.

And then you're going to say, call them out. This is what the Lord said. Think of that.

For a period of years until Jerusalem fell and then his tongue was open. Think of it. This wasn't judgment for his sin and unbelief.

This was God saying, you're going to talk too much. You're going to go around rebuking the people all the time and I can't have that. So the only time you're going to be able to speak is when I speak through you.

Ezekiel, what happened to you? You seem different these days. You're not quite as talkative. Everything all right? What do you think is going to happen to our nation? This is what the Lord says.

Judgment, pestilence, disaster. I mean, he was no longer his own. Do you understand that? But other prophets are allowed to speak.

Well, others can't either. Others can't either. Jeremiah can say, wait, wait, wait, wait.

Isaiah's married. He was married and with children. I know our traditions.

Others can, you can't. Even between two prophets. Paul had a certain calling that Peter didn't have and Peter had a certain calling that Matthew didn't have and Matthew had a certain calling that Thomas didn't have.

So on down the list. And maybe there are a few different reasons for it. I want you to think about it.

Maybe others can, you can't because of your own weakness. Because of your own tendency to mess up in a certain area and God has given you safety precautions. When I travel, it is my normal policy.

I travel with someone. Then when I'm staying at the hotel, my assistant Scott will have a room or whoever's traveling with me, I'll have a room. We travel together.

Then we stay in separate rooms, of course. Unless it's one of these Indian trips where you have like nine people in one room or whatever. A bunch of guys in one room, a bunch of gals in another room.

I'm in the room alone every night. It's my policy when I travel, we request this around the world to have the television removed from the hotel before I get there. They don't always do it, but we always request it.

I don't impose that on Scott. Although one night he went and just thought he'd just watch some sports and he gets into the room and the pastor just assumed that my standard was his standard, so his TV was removed also. I was glad.

But really it doesn't trouble me if I'm traveling with 50 other believers and they all have TVs and they never waste a minute with it. And maybe one night they just unwind and watch some news or a documentary or sports thing and it's perfectly clean and that's it. Wonderful.

It doesn't trouble me in the least. Let them have it. But I ask for it to be removed.

It's a safeguard. It's all too easy when you have a very intense schedule. When you go on 80 hours, 90 hours in a week.

When you're on the road, there's warfare, there's attack. You just want to slow down, unwind. You may waste three hours one night watching something you didn't need to do.

Perfectly clean. You're alone. You're away from everybody.

You're away from family. Your only companion is staring at you across the room there. And you've got to turn it on for it to be a companion.

Or maybe completely accidentally, flipping between a news thing and a sports event, something unclean comes on that you'd never dream of watching. And you switch right by it, but still that image just pollutes you. Or maybe worse yet, you're going to be tempted to watch something.

You're going to know something wrong is available. You're going to know that something's on. I mean, there are ads for it right on the TV.

You're going to wonder, you might even be tempted to watch something. So to me, the wiser thing, because I know so many people that have messed up sexually and so many people that have fallen into sin, so many ministers that have brought it, to me, the wise thing is to take precaution. To me, I'm not judging anybody else or telling anyone else to do it.

Our own home, most of our married life, we didn't have a television. We have one now. We've never had cable.

I'm not telling you you're sinning if you have any type of cable service. If it brings sinful stuff into your home, you are sinning by doing it. But the TV, I don't know, maybe once in six weeks, eight weeks, I'll see something briefly.

So I'm not around television a lot. I wouldn't think of bringing some of these things into your home that you can just get at a hotel. Or if you're paid, I always tell them at the counter, if the TV's still in there, dismantle all pay-per-view movies of any kind.

And Richard Krisco, when he travels out, he goes and he takes the cable attachment, goes downstairs to the front desk, and gives it to me. They said, oh, we'll be up and fix this in a minute. He says, no, no, no.

I disconnected it. When I leave, reconnect. He said for this pulpit, sorry if I'm weak.

I'm just taking precaution. And who knows how much demonic temptation is set there. Who knows how many people slept in that same place, out of wedlock, in affairs, watched pornography in that very movie.

May seem like a nice sweet hotel, but to me, take precautions. Maybe there's an area in your life and it's more than taking precautions. Maybe you have historic weakness in that area.

And maybe for your own good, the Lord won't let you do certain things. It's like someone that had a heart attack. They're going to live, but they can't do some of the things that others do, because their heart is weak.

Maybe others can, but you can't. Listen, some of you go back to your countries that you came from. You go back to your foreign countries.

And the standards in Europe are much lower, in terms of morally and spiritually, than the standards in America. I preached in Italy a dozen times. Preached in England a whole bunch.

When I say a dozen times, I mean a dozen trips. I preached probably 150 messages there, or more. Been in Italy a dozen times.

England a bunch of times. Scotland, Germany, Portugal, briefly once. Finland, a good number of times.

Sweden, a few times. We talked to Christians from all around the world. And a lot of these nations, you can just walk right down the street.

Here's a newsstand, and there's open pornography. There's stuff that would be forbidden in America. More blatant.

Women exposed more. And right up front, for anybody to see. Right there.

There it is. Right there. Or you can just be watching TV, and a commercial comes on.

One of the believers was telling me in Germany, with total nudity. Listen, that's the standard in the world. The standard of the church is often low, too.

There needs to be awakening. Standards needs to be raised. I was preaching in England at a fine church recently, and I made a statement that certainly didn't seem radical to me.

I was just using one recent movie as an example. A movie everyone was going to see. And I said, well, a believer shouldn't see it, because it's got nudity in it.

And, you know, it's sexually explicit nudity, from what I understand. Not just like somebody at an operating table, which is still not, you know, you're not going to, hey, let's all get together and watch someone be operated on. I mean, that's not your way to spend the night anyway.

But I'm talking about sexually explicit nudity. And I just made the statement, obviously, if you're a child of God, you don't go see that. Common sense would tell you that.

As I said yesterday, that's not the kind of thing you put up on a big screen and watch in church. If you can't do it there, you don't do it at home. You don't do it in the movie theater.

Someone came up to me afterwards and said, we've never heard anybody say anything like that. We've never heard anybody make a comment like that. Seemed so radical to some of them.

Some people were upset by it. Some of you are going to go back to your home country. Some of you are going to go back to your home churches in America.

And you're going to be looked at as fanatical for the stance that you take. You have to walk in the light of others can. It may not be an area of weakness.

It may be, as I said, sometimes God doesn't let you do certain things because you're prone to mess up. Others do okay there, you can't. Others won't foul up in this situation, you will.

So God says, they can, you can't. But there are other things when the reason that you can't do it is because God has given you a greater glimpse of his holiness. God has given you a greater glimpse of what it really means to follow Jesus.

You got to understand this. We have been so far off for so long that we have really lost our conception of what it really means to follow Jesus. We think somebody's radical, God looks at them as fairly lukewarm.

I've said for years that what the world calls fanaticism and the church calls extremism, God calls normal. All I want to be is normal. I'm not trying to be some superstar.

I'm just trying to follow Jesus. Jesus said if anyone would come after me, if anyone wants to be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. Period.

You're going to have to deny yourself. You're going to have to say no to the flesh. You're going to have to say no to the world.

You're going to have to move out in a totally different system. There's a love of the world which is loving the people of the world. As a college professor who was baptized last night said, I love my husband.

I love God. I love my family. I love the world, meaning I love the people of the world.

There's a love of the world that's wrong. First John talks about it. Don't love the world, meaning the things that are in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them. Because everything that's in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, it's not of the Father, but it's of the world. And the world and its lusts are passing away.

And whoever does the will of God abides forever. You have to say no more to that. No more the love of the world.

If you own a car, you own it differently than a worldly person does. If you have a home, you have it in a different way than a worldly person does. You enjoy it.

You enjoy the Lord's blessing in it. In our time here of 70, 80 years, we need a place to stay. We need clothes on our back.

Many of us need specialized education, family, the whole thing. We have needs in this world. We enjoy them, but as people who are passing through.

As people who are not owned and governed by these things. This way God can bless you with an abundance and then he can say, all right, use it for something else and it's fine. Others can, you can't.

There's the world and us. Separation's been made. Embrace it, recognize it, die to the old, live to the new.

There is others can, you can't. Among believers, some of us are weak and God's protecting us. I remember one guy in college said, I'm not judging you for not praying more.

He said, but I'm so weak, I need to just pray a lot more than you do. He used to have a covenant with God that he would never talk to anybody in a conversation longer than he would talk to God in a day. So it wasn't a matter of if he was working and, you know, on the phone or telephone solicitation or lecturing or something like that.

And he was talking, it was just, if he was going to sit down and talk to you, give you a call and just talk to you as a friend. Or sit down across the table and have lunch and talk to you. He just made a covenant with God.

If he talked to, if he had lunch and talked to someone for an hour and a half, he'd make sure he spent at least an hour and a half with God in prayer. I remember he said, listen, don't, it's not that I'm so spiritual, I'm just weak, I need to pray more. I think we're all weak, we need to pray more.

Maybe others can and you can't because God's put a calling on your life. Maybe it's more than just a glimpse of his holiness. Maybe it's more than just an understanding of what it really means to follow Jesus.

Maybe there's a call. Do you want to be a specialized servant of God or not? Do you want to be or not? What do I mean by specialized? We are not the corporate blob of Christ, we are the corporate body. And you may notice that as I'm speaking, I'm not speaking with my ears.

Have you noticed that? I'm not hearing with my eyes. I'm not smelling with my teeth. When I, when I go to write books, I don't prop myself up on a high chair, very high and the computer low and then start to type with my feet.

Because I have hands that work. And when I get up to walk, I don't walk on my hands, I walk on these feet. Most of you do the same, basically.

You hear with the ears, see with the eyes, speak with the mouth. Most of you. Each of these things must be trained.

You have to learn how to type. If you speak a foreign language, you have to learn to understand it, pronounce it properly. You know, if you're a musician, you train your ear to hear.

If you're an athlete, you get in certain shape. What's God calling you to do? You're going to have to specialize. You're going to have to specialize.

It may mean, listen, if somebody's a track star, I can imagine this person out, there's one guy I heard about recently and he's now gotten it down to running two miles consecutive in under eight minutes. You know, last generation, generation before the break, the four minute barrier was huge, huge, huge, huge. To run a mile under a minute, now people do it all the time.

Now they've brought that down by more than ten seconds. But to run a mile and then run another mile and run both of them under four minutes, nobody's ever done. Till this guy, African.

People talked about his training regime is completely beyond description. When he, I don't know if he, you know, runs 50 miles a day, I don't know what his training regime is, but nobody can keep pace with that. Maybe you're that person, you're up early in the morning and you go by the houses and you see the lights aren't even on yet and you're running, running, running, running.

You got a purpose, you got a purpose. All your friends out there playing ball and you're there doing your exercises on your violin. Your colleagues are going out for a bowling night and you're there just with the word, pouring through it, pouring through it.

Friends are all going to the mall to go shopping and take the kids with them and you're just on your face weeping before God under a burden the whole day. Others can, you can't. What's God calling you to do? What's God putting his hand on you to do? Not everybody's going to understand it.

It's going to be different than other people. Oh yeah, we're all called to love Jesus. We're all called to pray.

We're all called to be in the word. We're all called to be witnesses. We're all called for fathers to be fathers and mothers to be mothers, husbands, wives, whatever our thing is, whoever we are, we have basic things we're all called to do.

But there are special things that he's giving you. There are specific things he's giving you. Be different, it's okay.

It doesn't mean you judge everybody else. Maybe the person practicing violin is judging the kid out there playing basketball all day, but one's going to be a basketball star and the other's going to be a musician and they're both working at things. You leave the servant to his master.

I'm not telling you what to do outside of the biblical commands to holiness and obedience and you're not telling me what to do. You might say, well, brother, you know, if you push too hard, you're going to get run down. Good, I agree with you.

Thank you for reminding me. But don't tell me I shouldn't be up until two or three or four in the morning writing. Don't tell me that.

I'm not getting up at six in the morning if I'm going to sleep at four. Otherwise, I wouldn't make it. We understand that.

And I'm not getting up at noon either. But every so often I'd like to. I know what I'm called to do.

I know what I've got to do. As long as there's proper rest, as long as I'm taking care of myself, as long as my family's in good shape, my relationship with God is fine. Why do I have to take all kinds of extra free time? Why do I have to? You know, people have commented, I shouldn't do this, you guys shouldn't do that.

We appreciate the input. We think these things through, but we have something God's given us to do. We have a calling.

We have a responsibility. And we'll see the fruit of it. We'll see the fruit of it.

And three years into this thing, God's saying, I'm with you. What is God calling you to do? Listen to me. There must be your cross that you take up, your cross that you take up.

Say, when I get saved, I die to the things of this world and to the lordship of my own life. That's true. But it goes beyond that.

We just stay on that for one more second, though. This is a true story. Happened last year.

You may have heard it. There was a pastor doing an outdoor water baptism. And a man came up on the line to get baptized wearing scuba gear.

It's a true story. We know the pastor, local guy, wearing scuba gear. Pastor saw him and said, you know, scared, surprised.

What are you doing? It's absolutely true. He said, well, he said, I'm new at all this. He said, but my sister got saved over at that revival.

And they told her there that when they baptize you, they hold you under the water until you're dead. Not kidding. Not kidding.

Now, I'm the one that normally says that, you know. At the end, if I talk to the people, I tell them with water baptism, we hold you under the water until you're dead. And then I tell them I'm only joking.

Well, now listen, something struck me, though. Something struck me. That's how a lot of us get baptized. We're in scuba gear because we don't really want to die. We don't really want to die. We want to go under. We want to have this religious experience. We want to do something symbolic. But we don't really want to die.

Die. Die. It's over.

Self-determination of your future. It's over. Listen, we are thrilled to be here.

These have been the most wonderful years of life being in the midst of the revival. And the school has been the most wonderful thing I've ever experienced. I've ever been involved with.

The love God's put in my heart for the students and the thrill that I have of seeing God raise them up and use them is indescribable. But by choice, we would not be living in Pensacola. By choice, we would not be building a home in Alabama.

We're New York Jews, you understand? I had to deal with my flesh again today, you know, driving behind people going 25 in a 35 mile an hour zone. At least there were one or two cars in the midst of the pickup trucks. We love the Southern hospitality.

We appreciate a lot of things about the culture. This church is our home. More than any church, it's been our home for a very long time.

I mean, we're at home. We're thrilled to be here. It's the only blessing in the midst of the intense battle that you go through in a spiritual environment like this.

But, you know, it hit me the other day. I said, honey, honey, we're building a home in Alabama. We talked about moving down here and our older girl is still in Maryland.

She's 21. Probably join us down towards the end of the year, beginning of next. And we were talking about moving down here and we said, you know, well, you know, you get a house in Florida, Alabama.

She said, Alabama? Nobody lives in Alabama. Alabama, Dad, we can't live in Alabama. And there are many sweet, fine people in Alabama.

Thank God. How many here are from Alabama? Aside from the fact you guys have to learn to talk English the way we do in New York. Aside from that.

Let me tell you something. You would feel more like a stranger if you moved to New York City. I mean, you'd be back in Alabama in a heartbeat.

I'm just saying it's what you're used to. You know, it's not who's better, what's better, although I wish people drive a little faster or something. But it's not a matter of that.

It's just a matter of what you're used to. We wouldn't be building a home here, nor would you be going to New York City by choice. Or going to Africa or India by choice.

That's just doing the Master's will. Wonderful. We're thrilled to be here.

If I could pick any, if I could pick anywhere in the world right now, I'd pick here because of the move of God. But in terms of just natural thinking, if we could just live anywhere, you know, where we lived in Maryland was great. It was beautiful.

I drove back into that community a few weeks ago. I just flew up to spend the day with our daughter Jan to have a birthday dinner with her. And then just flew back the next day and just drove through our old community and called my wife on the cell phone and said, honey, it's a nice community.

We moved out. Beautiful place over here we have. But God didn't ask me my opinion.

He didn't say, well, what do you want to do? Your call. How many, do we have anybody here that's been in ministry more than 30 years? Anybody? All right. Has God ever asked you for your counsel? Has he ever asked you for your opinion and your counsel? Even after 30 years, he's never asked me either.

I've been saved 27 now. He hasn't asked me. He doesn't say, look, I'm thinking of moving here.

What do you think about it? Give me some feedback. How will the people like it? What are the pros and the cons? He's not like that. He says now here, he does his will.

You either get with his will and are blessed, or you do your own thing and your curse. That's the choice you make. You either get under the rain and get wet, or you get out from the rain and get dry.

That's the choice you make. You either choose to obey him and love him and serve him with heart, soul, mind, strength, and so be rewarded on that day. Or you choose to do your own thing, even as a believer.

With, you have the certain things you won't do anymore. You won't go off there into adultery. You won't go off there into alcohol.

You won't go off there into extortion. You won't go off there into lying. But otherwise, you kind of live your life.

It's over. It's over. You want Jesus as your Lord.

You want revival. You want God's grace. It's over.

Colossians 3, you've died. Your life is now hidden with the Messiah and God. It's over.

You're dead. 1 Peter 4, the past time of your life was sufficient for doing all those sinful things. Now you live to do the will of God.

2 Corinthians 5 15, we now live to do the will of him who rose from the dead. That's what we live for. Others can, you can't.

As believers, maybe some people can do it and you can't because of weakness. Thank God that he's keeping you safe. Maybe others can and you can't because you've gotten a greater glimpse of the holiness of God and the love of God and the purity of God.

Or maybe others can and you can't because you've got a calling that you've got to work with. You've got a purpose you've got to cooperate with. What are you going to do with the rest of your life? I want you to think for a moment.

I want you to think for a moment. Ask yourself, have you been saved six months? Maybe you've been saved 60 years. How do you feel about things so far? How do you think God feels about things so far? Has your life been marked by, I live to do your will? Or has it been marked by self-will, self-determination? Oh, God's going to give you a lot of freedom and liberty.

He is. And there's a certain creativity he's put within us that he wants us to express as who we are. And you may dress a certain way and that's you.

It's not lewd, it's not suggestive, it's not immodest, that's you. Hey, be you. Be everything he made you to be.

Be as expressive of who he made you to be as you possibly can. That's just a way of living under his lordship also. But look at your life, has it been marked by self-will? You say, I don't really know the will of God for my life.

Don't cop out with that. You know that plenty of times you waste time when you could be redeeming time. Plenty of times things are questionable and compromising and you do that.

You may not know exactly what God's called you to do and exactly all the details of how your life is going to work itself out, but you certainly know things on a daily basis are pleasing and displeasing. Look at your life. Can you say to people, follow me the way I follow you? Can you say to people, my life is an example of a living sacrifice? I'm not perfect.

You can point out some areas where I need to grow. But everything in me is living to glorify God, the whole purpose of my life. When God got ahold of me and saved me in 1971, I was a high school student and the whole purpose of my life was to glorify Jesus.

You know why I went to college? See, God cleaned all the drugs and the junk out of my system. But you know why I went to college? I had no plans of going to college because I still had a mentality that was kind of like that. That's the establishment.

I don't need that. I hadn't changed my thinking about some of that when I got saved. I was a hippie generation.

I heard a guy preach on a Sunday morning on Jesus was a teenager, honor your father and mother. Jesus submitted to his parents. I came home.

My dad said, what was the sermon on? I told him. He said, well, how can you reconcile that with the fact that your mother and I want you to go to college more than anything else and you won't go? I said, I'll go. I went to college.

I never dreamed of having the academic studies and career that I ended up having. Never thought of it for a split second. I went to honor that.

And when God reinvigorated me in 82, after a cold time in my life, I was, I was finishing up my grad school work, finishing up my PhD. And I was working as a salesman in the secular world. And I lived my whole life to glorify God.

My whole, the whole purpose of my life from morning to tonight, even though I was working, even though I was in school, even though I had a family, it was to glorify God. You can do it in the secular world. You can

do it as a student.

You can do a quote in the ministry. It's all the same. Are you his completely and entirely? Is he calling you deeper? Is he speaking to you specifically? Others can.

You can. Is he laying his hand on you and calling you and working on you? It's a time for some radical change. Father, I pray that these

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