

The Joy of Giving It All (Part 3)

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of presenting your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and living a life that corresponds with your internal reality.

Duration: 1:03:03

Scripture: Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1-2, Philippians 4:8, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Mental Discipline", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the analogy of building a fence to illustrate the importance of guarding our minds and thoughts. He emphasizes the need to focus on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and of good report. By surrounding ourselves with these 'fence posts,' we can filter out negative influences and distractions. The speaker also highlights the importance of seeking strength from Christ rather than relying on our own efforts, and encourages the congregation to prioritize seeking God, obeying His word, and ministering to others.

Transcript

Well, it's a great privilege to be here tonight. And this weekend we seem to have had a lot of our family that's been on the road and not a great number of people here this weekend. You know, when I was a young preacher, I'll never forget, I was starting a mission in Peru and, man, it was just difficult.

Because, I mean, one Sunday I'd be preaching and there'd be 50, 55 people there and I'd think, man, the mission has taken off. And then the next Sunday I'd get up and there'd be like six people. And as a young minister, boy, I'd be so mad there'd be six people in the congregation.

I'd just be lighting everybody on fire. Then one day I realized something. I'm beating to death the ones who are faithful.

And, you know, here's the thing. Everybody who needs to be here tonight is here. And many of our brothers and sisters who aren't here probably have good reason for not being here.

And this is not about beating anybody to death. Because this is not about who's got the biggest number. It's about ministering to God's people.

That's what it's about. You know, somebody might not even be here tonight because they're out soul winning. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Someone might be finishing up their Thanksgiving weekend and they've worked hard for months and they just need to rest. Praise the Lord.

Maybe someone's meeting with a family member, you know, over more turkey and getting to be an influence on their life. And that's what I want us to see. This church is not a competition.

It's not. It's about ministering to God's people. And it's about, you know, getting through all these hurdles so that we can do something that I haven't heard much of around here.

And it's a little word called evangelism. Now, going out and telling people about Jesus Christ in this city that so needs to know about Jesus. Now, let's go to Romans chapter 12.

I'm not making much progress here in this book. Today I did one word. That just goes to show you how much truth is in the Bible.

It's Romans chapter 12, verse one. We'll go ahead and read that. Everyone who wants to can stand.

Says, therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Let's pray.

Father, I pray that your word would make its way into our lives and change us. In Jesus name, Amen. You know, I noticed when I first came here to preach, I didn't know that I was supposed to do this.

But when I started reading the text, everyone stood up. And I think that's good. That's biblical.

I mean, there's a biblical precedent for doing it. And I think that's wonderful. But let me share something with you.

Be very, very careful about something. And it's this. You remember when we had the baby dedication a while back? I didn't ask anyone in the congregation to make a commitment to pray for the couples or the babies.

Someone asked me, why not? And I said, well, I didn't want to lead the congregation into sin. And they said, what do you mean? I said, you know, we forget today how solemn a vow is. And if after those people had gotten up here, and many of them you did not know personally, if I would have said, now who wants to make a commitment to pray for them? Most all of you would have raised your hand.

But look what I was doing. I would be leading you to make a superficial commitment that you probably wouldn't have followed through on. Ritual is a very dangerous thing.

Now, I think standing for the reading of God's Word is a wonderful thing. It shows respect. But at the same time, look at what you're doing.

You're involving yourself freely and gladly into a ritual of standing to hear the reading of God's Word. Now, that's a biblical ritual. It's a fine thing.

But in another way, you're committing yourself in a greater degree publicly that can cause a greater degree of hypocrisy. You're standing for the reading of the Word, which is a biblical ritual. But then again,

if you walk out these doors or go back to your house and don't practice the Word, you've publicly declared yourself to be something that inwardly and secretly you're not.

You see what I'm saying? That's a wonderful thing. And I would like to see it continue on. But I want you to realize something.

Jesus Christ is more concerned about how you live this thing. And you honor this Word of His, not by a public declaration of just simply standing. You honor it by doing it.

That's very, very important to honor God's Word. The only thing that will fix our lives, the only thing that will fix our families, our homes, everything is the Word of God. And it's submitting to it, submitting to it.

So we're in Romans 12 and he says, therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies. Now, in the last two sermons, we've dealt with the phrase that I just read. Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies.

God is calling every believer to literally die to self and give their life away, to present their life to God, to put their life at God's disposal. The motivation for that is the mercy of God, which means I am motivated to lay down my life and give it away to God and become an obedient servant of his because he sent his son, Jesus Christ, to die for me and has purchased me. Now, we are to present our bodies.

Now, this is extremely, extremely important. It's just extremely important. Now, I want you to notice something here.

It's kind of funny in a way, but then again, it's kind of very sad in a way. He says present your body. He doesn't say present your heart.

And why is he doing that? He's trying to make the rubber hit the road. He's trying to prove a point. Well, here people say, well, I've given Jesus my heart.

Yeah, but have you given him everything else? I've seen people in gross sin and immorality, and when I've talked to them about it, they said, but I love Jesus with all my heart. Well, that's wonderful, but he wants all your body. You see, you can make these great glowing spiritual declarations.

It's like I heard one guy say one time, you love Jesus with all your heart. You love Jesus with your blood pumping muscle. What are you trying to say? The evidence that there is an internal reality is that there is external action that conforms to that reality.

Your body. The way you physically, really, practically live demonstrates your degree of devotion. Do you see that? So it doesn't matter really what you feel or what you proclaim.

It doesn't really matter. Romantic, emotional gospel statements. He says, offer your body.

All that you are now, there is a problem, theological problem that I'll give you today. It's called the difference between a dichotomy and a trichotomy. Many people in America and in modern contemporary theology, they refer to man as a trichotomy.

Three parts, you know, body, soul and spirit. Well, that's I don't want to get in a fight or anything like that, but that's a big Greek idea. The Hebrew idea is different.

It really is. The Hebrew idea is this man is spirit or spiritual and man is material or physical. And when Jesus says you should love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, he's not trying to break down the human psyche for you.

He's saying simply this with every thing you are, you are to love God. And when he says here that we're to present our bodies, he is saying with every thing you are. Now, why didn't he say love him with your heart? Well, he's saying this, if you love him with your body, it's evidence you love him with your heart.

But if you say you love him with your heart and your body doesn't correspond, there's a problem. You hear people say all the time, well, you can't judge a book by its cover. Yes, you can.

And you do it every day. You do it every day. Let's say you're up north and you're in Chicago.

You sit down on the L, you sit down there in the subway. Let me ask you a question. You're going to sit down beside an 85 year old woman that looks like your grandmother holding out a bag of cookies and knitting.

Are you going to sit beside a guy with tattoos, with earrings, with things printed all over his face that said, you know, with a shirt on that says, I hear voices and they don't like you. And he's got two switchblades. Who are you going to sit down beside? It's just a matter of fact, isn't it? External reveals internal.

And so he is saying to you this. Get real, offer, offer you to God in a real way. Now, this corresponds with some other scriptures that also use the word body.

I just want you to listen in First Corinthians six, verse 19 and 20. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and that you are not your own? You have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.

What Paul is simply telling this church in Corinth that lived in a place much like Austin, very secular, very sensual, all about the physical. What Paul is telling them, look, the physical, the body is so important in this city. Well, I want you to know it is so important to God.

You need to offer your body to God. You need to live as one who realizes that their body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. You're not your own.

You were bought with a price. Now, here's something also that's very, very important. There is a Greek idea that we see it in coming out a little bit in Colossians, a little bit in First John, a heresy there.

It's this idea that, well, God is spirit. So spirit is all that's important. And whatever you do in the physical body really doesn't matter in the spiritual realm.

Well, the Bible teaches just the opposite of that. God made the body, it's his. God will one day resurrect the body, the body is important in Christianity and the way one uses their body.

And what I mean, your physical, your practical doings and workings, the way you live, the way we can see it. Gives great evidence as to how you are internally. Now, he also says in Romans, and this is so important in chapter six, verse 11 through 13, he says, even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lust and do not go on presenting the members of your body as to sin as instruments of unrighteousness. But present yourself to God as those alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. You are to realize, according to Paul in First Corinthians, that your body is important.

It is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. And you're to live in purity. It is to be a thing devoted to God.

The temple was devoted to God. Your body is to be devoted to God. And in the same way, you are to offer the instruments of your body.

Eyes, ears, mouth, hands, everything, not to unrighteousness as instruments of unrighteousness to do sin, but you're to offer your body to God. Every part of you to God. Every part, and it's so, so very important, there is just so much to be said about these two passages, but I have to go on.

The idea is this, everything that you are is to be offered to him. Your mind is to be offered to him, your eyes, your ears, your tongue, your hands, your feet, everything surrendered unto him, being brought into submission to his will to live out all that you are according to what he desires. That's God's passion.

Now, I wanted you to note that it says here a living sacrifice. Now, this is so, so very important. First of all, a sacrifice is pleasing to God because it's a living sacrifice and it's a living sacrifice because he made it alive.

Now, the point here is not is more than just a technicality. I want you to think about something. Most people, even under the guise of Christianity, think somehow they're going to get to heaven because they're good people or they do good things.

And that is a complete contradiction to Christianity. A person who has not been born again, a person who has not been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, a person who has not been saved through faith in Jesus Christ. All their works are dead works.

All their sacrifices are dead sacrifices. They're meaningless. Not only that, the Bible says that all our works of righteousness are like filthy rags before God.

What must you do to do the works of God? Don't walk out of here thinking, wow, you know, I really need to be moral. My pastor, his father, a man that I greatly, greatly respect back in Illinois, very tough man. Everything he was walking out of church one day, he was lost.

He was walking out of church and a little old lady walked up to him and said, Jack Russell, you're a good man. You're just good enough to go to hell. So she told him maybe if we started saying things like that, we get a lot more people say, I don't know.

That's what she told him. But she was right. If you do not know Jesus Christ, if Jesus Christ does not know you, if you are not living in a life of independence, a life of dependence upon Christ and his cross and his finished work.

If you're not dependent upon that solely and only, there's nothing you can do. You can't work your way to heaven. You can't be moral enough to get there.

You have to be made alive. Now, another thing that is very, very important about this is so very important. The fact that it's a living sacrifice implies a vigorous, lively Christianity.

We're not talking about dead orthodoxy here. We're not talking about doing something just because it's the right thing to do. We're not talking about forcing ourselves to try to live in a way that's contradictory to who we are.

We're talking about a person who has been born again by the power of God. Their nature has been changed and they just want, they desire to do the things of God. Well, every time I hear somebody say something, you know, like this, you know, I really don't want to go to church, but I know it's the right thing to do.

Or, you know, I really don't want to obey God in this area, but I know it's the right thing to do. I become very, very afraid about whether or not they even know God. You ever heard of apple trees sitting there going, you know, I really don't want to bear apples, but I know it's what I got to do.

Apple trees bear apples because they're apple trees. Christians want to do the will of God because their heart has been supernaturally changed. And they just desire to do these things, they just desire it.

So it implies the vigorous, a vigorous Christianity. Now, another thing that's very, very important to understand, extremely important, a dead sacrifice is much easier than a living one. Much, much easier.

You kill a goat, stick him up on that altar, he's not coming off, he's dead. Living sacrifices have this tendency to want to slide off the altar when no one's looking. And go run on their own again.

When he's talking about a living sacrifice, he's talking about something that is perpetual, something that is continuous, something that's a part of our lives. You know, you remember the song was real popular a few years ago. I have been crucified.

I have been crucified with Christ. That song, beautiful song. Well, I was preaching back in a meeting in Kentucky two years ago, I think, and I didn't know it.

But the guy that was directing the music that they brought in from Nashville, he was a singer, songwriter and all this stuff. And I thought, oh, boy, here we go. Entertainment.

And I could have never been so wrong. It was the guy who wrote the song. And the only way I can describe to you that man is that it looked like, you know, stained glass is made.

You take a whole bunch of glass, different colors, and you put it all sheets of it all together. You get a hammer, you beat the living daylights out of this stuff till it's broken into a gazillion pieces. And then you glue it all back together the way you want it to be.

That's what that man looked like. That is what he looked like. And as I talked to him more and more, I saw that that song was really a reality in his life.

And he was a man that you could see that had been literally beaten into a million pieces by God's hand, broken and poured out and moved around and everything else, that his life was something of a continuous sacrifice that everywhere he went, it was just like a fragrance aroma. You know, I've been speaking a lot lately about family and things like that. Let me share with you something, something I noticed in my own home, my fault.

That if you looked at our house, you'd see, well, you know, they're obedient, treat each other with decency, you know, strong marriage. One day I heard a guy say, that's not enough. When someone walks

into your house, do they sense the fragrance of Christ, the beauty of Christ, the loveliness of Christ? And that's what we're talking about here with a living sacrifice.

You see what I'm saying? It's just a fragrance about the person. It's just something that doesn't you can't fake it. You can fake so much stuff.

You can fake good doctrine. You can fake that you know something. You can fake preaching.

You can fake everything just about. But that one thing you can't fake that because it only comes from God. And it's kind of his seal or stamp.

This is really this is really my guy. This is really my my my daughter here is a person that truly walking as a living sacrifice is so, so very, very important. Now, it also says not only a living sacrifice, but a holy sacrifice.

You know, I could stop right here and then just give a three hour lecture on the true meaning of holiness, because it is so misunderstood of all the words, I think, in the Bible that are misunderstood. It's the word holiness. We too much equate holiness with righteousness.

We treat them as though they were synonyms and they're not. What do you think of when you think of holy? You think of someone who doesn't sin, right? Someone morally pure, someone who always obeys. Well, what you're describing there is not so much holiness as righteousness.

Righteousness is conformity to God's law. OK, conformity to God's law. For example, let's say this is a straight pole.

If I turn the microphone this way, I have righteousness. This microphone conforms to my hand. If I turn the microphone this way, we no longer have conformity to the standard.

Do you see that righteousness is when you conform to God's standard? And what is it? What is his standard? His standard is his own character and will. God is his standard. You are righteous when you conform to him, his law.

Now, holiness, we always think opposed. God is holy. That means he doesn't sin.

Well, God is holy and he doesn't sin. But there's much more to that than what you're actually seeing. And if that's all you're seeing, you don't understand holiness.

Holiness from the very beginning, it means this, the word in itself means to cut. It's what it means to cut. Well, then it kind of means also to cut with the purpose of separating something.

Let's say that you have a piece of beef here and you cut right here and you separate a tip off of that piece of beef. You cut here and you separate it out. You cut here and you separate.

The idea of cutting and separating. Now, what does it mean truly that God is holy? Does it mean only that he's sinless? No, it means much more than that. It means he is separated.

Now, what do I mean by separated? It means more than anything that God is totally and completely unique. He is one unto himself. There's greater difference between the number one and the number two than there is between the number two and the number 10 billion.

Because once you move away from one, you've lost your uniqueness. You're just another number. When it says that God is holy, it means there is no one like him.

When I'm teaching seminary students, I'll always do this. I'll say, tell me who's closer to God, a bacteria floating around in your toilet or the greatest, most glorious archangel in heaven? Which one is more like God? And they'll always say, well, the angel, of course, wrong. Neither one of them is like God.

God is not like us, just bigger. He's not like his creation, just better. He is totally and completely different.

There is none to whom you can compare God. No one. That is why when Moses said, who are you? He said, I am who I am.

That's because God, like I think I've shared this before, but it's important to share it again. If a Martian were to come down right here in Austin, Texas, I understand there's a lot here already. If a Martian were to come down and say, who are you? I would say, well, I am like Alan and I am like Kevin and I am like Brenda and I am I've got all these examples.

I can say I am like them. When Moses said, who are you to God, God could not point outside of himself and say, well, Moses, I'm like this and I'm like that. He said, I'm like who I am.

God has never been able to point outside of himself and say I am like until 2000 years ago when someone said, God, who are you? And he pointed to Jesus Christ and said, I'm like him. My beloved son, God is completely separate. That's where we get the term vulgar or common.

You think vulgar is just a bad word? No, that literally means common is what we're talking about. Something that is common, mundane. It's not unique, it's not different, there are other things like it, so many other things like it that it's well, it's not special.

God, when it says he's holy, it means he's separated from absolutely everything else. Now, why do we fear God? What is the greatest motivation? People will say, well, we ought to fear and reverence the Lord because he's holy. Well, what does that mean? Well, let me give you another silly illustration.

Like I said, I'm a deer hunter, so that means I get up at three in the morning, sometimes walk through very dark woods a long time in the snow and everything. And I will tell you, I'm a pretty brave guy, but sometimes I start getting spooky. You know, a Martian is going to get me, something's going to happen.

Yeah, well, let's say that I'm walking. I'm walking here, going down this old path in the middle of the woods, and I've got a choice. I can meet two different people.

One, I can meet a guy that is six foot six, mad as all get out, muscles coming out of his ears, who wants to tear my head off. That's one option. The second option is I can meet a Martian.

Now, like I think I've told you before, I mean, Martians aren't that big a deal. They're only about this tall. They got little bitty arms about the size of your fingers, long fingers, can't punch well.

All right, so why would I choose to meet this humongous man who wants to rip my head off instead of meeting a little tiny Martian? I could walk 30 of these guys. I'm more afraid of that thing than I am a man, six foot six, because I don't know what this thing is. I've never seen anything like this before.

It is completely different from me in one sense. That's how we understand reverence towards God. We reverence him and even fear him in a sense.

Why, my friend, if a little old Martian is different from you, how much more the God of all universe? Of all stars and galaxies and worlds, no one like him, you have nothing to prepare you. He's completely different. He is wholly, completely unique.

Now, when I say that we're to offer our lives as a holy sacrifice to God, the one thing I need you to understand. I'm probably I'm homeschool my boys and. Have a lot of fellowship with homeschoolers and I have a lot of fellowship with people who to you would be more like Mennonites or something like that.

Very strange people who dress very common, very plain, love them dearly, their godliness. When I'm teaching them, one of the things I will usually say is be very, very careful. If your child's idea of holiness is just not doing what the rest of the world is doing.

You're not teaching the child holiness. If you're just teaching them, you know, you shouldn't dress a certain way, you shouldn't watch certain things, you shouldn't do certain things and on and on and on, which all are true. But that's all you teach them.

You're not teaching them about holiness. Holiness is not just and not even primarily being separate from all those things that contradict God. Holiness is running to God.

It is cleaving unto him, it is God being the most important person in your life, bar none. That is why Jesus said in his prayer, how Lord be thy name, make your name holy, make your name special or unique in the world to be exalted above all other things. To teach your children holiness is to teach them that God is absolutely everything and to cleave unto him as the most important person or thing that there is.

It's more than just dotting the I's and crossing the T's. It is a it is a passion, sometimes almost uncontrollable passion. For God, for him.

If your holiness has any other definition, it turns into nothing more than pharisaical legalism. That why did I say that? Because I'm going to begin to tell you a bunch of things you need to separate yourself from. But I want you to understand that just because you separate yourself from things doesn't necessarily make you holy unless you separate yourselves from things in order to separate yourselves unto God in a love relationship, a passionate relationship.

I would rather have my sons turn out to be like David than to have them turn out like the very clean Pharisee. And then again, more important than both, I'd rather have him be like Jesus than David. See, David was a mess.

There was something about him. What was it? A heart that beat for God. That loved God.

Now, we are to be holy, we're to be holy and we're to offer a holy sacrifice, give our bodies as a holy sacrifice to God. I want to get through as many of these as I can. First of all, your mind.

Listen to me, church, there is no question in my mind why many of you can't have pure thoughts. There's no question in my mind why many of the youth are struggling with bad thinking. It's because you fill your mind with the same.

You say, well, Brother Paul, we live in a world. Yes, we do. But you don't have to pump it into your living room.

You don't say a mind is a terrible thing to waste. Yes, it certainly is. It's also a terrible thing to pollute.

Someone comes into my office and they go, Brother Paul, you know, I'm so struggling with my thought life. And I say, well, how many hours a day do you watch television and how many hours a day do you renew your mind in the word of God? You see garbage in garbage out. Listen to some of the things we're to separate ourselves from in the mind, the wicked in the haughtiness of his countenance does not seek him.

All his thoughts are. There is no God. Psalms 10 for now.

You say, well, I don't ever think that there is no God. There is a difference. There is what we know as a professing atheism and a practical atheism.

You might not profess with your mouth that you do not believe in God, but do you live as though God did not exist and your thought life? If someone were to study your thought life for 24 hours, would they find God in any of those thoughts? You might not be a professing atheist, but you may be a practical one. Frank Lombok, a great missionary to the Philippines, taught taught most of the islands of the Philippines how to read. And his whole purpose for doing that was if they can read, they can read the Bible.

But you know what his greatest goal? I have his diary. You know, his greatest goal was. To spend one entire day with every thought concentrated upon the glories of God.

I hear people say today, you know, well, they're so heavenly minded, they're no earthly good. We're so earthly minded, we're no heavenly good. Here was a man who taught the entire group of the Philippines to read.

He was a pretty busy fellow, yet his greatest goal was to have one waking day in which every thought was given to God. Maybe you need to repent of a mind that is basically void of thoughts toward God. Isaiah 55, seven, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man, his thoughts and let him return to the Lord.

It's not my friend, just your physical deeds, it's your thought life. You know, there are people who commit adultery in their thought life. You just you know, they're fantasize about other people.

Our thought life is to be brought into subjection and submission to the word of God. It really is. It's not just physically that I'm to reject certain things.

It is that I am to reject things in my thought life that do not conform to the word of God, because as a man thinks so easy. See, a lot of people think, well, when I get spiritual, I won't have these problems. That's not true.

When you get spiritual, you'll fight against these problems that will always be fighting against you. And there is victory. But look at what it says again, it says, let the wicked man, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man, his thoughts.

There are certain thoughts that probably you may need to forsake tonight. You need to stop thinking those types of things, you need to just forsake them. And then it says return to the Lord.

You can't return to the Lord just because physically and outwardly you look OK, or is your thought life OK? He goes on, he says, Isaiah sixty five to I have spread out my hands all day long to a rebellious people who walk in the way which is not good following their own thoughts. Now, here it doesn't necessarily say that they're bad thoughts, they're worldly thoughts, they're immoral thoughts, but they're their thoughts and not God's thoughts. You going to college? Well, yeah, I'm thinking about going.

You are. That's really not the question. I know that sounds so radical in this world.

Some of you parents are just cringe and saying, don't tell my child that. The question is, what is God thinking? What is what everyone does? Yeah, I know. And almost everyone is walking out of the will of God, I'm not saying don't go to college, what I'm saying is this, the people do what's right in their own eyes and according to their own thoughts.

Most of the things that you and I just will think of immediately of how to respond will not be conformed to Scripture. And so we've got to put aside not just wicked thoughts, we have got to put aside our own thoughts, running our own lives, doing what we think we ought to do and get back to, Lord, your servant listens, what do you say? What do you want me to do, Jeremiah, four, four, four, 14 says, wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved. How long will your wicked thoughts listen to this word lodge within you? Does that describe you in any way? Wicked thoughts that they're not just passing temptations, but since you've dwelt on them so much, they've taken up residence in your mind.

It's just reject them, reject them, put them out, fight against it. Now, I'm not up here tonight telling you, follow me. I got this down.

I'm just preaching truth, a truth you have to submit to. And guess what? A truth I have to submit to. That it is a difficult struggle, I don't want to say that you reach some spiritual level, you don't struggle anymore, because if that's true, I haven't reached it.

But half of the battle is realizing that there is a battle. Just remember this, when you were lost, didn't know Christ, you didn't struggle against evil thoughts, you loved them. Some people come to me sometimes, it says, you know, I'm struggling with evil thoughts, it must be the the proof that I'm lost.

I said, no, it could be the proof you're saved. That you've turned on these things and you hate the things you once loved. Now, not only are you to separate away from the wicked things, you to separate unto certain things in Psalms one, two, but his delight is in the law of the Lord.

And in his law, he meditates day and night. Our mind turned towards the law, you know, one of the greatest problems, if not the greatest problems among preachers and theologians. I'm talking about the guys who know all the Greek and the Hebrew and everything else.

They don't read the Bible and say, well, you're awful judgmental. I teach theology. Sometimes we spend so much time studying certain things, studying so many words and everything else that we totally lose focus.

Last night, my little boy, Evan, couldn't sleep, which in turn my wife couldn't sleep, which in turn I couldn't sleep, so no one is sleeping. So I thought, well, I'll do something spiritual for once in my life. I'll get up and read the Bible.

I just started reading, reading John, not exegeting John, not doing a Greek parsing of John, just reading it, meditating upon what I was reading. It filled me with so much stuff. I saw so many places last night where I was wrong.

I know it must sound downhearting to have a pastor stand up here like I do so many times and tell you so many times, you know, God just showed me another place where I was wrong and another place where I'm sorry, this is what you get. But I want to tell you something. Sometimes I just put all my Greek books down and my Hebrew stuff and I just read the thing and meditate upon it.

And I mean, it's like waves of correction and waves of encouragement. But then again, sometimes there's just nothing except I would rather eat Lucky Charms. So I want you to understand sometimes I read the Bible, too.

It's just like just read it and meditate upon it. Fill your mind with it. I find it interesting that when I did, I did a work several years ago in Spanish on how to study the Bible, on all about the Bible and how to study it.

And I found it quite amazing that there wasn't a whole lot of references in the Bible to studying the Bible. But there were all kinds of references in the Bible to two things, memorizing the Bible and meditating on the Bible. You know, you might have to work, someone else might control your hands, your body, tell you where you have to go and they can't control your mind.

You can be memorizing verses all day long. So we're to separate unto the word of God and then Philippians 4, 8 says, finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure. Whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise dwell on these things.

You know what that is? A fence to protect you. I taught this last week in our Spanish speaking mission. This is a fence to protect you.

Pretend that each one of these things in Philippians 4, 8 is a fence post. Put the and you make a fence, a circle around you with these fence posts. First of all, whatever is true, put in a fence post.

True, whatever is honorable before God, whatever is right, conforms to God's word. Whatever is pure, not off colored, not PG, pure, whatever is lovely, God would recognize it as beautiful and recognize its loveliness. Whatever is of good report before the throne of God, whatever is excellent in God's opinion, whatever God would praise.

Stick those fence posts all around you and then build a fence. Nothing should enter into your mind that does not make it past that fence. That sure cut out a lot of TV, wouldn't it? Really would.

I hope I can't listen to it. Why? Well, it's not lovely. One of the things I've noticed that now that I have children about cartoons, which I just I used to like Wile E. Coyote and all that stuff, I still do.

But the grotesqueness of the cartoons. The vulgar grotesqueness of explicit things. It's not lovely, you see, you see what we've done here, we've built a fence post around us, we've built a fence around us.

Keep everything that does not conform to this out of your mind and you'll do well. Now, we're going to do one more before we go on. We're talking about the mind, but then the eyes, these eyes are to be given to God, not just my mind, but my eyes are to be given to God, separated from what Psalms one oh three

three, I will set no worthless thing before my eyes.

Now, David is basically talking about idolatry here, idols. You say, well, we don't have any of those. Oh, just about everything we got's an idol.

Cars and homes and reputations and clothing and security and. So many idols. You say, how do I know if something's an idol? It takes more of your thought life away.

You spend more time thinking about that than you do, God, and you spend more time living for that thing than you do, God, it's an idol. I'll set no worthless thing before my eyes. I'll set nothing that has little value before my eyes.

And then he says, Psalms one nineteen thirty seven, turn away my eyes from looking at vanity. Well, you talk about a promise prayer verse you ought to memorize every time you go to the mall. Our society thrives on vanity to know what should we figure out, why are we vain? Our society is built upon vanity.

What is that which is vain, that which is not eternal? What is eternal? God, his word and people. If you invest your life in seeking God, obeying his word and ministering and giving your life away to people, you'll do well. Well, that's just it, Pastor.

I am working this hard and doing all these things so I can give my children everything I didn't have. You totally missed the point. God did not call you to give your children things.

He called you to give your children you and to give your wife you and to give your husband you. Do you see? Not chasing vain things. And I want you to know something.

Vain things will get you. They will get you. When I was a missionary in Peru, along with my wife, sometimes we were in the jungles of Condor, Kanki.

Wonderful place. And we lived in a tent. You know what? When we lived in that tent, it was no problem for me to stay just focused on the kingdom because you have anything but the kingdom.

A tent, some bananas and and really bony fish to eat. That's about all you have. Mosquitoes and spiders as big as a Volkswagen.

Other than that, you have a lot. You kept your mind razor blade focused on the edge, Christ and Christ alone. But you get you land in Miami and see what happens to you.

You get off that plane. You get on that plane in Lima. You get off in Miami and see the cloud that comes over you.

You sit down beside a guy your age whose shoes cost more than your house. He starts talking about all the great things he's done in his titles and everything else. And you're sitting there.

You're just a missionary, a stupid person who threw their life away. Vanity can get you. It can get you good.

That's why you keep your eyes off of it, because many people have been destroyed by vain things. Many people have lost their life for eternal things, but right now they're happy they did. The vain things are a danger.

Also, in Job 31, one, I've made a covenant with mine eyes. How then can I gaze at a virgin? This is more important for men than it is for women. You say, how do you know that? Have you ever seen a naked guy standing beside truck tires to sell them? You haven't, have you? You see more of the physical with women.

Why? Because men's eyes are attracted to that. And you say, why are you dealing with it? Because it needs to be dealt with. I remember when I was going to University of Texas, it was voted as like the most beautiful coeds in the world were on our campus.

And I remember I was in this discipleship group with this guy named named Bratloff, Mike Bratloff. And we'd be walking across campus and some girl would be coming our way that really wasn't her greatest concern was not modesty. And my friend Bratloff would always go, we got a Proverbs 7 coming through here.

Everybody bowed their head. Here's the thing about it is you say, well, I want to go to the mall. OK, go like this.

You say, well, I want to go to the mall and buy a pair of jeans. Why? Because you want to love your wife because you want your sons not to have the same struggles you had all your life because you weren't raised Christian. Really Christian.

Because you want to be pure because you want to please God because you want to rejoice in the life of your youth because you know how weak you are. You're not a great man, but you do want to be a good one. You don't have a great track record, but you do want to have a better one.

Then make a covenant with your eyes to be holy. You say, well, that's just human nature. Right.

Crucify that thing. You say, I'm just a man. Paul said you're living like mere men.

You're a child of God. You're a child of God. Very, very important, especially for you young men that are in the congregation.

Protect your heart. It's the wellspring of life. Everything goes through your eyes.

The window of your eyes is going straight for your heart. You want to be a godly man, a strong man, a man of integrity and credibility and everything else. Then start right here.

If you can get over this battle, you've gotten over a great battle. Very, very important. And also, it's very, very important for this.

What I'm going to say may sound a bit rude, I assure you, it's not. I go into many churches as a man to I'm going to preach. I mean, I'm doing the meetings.

If anybody's prayed up, it's me. You know, I'm supposed to pray. I'm going to be the one up there speaking.

And how many countless places and countless places in this country I've gone and preached. And when I've walked in the congregation, I've had to literally put my head down. And walk past.

Things that would have made a man stumble. I'm not going to have enough time to take you through all the things I want to teach you through in the days to come. Let me tell you this, and it's not hard, it's just true.

This goes for men and goes for women. I'm going to say this, I know I'm preaching about a whole bunch of things, but this is kind of shotgun approach because, well, I don't have much time. This is something I heard my wife say, I don't know where she got it.

I think I heard my wife say this. If your body. If your clothing, the clothing you wear is a frame for your face, it's of God.

If the clothing you wear brings attention to your face. It's of God. Young girls, this is a great thing to learn.

If your clothing is a frame for your body. It's sensual and God hates it. That's as clear as I can be.

God is all about beauty, but there is a great difference and it's not a fine line between beauty and God. It's a fine line between beauty and sensuality. I have known ladies that literally, friends of mine, of Chato, that literally could walk in that back door and I could look at them and say, isn't she pretty, Chato? Chato, turn around, say yes.

Every man in this congregation could turn around and say yes. Wow, very elegant lady. And that's it.

There are other women who could walk in. And the same thing goes for men on the other side. I'm not trying to be chauvinistic.

I'm just making a point. There are others who could walk in those back doors and as a man of God, the woman might not be half as pretty physically, but as a man of God, when she walked in her manner, her spirit and her clothing, I would have to throw my head down. Because even though she's not as physically attractive, she's a stumbling block because it's not beauty, it's sensuality.

This is so important. Young men, some of you are watching television and it's just destroying you. You're never going to be able to love a real woman.

Because that real woman is never, I don't care where you go, is never going to meet up to the one on television. You're going to end up hurting your wife. Say, Brother Paul, why are you saying all this? This is real gospel.

This is real Christianity. This is where it really comes down and says, OK, my life has been changed. I don't think like the world anymore.

I protect my heart. Why? Because there are evil things out there. Oh, you just want to be a holier than thou.

No, I want to have a good life. I just want to have a good life. Very important.

Very important. Now, separated unto. We're going to finish here, Psalms 25, 15.

My eyes are continually toward the Lord. Boy, I wish I could say that about myself. Man, I wish I could really say that, don't you? Now, are you sad because you can't? I wish I could say that.

Say, Brother Paul, you've got to give us a stronger, better example. I'm sorry, I can't be a hypocrite. I just don't do this like I ought to.

And I wish that I did. My eyes are continually toward the Lord. Wow.

You know, you can give so many gifts to a wife. Oh, I give you this. I give you that.

She can tell in your look. She can tell in your look. Gentlemen, you can't disguise it.

She can tell in your look. My eyes are continually toward the Lord. And in Psalms 119, 18, even though 25, 15, I don't do too well.

Psalms 119, 18 is for me. Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from your eyes. Open my eyes, Lord.

Open these dull eyes of mine. Open these wandering eyes of mine and turn them toward your beauty. Let me show you the difference between real Christianity and slavery.

And this is it. Slavery says, look, you people, you need to get right with God. You need to be holy.

You need to stop doing this stuff. You need to do this and don't do that. And if you don't, you're going to go to hell.

That's slavery. Real Christianity is this. If you could catch one glimpse of how beautiful he truly is, you'd have no problem with the rest.

Seek his face, seek his beauty. That's it. You weren't crazy about your wife before you met her.

If you were, you probably need to come in for counseling. There wasn't anything to be crazy about. But you didn't know her.

You didn't know her face. You know what she'd look like or anything. Man, when you saw her.

And it hit you like a ton of bricks, look like you've been run over by a train. I mean, in just a second, everything, I mean, you know, you're sitting there and you know, you're like my friends. You know, I'm going hunting.

I'm going fishing. I'm going to be a good day. And all of a sudden you're going to Walmart to buy a new lure you need.

And bam, there she is. Man, you forget about all the important things in life, like fishing, hunting, everything else. You're a goner.

If your friends really love you, they have to rope you down, drag you out of there behind their Ford truck. Because your life, I mean, just you caught one glimpse and it was over. Everything in your life now changes things you don't that you did care about, you don't care about anymore.

Things you didn't even dream existed, you know, exist. What was that you caught one glimpse? And then hopefully the more you come to know this person, the deeper your love. Now, I'm talking about a frail relationship between two human beings, both of which have great flaws.

So imagine this. You know, salvation is you're walking along one day, totally blind to the glory of God and God pulls off the blinders and you go, bam, what is this? A pearl of great price. It's worth leaving absolutely everything else behind.

This is incredible. Why didn't someone tell me? You don't see someone getting out of bed in the morning going, oh, gosh, give me a cup of coffee. Where are you going, Joe? I've got to go down here is a there's this pearl of great price I got to go pick up.

He doesn't do that. Why? Because he's caught some glory, some essence of this thing. He says he didn't even tell his friend he gets up, it's three in the morning, tiptoes out of the house.

He's gone like a bandit. What's motivating him, the beauty of that thing. In the same way, church, catch one glimpse of Jesus Christ and every greater glimpse will lead you to greater levels, greater degrees of devotion and holiness.

Seek his face, seek his face. I close by saying this is so very, very important. Most of the time, the question I mostly get from people who want to grow in the Lord is this.

I know what I ought to be doing, but I lack the motivation. I just lack the heart. What can fix that? Well, just think about it for a minute.

What can fix that? I mean, I mean, there's no 10 step program. I mean, what can fix it? Just one thing. Catch a greater glimpse of the beauty of Jesus Christ.

And you'll have no problem with motivation. You know, when the servant of Abraham was bringing Isaac's wife back, that beautiful picture. You know, as soon as she said, yeah, he slapped some jewelry on her.

And she said, yeah, he slapped some more jewelry on her. I imagine when they're making that long journey back, she's probably that servant probably caught her looking back at her family, maybe getting a few doubts in her mind, thinking, man, I'm leaving everything and I'm going to go marry this guy I've never even seen. And that servant, he looks at her and he's a wise old man.

He thinks she's got a little doubt in her heart. So he slaps some more jewels on her. And he's a servant of glory and glory and glory.

And it just sparks her memory and causes her to see this is a beautiful thing happening to me. That's the same way the Holy Spirit does with the true believer. When you first see Christ, man, you're so ready just to leave everything.

But if you're like me, gradually the fire begins to dull a little bit. But then the Holy Spirit comes, just reveals to you a little bit more of Christ's beauty. And you stop looking back and you start looking forward again.

And then you go on and then your vision starts getting cloudy and you really don't know, man, maybe I should back off on this a little bit. And then here comes the Holy Spirit and gives you another jewel of the glory of Christ. And it causes you to straighten your eyes back to the prize and keep walking.

And that's what this is all about. I can take this passage and turn it into legalism and bondage. That's not what I'm doing.

I want you to see that you don't need to try to muster up strength, you know, like a football team. For example, like UT when they beat the Aggies, you don't have to muster up a whole bunch of stuff and try to get strong enough to do this. You need to run to Christ and say, Christ, I don't have the strength to do this because my heart is dull and that's the greatest sin.

Would you please take the callous off my heart and reveal to me more of your glory? That's what it is. If you have problems or questions, if you want to know more about the Lord or you feel like you need to be saved, that God showing you some things or you need counseling. I tell you what, just make your way up front after this service and we'll help you as much as we can.

And then remember that the office is open all week. If you need to, you know, you just need some counseling. And do we have any announcements? Yes, I see that hand.

Well, praise the Lord. What about your husband? Is he OK? OK, I was just saying he probably went wild. OK, all right.

Any other announcement? OK, great, man. We're back in a thousand. No announcements today.

We can't be Baptists. All right, well, let's pray. Father, I thank you for your word and I pray, Lord, that grace would be given that we might see more of Christ and seeing more of Christ, we might be more obedient in Jesus name.

Amen.

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