

Applying Psalm 1 to Life

by Paul Washer

To be blessed means to have entered into a covenant relationship with God by faith in Jesus Christ, being instructed in His Word, and walking in submission to it.

Duration: 1:13:15

Scripture: Psalm 1:1-4, Psalm 1:6, Matthew 6:33, John 14:6

Topics: "Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of deeply studying and meditating on the word of God. He compares it to a cow chewing its cud, extracting all the nutrients possible from the grass. The speaker warns against treating the word of God lightly and indulging in worldly distractions. He then delves into an analysis of Psalm 1, highlighting the blessings of those who do not follow the counsel of the wicked, stand in the path of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers. The sermon concludes with a powerful anecdote about a football coach teaching a young player the importance of commitment and perseverance.

Transcript

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither, and in whatever he does he prospers.

The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." Well, it seems rather strange to be in such a small building with such a big pulpit.

But I guess if that shows the prominence of the word of God, that'll be fine. We're going to look at Psalms 1 today, quietly, cautiously. Well, let me say it another way.

We're not so much going to look at Psalms 1 as we are, my intention is to look at you through Psalms 1. The purpose of preaching is not entertainment. It's not to astound people with passion. It's not to promote the preacher's sense of piety.

Look how he loves him when he speaks of him. Also, preaching is not to be turned into something of a manifestation of glory that never puts its feet on the ground. And so, I'm not so interested in preaching as I am seeing you change, seeing me change.

It's not going to be extravagant or elaborate. Hopefully it'll hit you somewhere to help you, to help you. Before I do that, before I turn to Psalms 1, I was reading this morning and just wanted to share a thought with you that I read.

It's from Blaise Pascal, the famous French mathematician, physicist, who came to the Christian faith. And he wrote a work called, in French, Pensees, which simply means thoughts. And the way he begins is, well, it's good for us to hear.

It's just good for us to hear how he begins this search and why he writes out his thoughts in the way he does. So I want you just to listen. It says, Before we examine the evidence of the truth of Christianity, I need to point out an inconsistency of those who are careless about the truth.

Yet it is vital to them, for it intimately affects their lives. Of all their miscalculations, this is what most blatantly shows up their blind folly. It is this.

This present life is momentary, but the state of death is eternal. How terribly important it is then to live in the light of the eternal since it ultimately affects all that we do or think. Since nothing is more obvious than this observation, how absurd is it to behave differently? And he will use this word absurd or ridiculous over and over.

That we as a people have a sense of eternity, and yet we're drawn to live for the present. And nothing could be more foolish. Nothing.

He goes on, Seen from this angle, how absurd it is for people to go through life without regard for their final destiny. Many of you, young people, you've heard your parents over and over share the gospel, family devotions. You treat it so lightly.

A video game, a song, a movie will grab more of your attention than the fact is that your youth is so fleeting. Life is fleeting. And you're going to die.

You're going to stand before God. Instead, they are led as they feel inclined and they indulge themselves unreflective and careless as though they could wipe out eternity and enjoy some passing happiness merely by repressing their thoughts. Kind of like burying your head in the sand to avoid a charging rhino.

It's been tried many times throughout history. It doesn't work. The rhino always arrives.

Yet death is real for it threatens us at every moment of time, while eternity is also real and is in this fact a threat of ultimate destruction and misery. This creates the prospect of terrible consequences. Indeed, it is the prospect of eternal damnation.

Yet people do not even bother to find out if eternity is merely an old wives tale. Though this stares them in the face, they do not even trouble to find out if the argument for it is valid. They have no idea whether they should or should not refuse to face up to this question.

What an appalling way to behave. I want you to think about that. You know, you can get involved in coming to a church over and over and over until it becomes nonsensical.

It's like you get punched so many times in a certain place in your body, you no longer feel it. That's the danger of being here. Hear something good.

The purpose of church, of gathering together, is not to hear something good. It's to guide us, these minuscule tiny beings that we are, through a labyrinth of life, to one day stand before the judgment throne of God and to hear our eternal destiny decided. Well, let's look at Psalms 1. How blessed is the man, verse 1, who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers.

Now, there's days and days of teaching, meditation, thought in just that little verse. And to read it, memorize it, go on about it, got that, put it in your catalog of things you've done, is very dangerous. Let's just look at it.

First of all, blessed. What does it mean in the Scriptures? I mean, comprehensively, when we look at Scripture, what does it mean to be blessed? Well, I've written out a simple definition just from several texts. It goes something like this.

The blessed are those who have entered into a covenant relationship with God. A true covenant, permanent relationship with God by faith. By faith in Jesus Christ.

They are being instructed in His word and walk in submission to it. Consequently, their lives are marked by peace, hope, joy and fruitfulness. Fruitfulness with regard to their character and their deeds.

Now, that's a lot being said there. Did that describe you? Now, I could give you some comfort and say, does that describe us? But I'm not going to do that. Don't want to do that.

I want you to be alone when you hear this. I don't want any comfort from an all-inclusive idea that we're all in this together. No, I want the spotlight to shine right on your heart.

I want you to think about you and what the word is saying. Is this you? Because it's supposed to be you. This is not poetry.

This is not some pie-in-the-sky philosophy written for those who just want to dream about things. Does this really describe you? Are you blessed? Let's ask ourselves some questions. Have you entered into a covenant relationship with God by faith in His Son? Look at me.

Have you done this? Answer yes or no. Have you entered into a covenant relationship with God through faith in His Son? Do you cling to His Son? Fall on His Son? Is His Son your only hope? Do you expect to swing out into eternity on that one scarlet thread that Jesus Christ died for my sins? Or do you just hear? Do you just agree? Do you just acknowledge that it's true? Is it the faith of your parents? Your faith of your parents will not help you one bit on the day of judgment. Is it your faith, your clinging, your grasp? Do you violently hold on to Jesus Christ as your only hope? That's the first mark of being blessed.

Next, then, are you being instructed in His Word? Now, don't talk to me about preaching and don't talk to me about being in a biblical church. I don't care. Are you personally being instructed consistently by the Word of God? Now, look at me again.

I am telling you now. We're not going to leave any prisoners this morning. I want to help you.

I want this sermon to matter. Are you consistently saturating your life in the Word of God? Are you learning the Word of God personally, privately, all alone? Is that you? I don't care if you're a homeschool mom, a homeschool dad. I don't care if you're moral, ethical.

I don't care. I don't care. Are you living? Are you living, holding on tenaciously to God's Word? Yes, young person, you have a family that gives you devotions.

It means nothing. Nothing. Do you go to the Word of God your own? On your own? On your own? Do you? Do you answer yes or no? It doesn't matter how pretty you look.

It doesn't matter how just otherworldly you appear in your dress. I don't care if you look like pride and prejudice. I don't care.

Do you have a relationship with God's Word? Do you? Mother, homeschool mom, do you have a relationship with God's Word? Are you consistently in God's Word? Are you growing in your knowledge of God's Word? If not, stop your homeschooling. Father, Christian, preacher. Are you? Change if you're not.

Don't just listen. Change. Now, also, do you consciously and intentionally walk in submission to His Word? Is the Word in your mind so that daily you are seeking to purposefully and consciously, it's a conscious decision to make a choice to submit to God's Word or not? To have it to be the great influence in your life or not? This is an active mental thing.

It's not just passive. It's not just hopeful it will happen. But you are purposefully doing it.

Like Paul describes the athlete, the Greek and Roman athlete, who purposely is thinking about the way he should strike his opponent, or the way he should run. Are you? Are you doing this? Are you doing this? And is your life marked? Is it marked by the markings of a blessed man or woman or young person? Peace. Do you actually, have you? Let me put it this way.

Can you recall having relished, relished, savored the fact that you now have peace with God and you are no longer an enemy? Have you ever thought about that? And delighted in it? If not, you probably know very little about having peace with God. Do you have also the peace of God in the midst of the turmoil of this world? We are supposed to. We are supposed to reflect the peace of God in the midst of all the things.

We are not like those who have no God, who have no hope, who have no strength, who have no one under them or above them or around them. But we do. He is under us.

He is above us. He builds a wall of fire around us. Have you grown in the Word to the point where you have peace in the midst of turmoil? Because of your knowledge of Him going on.

Do you have hope? Do you have hope? Or is it not even needed? You know, we've become a generation, especially in the West, that when you talk about hope, they go, Why? Why? I'm doing okay. I'm alright. I'm alright.

Why do I need to hope for something better? We've become dulled in our senses. We're entertained to death. We've become a brutish people.

We are tantalized by youth, and they just keep the hamster wheel going around and around and around, so that we no longer see the great realities of life, of growing old and weak and death. Enfermedad. What's the word in English? A weakness.

A sickness can come upon us in a moment and destroy everything we are. I remember during the war in Peru, we were there and the bombs and the blowing up and the death and the fear and the churches were filled and there was great hope. And then when all of that passed and peace came, everything became blasé again.

Do you have hope? Have you learned enough from Scripture to know that you're mortal? That your life could change drastically in a second, so that you come to the realization, My only hope is Jesus Christ, what God has done for me and Him. Do you hope for a future? Do you hope for a resurrection? Do you hope for something greater than this fodder we're being fed on this planet? Or are you totally content like a beast who will eat hay all day and not complain? Or has God regenerated your heart so that you want more and you hope for more? And your hope does not disappoint because you have a firm faith in Christ. Do you have hope? Do you have joy? I'm not talking about fun.

I'm not talking about some sort of physical excitement. I'm not talking about simply some chemical reaction. I'm talking about, have you ever thought about Jesus Christ and His death on Calvary with joy? You were joyful over it.

That good news really, really was good news to you. Have you ever tasted and seen that the Lord is good? Have you? Oh, what joy! Unspeakable and full of glory at the mention of His name. Or is the pronunciation of His name, is it met with a dull response in your heart? Yeah, Jesus.

Got that. Or can you hear the same old story over and over and over and over again and then tell somebody, no sir, don't stop speaking. Tell me one more time about the nails.

Tell me about the crown of thorns. Tell me of His resurrection one more time. Do you have joy at the mention of His name? Fruitfulness.

Are you intentionally, young people listen to me, are you intentionally and purposefully seeking to bear fruit for Him? Or is it all about your designs, your plans, your stuff? Are you purposefully and intentionally bearing fruit? Would someone look at you and say, fruitful. They're coming to appear to be more like Jesus in their life. Things happen around them.

People are helped by them. People are told the good news. People are lifted up by them.

And don't just think, young person, I'm not going to let you squirm out the door. Listen to me. This is not just about adults.

All Christians bear fruit. All Christians bear fruit. If someone is magnificently converted at the age of seven, they will bear fruit.

So don't think just because you kind of got it nailed down, Jesus died and rose again, that you're a Christian. Do you bear fruit? Do you want to bear fruit? Do you desire to bear more fruit? You see, this is blessed. And then a final question before we go on.

Do you have, and this is, I think, one of the greatest things that saddens my heart. Are you, as a Christian, conscious of your blessed state? I have a dear friend, a physician by the name of Dr. Nathan Berry. And it is not some sort of cliché.

It is a reality to him. If you ever ask him, Dr. Berry, how are you doing? The answer will always be the same. And it's not because he decided this or made it up or thinks it's cute.

His answer will always be, blessed. Blessed. So many Christians.

And that's why I don't want you to take this wrongly. I'm not trying to hurt you. Because it breaks my heart that so many Christians walk in condemnation and guilt and fear.

And without a cleansed conscience. Because they don't understand the magnificence of the work of God on their behalf through Jesus Christ. Every Christian.

It is your birthright. It is your birthright to have a sense of being blessed. Of just being blessed.

I'm blessed. That the weak say, what? I am strong. That the prostitutes say, I am clean.

You see. That we trade our sackcloth and ashes for a garland of praise and a magnificent robe. And you say, yes, yes, I want to get there.

No, no, no. You don't understand. You get there by acknowledging what God has done for you.

Not by reaching some level of spiritual productivity. You're blessed because of Him. And it's that that drives you.

With a magnificent motivation other than guilt and fear. Just happiness, joy that drives you and energizes you. To bear fruit.

Do you have a sense of blessedness? And what I want you to see is when you read, blessed is the man. I want you to learn to say this. Am I blessed? Do I have a sense of blessing? Because if I don't, I'm stopping right here.

And I'm not leaving this until this gets worked out in my life. Heard a story in Africa one time. A brother was preaching.

And he became quite annoyed with a young African man that was sitting on the front row. Because he would get there first. Sit on the front row.

And when the preacher would make his first point, the young man would jump up and run out. Every night. Didn't stay.

And finally, he cornered him in the back and he said, Brother, what are you doing? And he said, well, when I heard the first point and recognized it wasn't a reality in my life, I figured I didn't need to hear anymore. I just needed to go out and work that out. That's the way you listen to preaching.

You see that? It's real. You look, you read the Bible. You see, it's so dangerous to read the Bible sometimes over and over.

Why? Because you look at how blessed is the man and you never think, well, is this me? And if this is my inheritance, if it is my legacy, if it's what I'm supposed to, it's my birthright, and I'm not have a sense of blessing, what's wrong? Where's the problem? How do I fix this? How do I grow? Now, let's look at how the blessed are described. They're described negatively by what they do not do. And they're described positively by what they do.

And literally, guys. It this is this is a maxim for all your Christian life. Your Christian life will be determined by you not doing certain things that you should not do, and by you doing the things that you should do.

Now, let's look. It says what they do not do. They do not walk in the counsel of the wicked.

They do not stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. Now, there is some debate. We don't want to read too much into the text.

But overwhelmingly, there appears to be a digression here. And I think one of the reasons why the why the commentary writers and the theologians see this increase in straying from God in this passage is because it is so prominent in real life. We see this happen all the time, not only in others and not only in young Christians, but in an old preacher like me.

I see this in me and I want you to see it. And I want you to avoid it like the plague. Now, look first.

They come under the influence of the wicked. Look what it says. The counsel of the wicked, they come under the influence of the wicked somehow.

They just start hearing the wicked's voice. Then they accept the lifestyle of the wicked. It's not just influence now.

They're moving now on the same road. And they've accepted the counsel and they've joined them in their lifestyle. And then finally, what happens? What is the next thing? They join the wicked in their scorn and mocking of the righteous.

I've seen this happen even among true believers that later on proved they were true believers because they repented. Now, let's let's just look. Let's talk about you now.

How does this describe you? When you read this, do you just read it? Do you just memorize it? Is it just some textbook fact? Or do you actually look at this and take inventory on your life? I mean actually take inventory. Sit down and ask yourself the hard questions. Here's the first one.

Are there any influences of the wicked in your life that must be removed? Have you ever asked yourself that question? I'm astounded. Sometimes I'll be with a group of young men and they're talking about Jonathan Edwards and John Owens and theologians and reformed theology and this and that and everything else. And then one of them will say, hey, did you go see the Deadpool movie? What? You're talking about men who desired godliness and you went to see the most barbaric, violent, immoral filth that has been created in some time and you relished it? Do you see that? Do you see the influence? The way that you can be influenced? Are there things influencing your life that are actually the voice of the wicked? Friends, now we're not supposed to move off into some mountain somewhere and be with the holy because there'd be no one to be with and then sooner or later we'd have to separate from ourselves.

We're not called to do that. We're to interact with all men. We're to love all men.

But you never become unequally yoked. What does that mean? Two oxen and they put a wooden yoke like a beam over both their necks. There's no flexibility.

There's no moving around. If those oxen are not in agreement, then you've got a fight on your hands because one's going where the other's going or the other's going where the one's going or they're both just going to crash and sit down. If you ever come into a relationship with a person whose influence begins to

move you away from godliness, then you have to cut.

You have to cut it. If your right hand offends you, cut it off. If your right eye offends you, pluck it out.

That's a hyperbole. He doesn't mean to mutilate yourself. He is simply saying it's that important.

If there's an influence in your life that is leading you away from Scripture, from the Lord, it's changing your attitudes. It's changing your conversation. It's all you talk about now.

Jesus is now secondary. Then those things need to be operated on. They need to be operated on.

It can be friends. It can be media. I think the most powerful thing in the world today is media.

And the way Christians will gobble down the filth of media and excuse it is just beyond reason. Media has such a great impact. It's had a greater impact on the West in the last 50 years than preaching has.

I can tell you that. I got into a small debate with some students up in Toronto last weekend at the China Bridge thing. And they came to me with every kind of pop science theory you could possibly imagine with regard to the existence of the universe, the sustenance of the universe, everything.

It was unbelievable. And what was unbelievable is it was just... I said, you're like... I said, oh, I want to strangle you kids. You are not Andrea Vocelli of the music world.

You are not Pavarotti of the music world. You're over here like, I don't know, new kids on the block. You think that this is like real science.

This is just stuff you got off the internet. But it's their whole life. They can now deny the existence of God based upon pop media.

And if you don't think that has an impact on your own Christian life, you're wrong. As a matter of fact, sometimes it's good to ask yourself the question, when I became a new Christian and I was so fired up about walking with God, now ten years have passed or five years have passed. When I was a brand new Christian, would I have watched this? When I was a brand new Christian who just loved Jesus and just wanted Jesus, would I have rebuked me? That's a good question to ask.

Media, literature, that doesn't have as great an influence because basically people in the West don't read anymore. But literature can be positive, it can be negative. Media can be positive, it can be negative.

Friends can be positive, negative. But if it's drawing you away from God, you've got to get away from it. Now, let's go on, let's look at some other things.

Also, are there any areas of your life where you have accepted the lifestyle of the wicked? You've just gone ahead, you're moving now in that realm. One of the ways is, would your lifestyle bring you under any scrutiny by those who do not love God? Would they join you arm in arm with what you're now doing? Would they be friends with you on this new path that you're walking? You need to ask yourself, not only are there influences, but what influences have actually so impacted my thinking that now I've adopted that lifestyle as my own? And it can be with regard to thoughts, attitudes, deeds, speech, relationships, what you allow to enter into your mind through media, literature. Now, I'm going to sound like a 1950s preacher, but I don't care.

Clothing that's inappropriate. Physical relationships that are inappropriate, that you just go ahead and accept that. That's just the way you are, that's the new you.

You've thrown off the shackles of biblical Christianity, and now you're walking in the freedom of the lust of the flesh. Those are questions that we need to ask ourselves. And then finally, it says, sit in the seat of scoffers.

Now, just listen to this. We all know there are legalists out there, and legalism is dangerous. Legalism is when someone tries to have a right standing with God based upon their own works.

Legalism is also manifested when a person begins to live under a law that God never gave. Do you see that? And usually promote that law stringently among other people. That's legalism, and that's deadly.

We don't want that. But now here's a question. In your supposed freedom, or Christian liberty, do you ever find yourself scorning those who walk, act, and live with greater circumspection than you do, with greater caution than you do, and with a greater strictness to the law of God than you do? It is very easy to become a scoffer and a mocker.

You see, some woman come into the church, and she's got a dress down to her ankles, and her head is covered. Would you say, oh, look at that. What we should biblically say is this.

That is not necessarily commanded by God, but if she is doing it for her to have a clean conscience before the Lord, if she's doing it to honor the Lord, and she's not promoting that or demanding that from other people, then bless her, bless her. Oh, what a lovely thing. Do you see? Or do you find yourself immediately, have you got so much freedom in your life now to be like the world in the midst of your gracious Christianity, that anyone who tries to take the law of God or the commands of God seriously, you now scoff at them? Now, I will admit, you go to the book of Galatians, and Paul scoffs at the legalist.

He does. He attacks him head on. And legalism should not be regarded.

It should be denounced. But be very, very careful. Very careful.

Very careful. Lest you find yourself sitting with the wicked in the seat of scoffers and talking about people who are simply trying to have a clean conscience before God. Now, what do they do? What do the righteous do? What do the blessed do? Let's look in verse 2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night.

Now, they delight in the law of the Lord. Now, we can just stop there, can't we? And let's ask ourselves some hard and fast questions. Now, before we do, I want to tell you something about me in order to put this, make this real.

There are times when I find myself not delighting in the word of God. So I have to ask myself this question. And I tell you that because I want you to recognize, look, don't just hear these things.

But think about them. Be honest with yourself. The most broken, messed up believer among us is in a good condition as long as they'll be honest before God.

They'll hear the word and be honest about it. They're fine. Don't ever worry about that person.

It's the person who hears the word, hears the word, hears the word. It's like it's glancing off their forehead. They're not even thinking about what they're hearing.

Do you see that? Now, they delight in the law of the Lord. The Hebrew word means they take pleasure in. It brings them pleasure.

The word of God brings them pleasure. The commandments of God actually bring them pleasure. They are pleased with what God commands.

I remember a student one time, I think it was in Europe, and he said to me, he goes, you know, these laws subjecting us with these laws, these laws that enslave us, these laws that cramp our lifestyle. And I said, which law would that be? Is it the one that says you shall not take your neighbor's wife? Is that cramping your lifestyle? Maybe you need to change your lifestyle. Is it the one that says don't bear false witness against your neighbor? Is that the law that oppresses you? Do you see? The people of God see the law of God as good.

As good. Not bondage. Not burdensome, as we read in 1 John.

But a delight. A delight. Now, then he says, in his law, in God's law, he meditates day and night.

Now, let's go back. Now, just let your voice ring in your own head here. Do you delight in the law of God? If in your own brain you said, yes, then the response is, prove it.

Well, how do I prove it? You meditate in the law of God day and night. Now, let's re-ask the question. Do you delight in the law of God? This is not just a Hebrew idiom.

This is real. There have been people down through the ages that have been mightily used of God. And one of the things you find about them is they delight in the law of God.

And how do you know they did it? Because they meditated in it day and night. This is how they demonstrated their delight in the law of God. You see, if you just say, in my heart of hearts, I delight in the law of God, you're going to go astray.

If you say, ooh, I love to hear the law of God. Hold it. If I say, I love my wife, but I never spend time with her.

There's a problem. I never think of her. I love her passionately, and I never think of her.

There's a problem there, isn't there? There's a disconnect. I'm not living in reality. There's a sense of delusion, mental delusion.

Well, it's the same way. We can so often say, I delight in the law of God, which basically means I'm not opposed to it. I think it's good.

I think it's wonderful. Yeah, but do you think about it? Does it really bring you pleasure, enough pleasure so that it becomes the essential aspect of your life? That you want it as much as breath or food. You see, or personal relationships.

Now. I want you to see something here. It's his meditation talks about meditating.

His delight is in the law of God. And in his law, he meditates day and night. What does that mean? Think.

Think. Consider. Apply.

It's like the old illustration, which is probably a little bit too hard for our modern generation. The cow's stomach has four. Elite grass goes in there.

Digest it. Comes right back up again. Right back in his mouth.

And he chews it again. Digest it. Comes up.

He chews it again. Does that four times. And what's he doing? He's getting all the nutrients possible out of that grass.

That's the same idea here. That you're just going back and forth, drawing out more and more and more from the word of God. You're not inventing things.

You're not imagining things. You're not trying to see visions in your head. You are simply thinking and putting words together and comparing verse to verse and doing this.

And gradually you're growing and seeing how this beautiful tapestry of God's wisdom truly works in the life of a human being. So meditation, though, now that we've explained it, I want to say something very clearly. It is not the goal.

It's just like Bible study is not the goal. Did you know that? Prayer is not the goal. People mess up in this.

Back in the 80s, it was all about have you had your personal quiet time? It was like a checklist in your little discipleship book. So the goal became have your quiet time. Read the word.

Pray. That's not the goal. That's the means to the goal.

What is the goal? Conformity to Christ and fruitfulness. That's the goal. It is to we meditate, to understand and to be empowered, to obey and bear fruit.

Joshua, you say, well, this isn't very practical, really. Joshua had to go to war with all the tribes of Canaan. And what did God tell him to do? Meditate upon the law of God day and night.

Meditate upon the law of God day and night. The nation of Israel, because it was deported, was in disarray and confusion. No political stability, nothing.

What did God do? He sent Ezra. And what did Ezra do? He studied the law of God. He obeyed the law of God.

And he taught the law of God to God's people. John 15, 5 through 8. What is it about? It is the Father's will. He desires that we bear fruit.

But we bear fruit by our utter dependence upon Christ. And that utter dependence is manifested on his word abiding in us and us calling out to God in his name. His word of God abiding in us.

Frank Lombok, many of you, does anyone even know the name Frank Lombok? Well, if you were in the Philippines, you would all raise your hand and say, yes, we know Frank Lombok. Frank Lombok, his greatest goal in life was to spend one waking day in uninterrupted meditation on the person of Christ. That was his greatest goal in life.

And so automatically you're thinking, yeah, he's so heavenly minded. He's no earthly good. Well, he's known all over the Philippines because he taught the Philippines to read.

The reason why the Philippines is literate is he taught them to read. Even when I was in the Philippines a few years ago, I asked someone, Frank Lombok. The kid goes, yeah, he taught everybody to read.

So heavenly minded, he's no earthly good. He taught millions of people to be literate. Why? So that they could read the scriptures, so they could know Christ and so they could know God's world, literature and science and art.

Maybe we're so earthly minded, we're no heavenly good. And to become heavenly minded begins with the scriptures. It always begins there.

I tweeted something last year and man, did I get a barrage of just I was called a simpleton. Well, those are some of the finest things I've been called. But the guy said, you are just an utter simpleton.

And I thought literally, I thought when I tweeted this, everyone would be happy for once. I tweeted that and it's like, you're a simpleton. What did I tweet? Basically this, I don't know how I got it in 142 characters, but it was basically this.

When you find yourself with no spiritual power, you can almost always go back to the fact that you have not spent much time in the word of God and prayer. And that is the great cause of the spiritual weakness today. No, it's a simpleton answer.

And every time someone tells me that now personally, that's a simple answer. I go, do you struggle with spiritual power, vitality, virtue, life? Yes. How much time do you spend in the word? Well, I got to admit, I really struggle in that prayer.

Even worse. OK. Do you see now the idea of day and night? Means day and night.

I went through the Hebrew on this. It's what it means. Means day and night.

Now, let's be practical, though. What does this mean? There's an idea of. Dependence.

There's an idea of continuity. Of a life practice or life discipline. I have many friends who are doctors.

I've always had a great respect for the medical profession when it's practiced correctly. Requires a genius, in my opinion. And yet I've known those doctors.

I can recall one who's one of the most reputable surgeons in South Carolina, near Charleston. Good friend of mine. He graduated top of his class everywhere.

And he is a walking Bible. He literally meditates on scripture day and night while he is solving some of the most complex orthopedic issues you could ever imagine. The idea is that, you know.

If I'm doing a complex mathematical equation, which I don't do anymore now that I've graduated from the university. I still have to breathe. And somehow my body has learned to breathe without me concentrating much upon it.

But if I stop breathing, I know it. I've known men like that and women. They seem to breathe the Bible.

They seem to be saturated with the scriptures. Owen said of, you know, Owen, the great scholastic. The great erudito.

The great scholar. He said this about John Bunyan. John Bunyan was a tinker.

A tinker. That meant he fixed pots and pans. But he wrote some of the greatest theology that's been written.

Owen said of Bunyan, I'd give everything. All my books. Everything.

To have what he has. And they said this of Bunyan. That if you were to cut his veins.

The Bible would come out. He was in prison 12 years. That's where he wrote Pilgrim's Progress.

Second only to the Bible, I believe, in distribution. On old parchment using milk. Because you can smuggle it out.

And then when you pass the parchment over a flame, the milk burns. And you can see the letters. Pretty amazing.

He bled the Bible. He breathed the Bible. He did.

I believe that day and night means that the person. Will and word of God are the chief occupation of the mind. It is part of what it means to love the Lord your God with all your mind.

One of the most brilliant and to me entertaining. And I mean this in a wonderful way, not in a bad way. The most brilliant and wonderful, whimsical, brilliant.

Did I say that? Person on this planet is Robbie Zacharias. I love that guy. I mean, it's amazing.

And yet with him, the foundation of all that learning. Bible, Bible, Bible, Bible, Bible, Bible, more Bible. Now, there are passages we don't have time to get into.

But I can refer you to Colossians 3, 1 through 2. That talks about having our mind set on things above. I talk about Colossians 3, 16, that the word of Christ dwell in us. Dwell in us.

Now. Is this you? Is this you? And here's something. Whenever the Bible is preached.

Whenever your relationship with God is to be spoken of properly. It's always in present tense. You're only as spiritual as you are right now.

You can't rest on past laurels. You say, well, you know, I memorize scripture. I did this.

If it's always in past tense, you're in danger. We never talk about past tense. It's always present tense.

What is your life like now? Present tense. What are you doing now with the scriptures? Where are you now? Now, I want us to just look at a few things that are very practical. How do we.

Because I honestly hope, even though I know it brings you pain. I hope that some of you have said to yourself. I am not delighting in the law of the Lord.

I'm not doing it. I hope. That is.

Guys, I want to tell you something. That's the turnaround point. When you just hear and hear and hear and you never answer the question, you just keep going down the wrong way.

This is a turnaround point. If you can say in young people, this is you. I'm looking at you.

OK, also. Don't be. Don't be putting Christian on the end of your name.

If you think there's a subcategory of Christian that young people do not have to bear fruit or be interested in spiritual things and they're still Christian. It's not true. Have you come to the point maybe where you've said, you know, I just.

I don't delight in the law of the Lord. Not in a biblical definition. I don't delight in the law of the Lord.

Now, the question always is, is not to leave a group of people going. I don't delight in the law of the Lord or I don't love God. But to tell them, OK, how do we get out of this? How do we get out of this? I mean, really? Well, I'm going to tell you.

But the problem is it's not going to be complex and it's not going to be easy. But you can get out of it. You can get out of it.

First step. Recognize your failure. Just recognize your failure.

There's a book that I keep there, two books that I keep on my desk other than the Bible. One is, and you can I've had it since I was like 22, is the autobiography of George Mueller. Yellow Pages, Torn, that book.

The other book is actually a modern contemporary book that's secular. And it's it's been very helpful to me. It's called Talent is Overrated.

And it uses different people like Jerry Rice and other people. He was one of the greatest wide receivers who ever lived and yet really didn't have talent to be a wide receiver. And the things that he did to become the man he was, the player that he was.

And just copious amounts of other examples of people who did not buy into genetic fatalism, saying, well, I'm just this way. I don't have talent, can't do this. But they literally overcame it.

And they overcame it by sitting down strategically and saying, this is where I am. This is where I want to be. And I'm going to have to seriously change some things strategically.

I'm just going to have to discipline myself to do this because the desire is so strong. Jerry Rice wasn't fast. So what he did, he practiced his patterns to the point of like a half inch.

He would run those wide receiver patterns to a half inch. The coach would not allow him to share his off-season training program with anyone else on the team for fear it would kill them. He said, this is what I got to do.

And he wanted it so bad that he was willing to do that. And I admire that. I really do.

And in every individual, almost none of them have the talent or the gifting. They just want it. I heard one fighter say, I'm not talented.

I'm obsessed. I've got to have this. They're the people you call crazy.

Extreme. Yeah. Yeah, they are.

All of them. So first thing, recognize your failure. Secondly, recognize your dire need.

Wake up. It's impossible. It is impossible to live the Christian life without being saturated with the word of God.

It is impossible to live with vitality, strength, fruit. It's impossible. All the preaching from Anthony and Jamie and everyone else.

I'm sorry. It's not going to get you over the rope. It's not going to do it.

What it can do, though, is actually harden you. So that you're hearing all kinds of glorious things. It never changes you.

I'm too old to care about glorious things. I just want to change. I don't have as much time left as I did when I started.

I want to change. I want to be different. I want to be like him.

Not just say or write or study big things about him. Sooner or later, young people, college students. You just get so, and I'm going to put it this way.

You just get so stinking tired of words. It's like, just show me. Just, I just want to be different than I am.

More like him. So, you recognize your failure. You recognize, look, you can't live.

You can't, you can't. And I'm going to say it this way. It's going to hurt you.

You can't be a good husband. You can't be a good wife. You cannot be a good father.

You can't be a good mother. You can't be a good child. You can't be a good friend.

Not the kind of friend the Bible talks about. Apart from saturating your life in the Bible. You cannot, you cannot hear this.

Husband, wife, brother, sister. All of you hear this. You can't.

I love that, that I'm not really big on sports illustrations. But here I go with another one. I love it where that guy comes to this coach and says, I want to be a pro football player.

I want to be a pro football player. He says, meet me at the beach tomorrow. Meets him at the beach.

He thinks he's going to run wind sprints in the sand. A big old football coach says, follow me out into the water. Followed him out deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper.

Until he had to kind of tread water. Football coach is a pretty tall guy. He's still standing there.

And he said, well, are you out here treading water now? He said, yeah. And he grabbed him by the shoulders and the head and dunked him under. And that football coach was big and he was strong.

And he held him there. He held him there until that kid literally thought, I'm going to die. This man has lost his mind.

He's fighting with everything he's got. He's punching now. He's kicking.

He no longer thinks it's a game. He thinks he's going to die. And that coach, right when he's about to pass out, lifts him up out of that water and says, Now, when you want to play football as much as you wanted to breathe, come back to me and I'll trade him.

How much do you want to be like Jesus? But know this. You can't be like Jesus without the word any more than you can live without air. You can't.

And I used to think it was so hokey. I'd go into some homeschool houses. You know, they have verses all over the walls and everything else.

I no longer think that's hokey. I don't care how you do it. I don't care how you do it.

Put verses all over the wall. Do the Deuteronomy 6 thing. But mainly verses by themselves aren't going to help you.

You've got to study the scriptures yourself. So you've got to recognize your failure. You've got to recognize that you cannot live the Christian life without saturating your life in the word.

And then. Recognize this, this truth. I learned this from Jay Adams, the counselor, Jay Adams, and I. It's been one of the greatest helps to me.

You're either spiraling upward or you're spiraling downward. That's all there is to it. And you know what I'm talking about.

You decide you're going to work out one day. You work out one day and then work out the next. Each day you work out, it kind of gets easier to work out.

Each day you miss, it gets harder and harder to work out, doesn't it? It's the same way with the scriptures. And I'm telling you, it's true. The more you study the scriptures, the more acclimated, the more ready you are to study the scriptures.

And the more you back off of it, the harder it is to restart. Here's where we get to the meat. And it's this.

I want you, if you're in a situation right now where you're saying, I'm just not studying scripture. Next step. Begin to consume the scriptures as a matter of sheer discipline or simple obedience.

Do it as hard work. I don't even care if you think it's drudgery. I don't care if you like it.

Do it. Do it. You know one of the greatest problems with people? Is Christians will look at people who study the Bible a lot or read the Bible a lot.

Or they'll look at people who pray a lot. And this is what they'll say. They read the Bible a lot and they pray a lot because they're gifted at that.

And it's easy for them. You see how that sets you up? I'm not gifted at that. That's not easy for me.

It must not be my calling. What you've got to understand. I learned this from Dr. Piper.

One of the things you've got to understand. For every Christian, it's a battle. Do I study the Bible? Yes.

It is a battle. I don't want to get up in the morning sometimes. I don't want to stay up at night sometimes.

Do I pray? Do I intercede for nations? Yes, I do. Do I enjoy it many times? Absolutely not. It's a battle.

I have a dear friend right now that just came off a ventilator. Ask him if it's easy to breathe. He'll say it hurts like hell to breathe.

But he's not going to quit breathing. You do it because you must. But here's the wonderful thing that always happens.

What starts out, if you're truly Christian. What starts out as sheer discipline and raw boned obedience will turn into desire. You know this.

The times when you gave yourself more and more to study God's word. Did you not love God's word? The more you gave yourself to prayer. Could you not say to yourself.

Oh, I can't wait till this baby goes to sleep so I can hit my knees again. But don't think you're just necessarily start off with desire. You start off with this is a must.

This is a must. And I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it now.

I want to give you a few things to do. First of all, be intentional. I want to be an Olympic power lifter.

OK, what's your strategy? I don't have one. You're not going very far. Be intentional.

Find out what your capacity is. And don't be easy on yourself. I know some men who can read 10 chapters a day, 20 chapters a day.

And comprehend what they're reading. I know other men, just as good a man. But 3 chapters a day.

If they read any more, there's no reason to be reading. One of the things that I most recommend that is most neglected by the modern day Christian. Because we got little computer things where we can jump all over the place.

And find words and everything else. The old saints didn't have that. So in order to know certain things, they had to know something about everything.

That's why when we talk about our doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We usually go to John 14, John 16, right? The old guys, they went to Zephaniah. And you're thinking, was that even a book in the Bible? So one of the things that I would truly recommend you to do.

That I think is the most beneficial thing to do. Is to get you, first of all, a really good translation. I recommend the New American Standard.

I recommend ESV. I recommend New King James. And I'll tell you what I personally do.

Now I've got a Greek New Testament. And I've got all these different things. But when it comes to me, just reading the Bible for change.

I don't want to get caught up in 4 hours of trying to figure out what this preposition is. I don't want to get caught up in all these intricacies. I just want to read and enjoy the word.

And ask serious questions about me. And to do that. One of the things I most prefer.

I use the New American Standard Translation. But I use the ESV Study Notes. ESV Study Bible.

It's notes. And there are others. There's the Reformation Study Bible.

There's MacArthur's. There's others. But that's the one I use.

I find it it's most down the center. With regard to historical, biblical Christianity. And why do I do that? It's not that I read a chapter and then read the notes.

I just, I'm reading the chapter. I'm wanting to hear what God says. But then I come to some city or something.

That maybe I don't know where it is. And it kind of intrigues me. I can look down real quick.

In a matter of a few seconds. Get my bearings of what's going on. And get back up to the text.

I just want to enjoy God and the word. And start in Genesis. And read through Revelation.

And then do it over and over and over and over again. And that's why a study Bible is also very helpful. When you get into those minor prophets.

That you're not really accustomed to. You get kind of a bearing. Guys, it's not rocket science.

It's not brain surgery. Or like a friend of mine says. It's not rocket surgery.

You just read. And listen. And ask questions.

And find text that people sometimes will get in a memory system. I'm going to memorize scripture this way. And that's fine if your brains work that way.

But here's the thing I think is very important. Is memorize those scriptures that you most need now. You're going through times of trials.

Memorize James 1. You're having struggles in your studies with God's word. Memorize Psalms 1. Don't just do something in order to mark it off. That's the type of people we are, isn't it? I memorize this and this and this and this.

Memorize what you must have to live at that moment. Now, again I want to iterate something. Your discipline will turn into delight.

It will. It will. It will.

Get someone. I'm so tired of lone wolf, super spiritual Christianity. Get a friend who's going to start asking you some serious questions.

Get someone. I mean, I believe that personal discipleship and relationships and church is about that. It's not about being a Gestapo and going around trying to prove everybody's not doing what they're supposed

to be doing.

But you need to be intently concerned about your brothers and sisters in Christ. And it begins with the word of God. Now, I've gone on a long time.

But I just want let's just go quickly to verse three, the outcome of the blessed who availed themselves of God's word. And this is encouraging. It says in verse three, he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither.

And in whatever he does, he prospers. Number one, let me say this. Those who dig their roots deep into the word of God.

That's what it's saying. Those who dig their roots deep into the word of God will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water. Now, in Peru, in many places in Peru, it's very arid, just desert, some of the driest desert in the world.

And if you're flying over it with a bush pilot or something, you just see desert, desert, desert. And all of a sudden you see this little strip of green. Like a little line.

Why is that in the middle of the desert? Because that's where water is flowing. And that one little place. You do not have life without water.

You do not have spiritual life without the word of God. Without the word of God. Now, look what it says.

It says, planted by streams of water. Literally in Hebrew, channels of water. Now, in Hebrew, you want to always look at the plural.

Because a lot of times it's really telling of something. Like he spoke with the voice of many waters. Well, because they don't say little pond, big pond.

They don't say pond, ocean. They say water, smaller, waters. Great.

So what it's talking about here is abundance. Abundance. You know, we hear all these TV preachers and I'm so sick of, you know, their abundant life.

Meaning that you're going to go without any turmoil and you're going to have a Mercedes. That's not what it means. That's disgusting.

We want things much more greater. Much greater than a Mercedes. We want life.

We want love. We want the fruit of the spirit. We want to be a blessing to people.

Oh, and another thing. Those guys always talking on TV about, you know, you need to prosper. You'll be like a tree.

You bear fruit in its season. One thing those TV evangelists need to understand is that trees never eat their own fruit. If you're bearing fruit, it's to bless somebody else.

Not to bless yourself. Let's go on. The word planted denotes that the availability of spiritual life and power will not be passing or sporadic or intermittent, but permanent, enduring.

A permanent and enduring flow. You're planted like an oak. Your roots go deep down.

I remember one time we were going to build a church in Acerradero and there was a big lemon tree right in the way and we had to remove the lemon tree. It's one of the most difficult things you can do on the Amazon. Or that was the Marañon River.

Because they have a taproot that just goes down and down and down and down. We worked for two days to get that out of there. And that's the idea.

It's this idea of a taproot of a large tree sunk down deep into the water. It's a permanent flow. There's a consistency of power and life and vitality that are coming into that person.

And then they will yield their fruit in their season. This is very, very important. It shows a lot of wisdom.

That the benefits of your Bible study, the benefits of meditation, of digging deep in the word, they will not always be immediate. They will not always be immediate. It's by faith.

But they will be sure. They will come. There will be benefit.

Why is it just in their season? Why is fruit not always evident? There's three reasons that I see in the scripture. First of all, times of growth are needed. If a tree bears more fruit than its structure, its limb and trunk and root system can withstand, it will topple over.

Limbs will break. Things will be ruined. I've seen young Christians that had something of the power of God on their life.

Maybe a young preacher. And he didn't build up the structure of his life with the word of God. But he was mightily used in evangelism or something like that.

And the tree topples over. Why? Because he doesn't have the structure. He should have stepped back a little bit.

Some wiser men should have grabbed him and hid him a while. And taught him and got him in the word. You see.

So there's need to be able to grow, to sustain and hold up this fruit. And not topple or ruin the tree. Also, Jesus talks about in John 15.

He said the Father prunes us. Why does he prune us? He prunes us that we bear a lot more fruit. If you ever go to a place where someone's pruning either vines or pear trees.

You think. Oh my. What happened here? A crazy man with a chainsaw got loose.

You see a stump. Where's my fruit tree? You've killed it. But then you begin to see.

This thing comes back and bears even more fruit. Sometime the Lord will do that in your life. He will just seem like he tears you from limb to limb.

But it's in order to make those limbs more fruitful. And then there's just simply times of rest. Do you know that the land of Israel every seven years in the year of Jubilee.

It required a rest. The land required a rest from plowing and sowing and fruit bearing. It's the same way in our lives.

Sometimes God just can't use us all out full like that. Sometimes we just need to rest. And he will rest us when we don't want to rest.

Now. It says there leaf will not wither. Fruit may not always be evident, but life will.

Life will. That even when it seems like you're not bearing copious amounts of fruit. In the ministry and things like that.

There is life bubbling up. There is real genuine life going on. And people can see it.

It affects everyone around you. Life. Then finally.

Whatever they do, they prosper. Now, what does that mean? They are saturated. And I'll finish with this.

They are saturated in God's word. They have cultivated the mind of Christ. They have a keen understanding now of the purpose and will of God for their lives.

And they are empowered to carry out that will through the strength of the word and the spirit. They're blessed. They're blessed.

They're bountiful. And verse six is such an encouragement. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous.

What does that mean? You say, well, I thought he knew everything. I thought he knew the way of the wicked. How does it say he just knows the way of the righteous? We have to understand the Hebrew concept of no, which indicates intimacy.

Sometimes the greatest physical and sexual intimacy and the whole idea means this. The Lord is intimately acquainted with them and intensely concerned for their well-being and directly involved in their lives to bring about his desired outcome. Isn't that wonderful? He knows everything and he's intimately involved in every aspect of your life.

Doesn't that give you encouragement that when he now says, follow me by saturating your life in my word, you'll do so. Don't be like the wicked young people. Don't be chaff, lifeless, dead, useless, that is driven away and forgotten.

And is no more that perish and no word is ever spoken of them again. Don't be that way. Don't lose your life.

But be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season. Be like that. Give yourself to the word.

Sorry it's taking so long, but hopefully this will bring you some help. Strong medicine usually does. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for your word. I pray that you would use it in the life of your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

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