

# Reality Check Conference 2007

by Paul Washer

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*The greatest act of God's compassion is to regenerate us and make us new creatures, and to reveal himself to us and teach us his Word.*

**Duration:** 43:21

**Scripture:** Psalm 30:5, Isaiah 61:3, Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:48, John 16:20, Acts 16:25-26, 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

**Topics:** "Spiritual Awakening", "Heart Transformation"

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## Description

In this video, the speaker discusses the transformative power of receiving a revelation of God. He emphasizes that when someone truly hears the Gospel for the first time, it opens their heart and mind to the truth. This revelation also leads to a realization of one's own brokenness and sinfulness, causing a sense of mourning and crisis. However, the speaker assures that the Bible is a survival book, offering hope and guidance. He also highlights the responsibility that comes with receiving such a revelation, urging listeners to obey and guard their hearts in order to have a pure heart and actions.

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## Transcript

Here is a clip from session two. Do you realize that men much better than ourselves have longed to hear these words and did not hear them? Prophets rotted in prison with their ear pressed to the window longing to hear these words. Kings and scholars searched the night skies longing for the day when the Messiah would come and set things straight and teach men about God.

And it is our privilege. As I have always said, we are the most privileged people on the face of the earth. But I also want to talk to you about the responsibility that is ours to obey such teaching.

To whom much is given, much is required. Your privilege is great and your responsibility is equal to your privilege. For some of you, and I don't want to seem harsh, it would have been better that you never heard of Christ.

For some of you, it would be better that you never had this book or these words. Because you treat them so lightly. And we can become so dull at heart.

I have been preaching for longer, as Brother Jeff said, than some of you have been alive. But do you realize that when young Matt Fowler got up here and preached, it tore my soul in two. Lord, do you look in my heart and find no loyalty? Lord, do I serve you for the sake of ministry? Lord, do I serve you for your

protection? Lord, do I serve you for my family? Lord, if you took everything away from me, would I follow thee? Because Lord, when the smallest trial comes to me, I grumble.

I am not as righteous as Jode. You see, especially for you young guys out there so full of zeal and so full of desire to do the right thing. I so appreciate that.

I applaud what God has done in your life. But realize this, 25 years from now, you are going to be much more unholy than you are today. At least in your own estimation.

And any time a word is spoken, any time a person or a prophet or the tiniest member of the church stands up and says, something is wrong, you are going to look at your own heart and say, is it I, Lord? Is it I? We have a great responsibility. Also, we are going to learn from this what true Christianity and true Christian discipleship looks like. We got a good taste of it the last hour.

And hopefully we will be able to build upon that. Also, we are going to look at the true goal and greatest endeavor of the Christian life. And you know what that is? Conformity to the image of Jesus Christ.

A godly character. You have one problem. It is your lack of Christ-like character.

If you have problems with your parents, you have one problem. A lack of Christ-like character. If you have problems with your wife, you have one problem.

A lack of Christ-like character. I have been among those and I still do pray for power. And I pray for the unction of the Holy Spirit.

And I pursue those things. But Paul Washer's greatest need is to be more like Christ and less like him. And if I am to pursue anything, it shouldn't be ministry.

It should be the character of Jesus Christ. It goes on. We are going to learn something of what it means to be salt and light in this world.

We hear so many militant things about how to change the world. But the world is not changed through militant organizations or conservative politics. The world is changed through a godly man.

Through a godly woman. Through the youngest among us who has desired one thing and that is to be like Jesus Christ. You want to be great preachers? Then you want something that is not very worthy.

You want to be mightily used of God? You are putting the cart before the horse. Your greatest want should be Christ and conformity to Him. Not in some super spiritual monastic sort of way.

But to live in a real world with other real people doing real mundane things. But just like Jesus Christ would do them. We are also going to test the validity of our own profession of faith.

You see the Beatitudes are something that we ought to strive for. All these characteristics we ought to strive for them. But you need to realize something.

The old preachers also used them as a standard of measure to determine someone's conversion. You see, if you are born again, you will be salt. You can't help it.

If you are born again, you will be a light. And if you are born again, these things will be found in your life. Even though in their development they may be immature.

Even though in your struggle against sin it may be two steps forward and three steps back. But nevertheless, if you are truly born again, people are going to see these characteristics in your life in ever increasing measure. And now I'm not talking about a race of two weeks or two months or two years.

I'm talking about a race of a lifetime. That over the full course of your life, both men and angels are going to be able to see you truly were born in Zion. Because these characteristics, God has been working in your life throughout your life.

Now, let's go to the first phrase. When Jesus saw the crowds. Now, this phrase is found in several places in Matthew.

Let me read it to you. Matthew 14, 14. He saw a large crowd and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.

Matthew 15, 32. And Jesus called his disciples to him after seeing this large crowd and said, I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry for they might faint on the way.

Now, what do we learn from this? Something very important. For God to care for our temporal needs is a great manifestation of his compassion, his love and his mercy. When God heals people, when God feeds people, it is a tremendous demonstration of grace.

You see, people have questions, but many of their questions, it's not that they don't have answers. It's just that they're wrong questions. People will say, why do bad things happen to good people? That's not the question.

The question is, why does anything good happen at all in this fallen world? Nothing good should happen here. There should be no leaves on trees, no babies born, no lovers, no poetry, no joy, no dancing, nothing. The world should literally be like a stage set for the play *Waiting for Godot*, where it's all just gray and blanketed in death, and you see a man sitting on a park bench with a tree behind him, gray and dead and without a leaf.

So anytime God does anything good to anyone among Adam's fallen race, it is an act of grace. So to feed and to heal is a great work of God. But the greatest demonstration of God's compassion to men, the greatest, most loving thing that God could ever do for you, is to pull back the veil and reveal himself to you and reveal his will to you.

We can see this in the New Covenant promises in the Old Testament, where God declares that he's going to do a great, compassionate thing for his people. And this is what he says he's going to do. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws within them and on their hearts I will write it. And I will be their God and they shall be my people. And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they will all know me.

From the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord. What is this great work of compassion and love that God is going to do to a people? He is going to take out their heart of stone that cannot and will not respond to him. And he is going to replace that heart of stone with a heart of flesh, as it says in Ezekiel 36.

A heart that can respond to divine stimuli. And then, not on tablets of stone, but literally on that fleshly heart, supernaturally, in the power of the Holy Spirit, God is going to write his will into the very core of their being. And he will see to it, through this miraculous work of conversion, that he will be their God and they will be his people.

That is the greatest act of God's compassion. And so when Jesus sets down on this mountain and opens his mouth to teach the people, it is the kindest thing he could ever do. Now, let me ask you two questions.

First of all, do you see that? Do you see that the kindest thing God could ever do for you is not take care of your temporal needs? And to be honest with you, I didn't know what Matt was preaching until he got up and preached it. But do you see that it's not the greatest act of compassion? That he give you this perfect marriage, or that he give you this wonderful life, according to the standards of this world, or that he fix every hurt in you. You see, that's not the greatest thing he can do for you.

The greatest thing he can do for you is to regenerate you, to make you into a new creature that loves him. And then to open up your life, your mind, and your heart, and pour himself into you, and teach you the Word, and guide you with his Spirit. Now, next question.

If someone were to look at your life, would they say that the greatest thing you appreciate about God is that he, through the Word of God, and through his Spirit, has seen fit to teach you? Do you treat his Word, his written will, his revealed will, as the most precious gift that he's given to you? And do you dive into it, like me, into a box of chocolates? The only thing Jonathan Edwards and I have in common, other than saving grace, is that he was a chocoholic, and so am I. You give me chocolate, I devour it. Can you appreciate, do you appreciate the Word of God? Because you have nothing but the Word. You have nothing but the fact that he opens up his mouth and teaches you.

And what comes out of that mouth, your life depends upon it. Oh, young person, you want to wear Christian t-shirts and sing Christian music and hang around with Christian friends, but how many of you will wear out a Bible and say, I must know this, else I die. So the most compassionate thing he can ever do for you is to reveal himself to you.

And he's done that, if you're a believer, through his Spirit and through the Word. Now, the most horrifying judgment that God can send against you is to close himself off from you and tell you nothing. To hide from you.

To let you go on with just enough Christianity to soothe your defiled conscience, and yet you know not the truth. You live a Christianity that is no Christianity at all, and you cannot see how false your life is. Isn't it amazing? Have you ever thought about the nation of Israel? How they could literally go into the temple of God and supposedly worship the one true God, Yahweh, and then come right out and worship Baal, and not see a problem.

You say to yourself, how could someone be so totally blind? But then look at us. We say Jesus Christ is the only way. Yet do we cling to Him? We say only by the power of His Spirit can I prevail.

But do we cry out for ever increasing fillings and measures of the Spirit in our life? We say that without the Word of God we have no wisdom. We're like a lost blind man walking in a minefield without the Word of God. And yet, even though we say it, the Word of God sits on our desks.

Or we study it just to know more than everybody else. The Bible, if it's anything, it's a survival book. It is given to us to survive.

Here is a clip from session 3. George Mueller, who was one of the most frugal and obedient and even at times impoverished servants, impoverished himself for the benefit of the kingdom, he always said this, he said, I never want someone to look at me and see me worried or sad or confused or bewildered because I don't want them to think that my master is not a good master. One of the things about the Christian life, and that again is such a rebuke to me, is people ought to look at me and they ought to see a seriousness, they ought to see purpose, but they ought to see joy. C.S. Lewis said that was maybe one of the greatest characteristics of true Christianity.

Now, we're not going to go into the prosperity gospel, which we don't believe. The purpose of walking with Christ is not joy. But in walking with Christ, how can we not have joy? Even when our body is filled with sickness, trials are all around, and it seems that some of the things most beloved to us are being torn apart.

Yet we should still have joy because our joy and our blessedness is fixed, not in what we do, not in what others do to us, not in our circumstances, but our joy is fixed in the perfect person of Jesus Christ and the perfect work of Jesus Christ. Now, he says here in these next verses, he's going to teach us as Christians how to walk in blessedness, how to increase in blessedness, how to be happy. I know that sounds trite to some of you who are very spiritual.

But after all these years, I've realized that one of the most blessed fruits of Christianity is just being happy, being complete, being whole, having joy. And he's going to tell us how to do it. Now, before we look at this, I want to look at a contrast between the teachings of Jesus Christ and not just the modern day contemporary secular thought, but the teachings of Jesus Christ and a lot of teaching that goes on in the church today.

Let's look at a contrast because we do know this. Everybody wants to be happy. Everyone wants to be blessed.

The question is, how do we get there? And just a quick summary, let's look at a contrast. The world says, blessed are those who are self-confident and independent. The movers and shakers who grab the bull by the horns.

And they make out of their life what they want it to be. They forge with their own two hands their life. Jesus said, blessed are those who recognize their absolute need of God and live in constant dependence upon him.

The world says, blessed are those with healthy self-esteem and an optimistic view of mankind. Does that sound familiar? And Jesus said just the opposite. Blessed are those who mourn over their fallenness and the fallenness of their world.

But again, I want to catch you here. They mourn and they mourn enough so as to turn their eyes off of themselves and to place their eyes upon Jesus Christ and then their mourning is turned to joy. You see, there's a godly purpose for mourning.

We do not mourn for mourning's sake. We mourn because it causes us to take our eyes off of self and place our eyes upon Christ, the only one who can fill us. Now, the world says, blessed are the driven who

put themselves first, make their own plans and go to any length to get what they want.

Now, I want to tell you something. That is pumped into the head of our youth, even by parents. You go out there.

You do it. You win. You get what you want.

No one's going to give it to you. You take it. Jesus says, blessed are the meek who seek the glory of God, His purpose in the world and who submit to His will.

The world says, blessed are those who are satisfied with the priorities and treasures of this world. One of the great ways you can tell whether or not you're converted is this. Are you so satisfied with the things of this world that you don't need Jesus, except for that little thing you do on Sunday? You're so filled with the world, its activities, its things, its ideas, its dreams, its visions, its purposes, that you don't need to be satisfied in Christ.

Jesus said, blessed are those who recognize the temporal nature of this world and hunger and thirst for God, for God's kingdom, and greater conformity to His will. I would put it this way. Blessed are those who recognize this is not their home.

They are strangers, and they are pilgrims, and they are outcasts, and if they try to fit into this world, they're like trying to stick a square peg in a round hole. They just don't fit. Blessed are the misfits.

And this is, blessed are those who demand the best from others and distribute rewards and punishments based on performance. I'll give you exactly what you deserve. I had a young man one time, I was praying at the front of the church, and it was during a meeting, and a lot of people had come forward, and a young man sat, kneeled down right beside me, and began to pray, God, I just want You to give me what I deserve.

I stopped him. I tapped him on the shoulder. I stopped him.

I said, no. No. The last thing you want is for God to give you what you deserve.

Because, young man, you deserve the deepest part of hell. But at the same time, we have to be careful. If we realize that we do not want what we deserve, but desire the grace of God, as David Miller said, those who believe in sovereign grace ought to have some of their own.

If we believe that God has granted us grace, we should grant grace to others. And then Jesus says, blessed are the merciful who recognize God's mercy in their own lives and seek to reflect that mercy in the lives of others. The world says, blessed are those with a singular devotion to self, who put themselves first and are willing to compromise all other loyalties in order to attain their goals.

Again, if you do not think that's not a main theme in this world, then you have deaf ears and blind eyes. Jesus says, blessed are the pure in heart. That doesn't mean some person with a monastic lifestyle who lives on a mountain.

But blessed are the pure in heart who have an undivided loyalty to God and the advancement of His kingdom. The world says, blessed are those who make self-preservation their highest goal. One of the greatest sins, and I'm going to say this, recognize that I have the greatest respect for pastors.

I think it's the highest calling in the kingdom. But one of the greatest sins of pastors in America today is self-preservation. To preserve self, they will turn away from preaching the truth.

Jesus said, blessed are those who risk themselves and everything they have for the promotion of God's peace in the world. The world says, blessed are the moderately religious who have the respect of this world and are never labeled fanatical. Jesus said, blessed are those whose conformity to Christ and passion for truth are so evident that they are disdained and persecuted by this world and by the moderately religious.

But Jesus tells us the way to be truly happy. There is an initial step. There are things that must be done.

There are workings of God's Spirit in our heart that must take place before we can be truly happy. And one of them is to be impoverished, seeing our sin, and the other is to be broken over that and to actually mourn. Now I want you to note here that when it said, blessed are those who mourn, it's a present tense participle and that's very important.

What does it mean? Blessed are those whose lives are marked by mourning over sin. A characteristic of their life is that when the Holy Spirit or a brother or sister comes and points out a real sin in their life, they're broken over it. They've heard about it.

And they may fight with it for a while. They may wrangle with you for a while. They may not see it that quickly, but eventually they're going to come to see, yes, that's sin and it hurts me.

One of the greatest marks of being a genuine Christian is not sinless perfection. One of the greatest marks of genuine Christianity is that when we sin, we are sensitive to it and that sensitivity leads us to contrition and brokenness and ultimately confession. Christians are confessional people and that doesn't just mean that we confess Jesus as Lord, but we're constantly agreeing with the Lord about ourselves.

The word confession, *homologeō*, means to speak the same thing that God speaks to you through His Word and says, you have anger in your heart. Confession is not, Lord, forgive me for my sins. Confession is, Lord, I hear You and I speak the same thing.

You say I have anger in my heart. You say I was proud at that moment. Lord, I speak back to You the same thing.

I agree with You about me. I confess that what You tell me is right and I repent. Now, I want us just to look at a few things here for a moment.

Just some examples of biblical mourning. Ezra 9.5 And I said, oh my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God. Has this ever been a reality in your life? Does it continue at times to be a reality in your life? Have you ever been ashamed, not before people because you got caught, but before God alone with Him? Have you ever been ashamed and embarrassed? Luke chapter 18, verses 13 and 14.

But the tax collector standing some distance away was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. We all know what Jesus said about him. This one went through his house justified.

Because he saw the reality of his sin and he cried out for mercy. Now, James chapter 4, verses 9 and 10. Be miserable and mourn and weep.

Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humber yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you. You read a text like this and people will say, you're unbalanced and you're leading people into depression and all sorts of emotional maladies.

Isn't it amazing that if I talk about the happiness in the Lord, no one will come to me after the service and say, you're not balanced. Because you didn't mention mourning. But if you mention mourning nowadays, all these preachers are so afraid that the congregation is so fragile, they'll go out and commit suicide or something.

But there is a sense in which there is an unbiblical mourning, an unbiblical repentance that leads to death like we see in Judas. But there is a real genuine mourning and repentance that comes from God and it leads to life because it leads us to Christ. I want you to look at, just for a moment, listen to this in 2 Corinthians 7, verses 9 and 10.

Listen to what Paul says. I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of genuine repentance. Paul says, I am glad that you saw your sin.

I am glad that it created sorrow in you for this reason. Sin. It caused you to turn back to God.

And then he goes on and he says, now listen, this is very important. For you were made sorrowful, listen to this, according to the will of God. It was God's will to make you sorrowful.

Literally, it can be translated this way, you were made sorrowful according to God. It was God's doing. I remember preaching one time and as I was preaching, about the middle way through the sermon, people started weeping, just all over the congregation.

And they just started coming forward and they're crying. And the leader of the counselors kept looking at me like, shouldn't we come forward and help them? And I said no. And then I realized they were going to do it anyway, so I went down and I stopped them.

And this is what I told them. I said, don't you touch the ark of God. Don't you try to comfort people that God Himself is wounding.

God must wound you. There must be a crisis in order for you to be saved. You must come to grips with who He is and what you are, and the heinous nature of sin, the sinfulness of sin, in order for you to come to Christ and see Him as precious.

But even after your conversion, there is a sense in which sorrow and mourning can be biblical and should continue. Now, I want to share with you just something about the Christian life. How it truly works.

This is about the closest to a drama we're going to get. You're a lost person. You know nothing of the revelation of God except what's been written on your heart and you've pressed it down and restrained it.

But then one day, even though maybe you've been in church a million times, one day, you hear the Gospel. It may be the only sermon that the preacher's ever preached. He's preached this sermon to you 1,000 times, but you've never heard it.

But then one day, you walk in the church and he preaches that message, and God opens up your heart. He opens up your mind. He renews you.

He speaks to you. And you hear that message for the first time in your life. What has happened? You have received a revelation of who God is.

And in seeing a revelation of who God is, you have also caught a glimpse of who you are. And it causes you to mourn. You have a crisis.

You break in two. But you're not left there to despair. Why? Because with the revelation of the holiness and the righteousness of God and the revelation of your sin, there is also, for the first time, the revelation of the grace of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

He's absolutely beautiful to you. And you run to Him. And you're swallowed up in joy.

Day one. Now day two. You start reading His Word.

You start fellowshiping with godly people. And what happens? Through the reading of His Word and the continuing work of sanctification through the Spirit of God, you begin to see more of the holiness of God and more of your poverty. And your mourning becomes deeper.

But at the same time, you see more of the grace of God in Jesus Christ and your joy becomes greater. And then throughout your entire life, what's happening? There is ever-increasing revelations of God, ever-increasing revelations of your need and your weakness, and ever-increasing revelations of the grace of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So at the end of your life, you are far more broken and far more mourning than you could have ever dreamed when you first began, and yet your joy cannot be described.

But not only that, there has been a transference. There has been an exchange. When a person starts in the Christian life, for the most part, the immature Christian finds his or her joy in his or her performance.

And so their life is just so unstable. They do good one day, they're excited. They do terrible the next day and they're down and they're depressed and everything.

But what happens? Gradually, they begin to put less and less hope, trust less and less in their own performance as the years go by and there's a transference in which their eyes are taken off of themselves. They no longer become the source of their own joy and what they're looking at and the source of their life is the finished work of a perfect Savior. Here is a clip.

The point is many of you will study the Bible, many of you will pray, many of you will seek out godly fellowship, and yet at the same time, you do not make that much progress with regard to purity of your heart because you're constantly allowing filth to be pumped in. Five seconds of filth on a television will take away two hours of good Bible study. You have to guard your heart.

Why? Jesus has already told us in Matthew 15 that from the heart springs everything. If you want your actions to be pure, your heart must be pure. And how can we have a pure heart? It's by guarding it, protecting it.

Do not be transformed by this world. Do not be conformed to it. Do not allow it to get near you.

Years ago, when I was a struggling young street preacher, Leonard Ravenhill sent me a track and it said, others can, you cannot. I don't agree with everything in the track, but there's enough there that I agree with. And what he was basically saying, you want to be used of God, then even what others think they have freedom to do, you must not do.

You must guard your hearts. There are certain things you cannot do if you want to be a useful instrument to God and you want to have a pure heart. You must cut yourself off from that which contaminates.

Years ago, a concert violinist played his last concert, an old man, marvelously. And a young student came up to him afterwards and said, sir, I would give my life to play the violin like you. And he said, young man, I have given my life to play the violin like me.

You must give yourself to these things. Listen to what Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4.16. Pay attention to yourself and to your teaching. Oftentimes we are so concerned about what we know, but we're not taking enough concern for our own hearts and guarding them.

Now why am I telling you this? Well, because Scripture tells you this. But there's another reason. One day when some of you young people have children, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about.

There is a love that you have for your children. A desire to protect them. I have a little six-and-a-half-month-old daughter named Rowan.

And she's just beautiful. She took after her mom. I love going in in the morning and just watching her.

I mean, my boys, you know, they all sleep in bearskins and everything, but my little girl, she's got like pink on and little soft things and she's just so beautiful laying there. The greatest joy of my morning is to get up and walk over there and look at her. Not my boys.

When they wake up, they smell like they've slept all night with a dead shrimp in their mouth. But she's different. She's just there, so pretty.

What would happen if one morning I go in there and there's my daughter. The sheets are all soiled with filth and wrapped around her writhing is a filthy serpent that's already dug its fangs into her neck. And she's dark and soiled and spotted.

The anger. The pain. That's why we don't entertain here.

This is not a game. There is a serpent out there. And those of you who are children of God, He wants to wrap His filth around you and soil you.

And He wants to stick His fangs in you. And if we are men of God, we love the children of God and it breaks our heart so we don't have time for silly dramas and smoke and dry ice and parties and laughter. We want to tell you there's a war going on.

And your life depends upon you following truth. Some of you will leave here and grow older and destroy your lives. Some of you will stand before God one day and be thrown in hell.

This is the burden of a man of God. Not to make sure that you have self-esteem or that your checkbook is balanced or you have your best life now. The great thing is this.

Will you not only survive, but will you triumph in Christ? And to do that, you must give great concern for yourself, for your heart. Now, remember that I said purity of heart deals with a heart that is not mixed or alloyed. Let me put it this way.

It has no competing loyalties. It has one King, and that is Jesus Christ, and one law, that is the Word of God. Now, one of the things that we must do... Well, first of all, let me talk about what God is doing.

One of the things God does with a man when He saves him is He begins to destroy all the idols in his life. And that's from Ezekiel 36, a new covenant promise. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness.

I will destroy all your idols. If I were to have to take a life verse that most describes my life, it would be that. As I look back over 25 years, I see this.

God sovereignly working to cleanse me from my filthiness and destroy all the idols in my life no matter the cost. No matter the cost. As I often say, and you've probably heard, my bones aren't doing very well.

They haven't been doing well since I was a teenager. I've got more metal in me than a Tonka truck. I'm breaking down all over the place.

And I've got news for all the TV preachers. It's not the work of the devil. It's the work of God.

Just breaking. Destroying all that will not last in order to replace it with something else. So there is a real sense if you belong to God, what is He going to do? He is going to be constantly working to tear the idols out of your life so that He and He alone is King because He's the only one who can satisfy.

The only one. But there's something that we should do also. We should be hard at work destroying all the competing loyalties in our heart.

Listen to what Jesus says in this same chapter in verse 29 and 30. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you. For it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you. For it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. We must look at our lives.

We must sit down and think, do I have competing loyalties in my heart? And if I do, I need to put them away. And not be apathetic or even timid, but do radical surgery on our own hearts. There are even good things that the Lord can give us that can become idols in our life that keep the Lord from reigning there.

Let me give you a perfect example. Isaac was God's promise to Abraham. And what a wonderful promise.

But it seems as though Isaac, the gift, started having too much importance possibly in the life of that old man. Radical surgery required. Abraham, take your son, your only son.

Take him up on that mount. Slaughter him. When that old man came down with that knife, his heart was free.

When he made that decision, God above all things, his heart was set free. And God stopped his hand. Do you want Him? We live in a generation that says you can have your cake and eat it too.

But God says, no. God will bless you with so many good things and so many aspects of common grace. He will give you the desires of your heart so many times over as He has me.

But at the same time, He will make sure to guard you so that those things do not become idols in your life. And you must be sure to guard you.

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# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

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