

# The Rewards of Discipleship

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer's sermon emphasizes the profound connection between God's justice and love as demonstrated through the cross of Christ, urging believers to live as sacrifices for God.*

**Duration:** 1:05:32

**Scripture:** Exodus 34:6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 4:7

**Topics:** "Discipleship", "Sanctification"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of renewing oneself with the truth of God's Word. He acknowledges that living the Christian life can be challenging, but suggests that we often make it even harder than it needs to be. The preacher highlights the limited amount of time we spend reading and meditating on Scripture compared to the hours we are bombarded by worldly influences, such as television. He encourages listeners to prioritize their relationship with God and to be mindful of the impact that external influences and ungodly relationships can have on their spiritual lives. The preacher emphasizes the need for a deep understanding of who God is and what He has done for us in Christ, and urges believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God.

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## Transcript

This sermon was uploaded by Grace Community Church in San Antonio, Texas, and our website is [www.gccsatx.com](http://www.gccsatx.com), or you can find us on Sermon Audio by going to [www.sermonaudio.com](http://www.sermonaudio.com) slash gcc. Well, it's a great privilege for me to be here tonight, a tremendous privilege. And I'm going to continue on with the teaching I did this morning.

But since we have a great big group of new people here, I want to touch on something before we go to our main lesson. And let me go by way of testimony. I was in seminary and very zealous evangelism and working with street people and all sorts of things like that and preach the gospel, or at least what I understood of the gospel.

And a point kept coming up in my mind, in my heart often, how does the death of Jesus Christ pay for my sins? And why was it necessary? And if the answer that would basically be given all the time, well, God is holy. Well, yes, but still I never could put the connection together. And I went to a rather liberal, at that time, a rather liberal seminary.

And I would say, but how does, how does the death of Jesus, I mean, the Romans beating him and putting a crown of thorns on his head and then nailing him to a tree and putting a spear in his side, although I marvel at the cost that he paid. How does all that make me right with God? And I would ask this question to people. And believe it or not, no one ever answered me.

A lot of times they didn't even know what I was talking about. And believe it or not, I'm sad to say it wasn't until after seminary that I began to look through Scripture and I learned something about the cross that isn't new. I assure you, it's what was always preached by men of God down through the ages.

But I learned something about the cross that literally astounded me. I mean, it set me back for weeks and months. And until this day is probably one of the dearest things to me in understanding the gospel.

And since we've got some new young people here and things, I just want to share that just something I want you to think about before we go on to our main lesson. And I want you just to go for just a moment to the book of Exodus, the book of Exodus, chapter thirty four. Now, all of this might be quite familiar to most of you and well, then then just humor me.

But Exodus thirty four. God does an incredible thing here. This is one of the most astounding passages in the Old Testament, as God reveals, as we could say, humanly speaking, God reveals his back, so to speak, to Moses.

And we see here in verse six, then God, then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgressions and sin. Yet he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. Now, there's a there's a great question here that in one place we hear that he will by no means it's greatly emphasized he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.

And yet at the same time, we're told that he forgives iniquities, transgression and sin. There seems to be something of a contradiction here. By no means will he leave the guilty unpunished.

Yet at the same time, he will forgive the transgressions, the sins, the iniquity of the guilty. Now, to compound this problem, just look over for a moment at the book of Romans chapter four, verse seven. Listen to what David says, and if if you if you read these words of David in the context of what we know about Exodus thirty four and the justice of God, it seems that insult the injury.

Now listen to what David says in verse seven, chapter four. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered, been covered by whom? By God. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.

Now, how do we balance this out with he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished and countless other texts in the Bible that simply says that God will not just turn his face away. From sin, he will not be apathetic toward sin, but that he will Punish the guilty. Now, one more thing that I just like to add to this, let's just go for a moment to a text that is not really addressing this subject, but it does function as sort of a wonderful illustration to get you to understand what the problem is.

And that's over in the book of Proverbs. Now, again, this simply illustrates the problem, he's not addressing this problem in the text, but if you go to Proverbs 17, verse 15. What a wonderful illustration is laid out for us, he who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord, he who justifies the wicked.

Any judge or authority in this context in Israel that justifies a wicked man, he's considered to be an abomination before God. Now, there is nothing I can't find. I don't think a harder word in the entire Bible.

Anyone who justifies the wicked is an abomination before God. Now go back to Romans again and go to chapter three. Verse twenty three, for all have sinned.

What does that mean? All are guilty, all are wicked. And this is what it says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And then speaking about the Christian, it says being justified.

Now, you heard what Proverbs said, that anyone who justifies the wicked man, that is simply looks over his sin, does not take it into account, covers it up. Anyone who does that is an abomination before God. And yet we're told that with regard to the Christian, God has done just that.

Are you beginning to see the problem? Well, that is what the cross event is about, because if you continue reading on in Romans three toward the end, he says in verse twenty six about the cross for the demonstration, I say, of his righteousness at the present time so that he would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. What is the cross about? Well, here's what you must understand. Now, I have heard evangelists say this many times.

If I had a nickel for every time I heard it, I'd be a rich man. They've said this now, instead of being just with you, God was loving. Now, that sounds good, maybe at face value.

And you're saying, yeah, I've heard that. That's pretty good. Well, there's a big problem there.

Let's just follow it through. Instead of being just with you, God was loving. That means God's love toward you was unjust.

You see, it doesn't work that way. God is just and loving. And in order if God is going to justify men, he must be just in doing it.

So you see the cross. It does include and I never want to take away from the fact that when Jesus hung on that cross, he was he was terribly torn apart by men. He had he had thorn thorns on his on his brow.

He had nails in his hands. He had a spear in his side. And we don't want to take away from that.

Isaiah shares with us something of the afflictions, physical afflictions of Christ. It was a bloody Calvary crucifixion. But if that is all you see, then you haven't really seen the cross.

And I'm aware that on Easter, pastors preach about the cross very often. But I've always marveled at this as when the passion came out, the movie, The Passion. I never saw it.

I don't have anything against it, but I never saw it. I heard a pastor come on national radio and he said, you know, there's been a lot of talk about the cross, so I am going to take the next hour and share with you the true meaning of the cross. And I stopped my truck.

I was out working actually on the farm. I shut my truck off, turned the key back and thought, oh, wonderful, someone's going to clear this up. He spent an entire hour, almost like a medical doctor, explaining to us exactly what happened to Jesus physically on that cross.

Now, everything he said was true. But like so many, he missed, I believe, the fundamental point of the cross, what really happened there. You say, oh, yes, Brother Paul, he bore our sin.

Yes, he did. He bore our sin. He bore our guilt as some of the old theologians used to say, he stood in our law place.

But what you have to understand is this, when he stood there and bore our guilt. The suffering he experienced was not merely the physical suffering of a Roman crucifixion. What did he suffer? Well, I want you to go for just a minute to the book of Psalms, chapter seventy five.

Now, we're all aware that Jesus was in a garden and he cried out three times, let this cup pass from me, all aware of that. Now, I have heard any number of interpretations about that cup. I even heard a few years ago a charismatic preacher say it was it was the devil.

The the the the antagonism of the devil. Others simply say, well, is that Roman cross and that cruel cat of nine tails and all they think all these things. Now, once you think about something for a moment, just a moment, we are told in Christian history that after the resurrection of Christ and the birth of the Pentecost and the book of Acts and on through the first century, second century, we understand that many Christians were crucified on crosses, Roman crosses.

Some of them supposedly were crucified upside down, and some of them, after being crucified, were actually covered in a crude form of pitch or bray and set on fire to provide lights for the streets of Rome at night. Now, it's told in history and books like Fox's Book of Martyrs and everything that many of these people went to that cross singing, singing hymns, not not necessarily trembling, not crying out, take this cup from me, but embracing this death as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Now, let me ask you a question.

Do you honestly think then? That the captain of our salvation was in a garden trembling because he feared a cross, a Roman cross that his disciples joyfully embraced? There was something more in that cup than just a Roman cross. And in Psalm 75, verse eight, for a cup is in the hand of the Lord and the wine foams, it is well mixed and he pours out of this. Surely all the wicked of the earth must must drain and drink down its dregs.

What you need to understand, and then we're going to go on to our text, what I want you and plead with you to understand is that when Jesus was on that cross, he bore our sin, he bore the guilt of his people. And on that tree. He was handed the cup of the wrath of God.

God is a just God. He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished in order for you to be pardoned. Yeah, in order for you to be justified, to be made right with God, to have a right standing with him, to ascend to that holy hill in order for that to happen, the justice of God had to be satisfied.

It is not, as many evangelists will say, that he was loving with you, overlooking his justice. No, he was just and loving Christ when he died on that tree, died, having suffered the wrath of God in the stead of his people. And on suffering that he satisfied all the justice of God against them.

He died paying the penalty, and now God is just and the justifier of the wicked. Because God in human flesh has satisfied his own justice. Now, I want to say something just before we go on, it's very important because some of you I know have read C.S. Lewis and especially you've seen the the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe on television or on cinema or whatever.

Well, there's there's one place before Aslan goes to make his sacrifice at the stone table where he's talking to King Peter, and this is what he says, and it's it's very wrong. He says, you know, Aslan here represents Christ. He says that to King Peter, look, your brother has betrayed us.

The witch does own him. Now, Peter, there is a principle even above me that I must submit to referring to a type of principle of justice. That I can't simply take your brother back, something has to be done because there's a principle even higher than me, that's basically what he's saying that must be satisfied, must be dealt with, that even I can't go around when we say that in order to pardon us, God had to satisfy justice.

OK, we're not saying that there was a principle of justice higher than God that he had to submit to. That's not what we're saying. We're talking about God's own justice.

He had to satisfy his justice. Do you understand that there's not some higher ranking principle in the world that even God had to submit to in order to save us? The justice he had to satisfy was his own because God is perfect and in him there is no contradiction. Now the cross becomes so much more splendid to us.

I was teaching in Romania years ago and I came across a book. I was in a German seminary. I was actually in Ukraine or somewhere, but the seminary was all German and I don't read German.

And so I was looking for a book to read because I was well, I had a break and I finally found one in English and it was the cross of Christ. Now, it wasn't John Stott's book was another book written by someone I'd never heard of before. And so I opened it up and I started reading through it.

And this is what he said. That God, the father, looked down upon the suffering of his son that had been inflicted upon him by the hands of men and counted that as payment for our sin. Do you see the problem there? We are not saved merely by what the Romans did to Jesus on that tree.

We are saved by what God, the father, did to his only begotten son on that tree, as in Isaiah 53, 10, it pleased the Lord to crush him. That doesn't mean that God gleefully crushed his son. It means that the will of God was fully accomplished in a people, a people, according to the plan of God, is now redeemed because of what God had done through his son.

So I want you to see that in the cross. Now, let's go to Romans. Back to our text, we've been in verse one of chapter 12, we talked about Paul's pastoral passion.

He says, I urge you, brethren. Do not react with a stiff neck when someone urges you. Now you say, yes, when someone urges me in love, I should not react with a stiff neck.

Let me let me fill you in a little bit. When someone urges you with a bad attitude, don't stiffen your neck. Why? Don't worry so much about their attitude.

Just ask them. Just ask yourself this question. What they're saying, is it true? I hear so many people escape biblical, truthful rebukes because they say the one who delivered it didn't deliver it correctly.

Well, you just wouldn't believe the attitude they had when they told me that. Who cares what the attitude was? If it's true, it's helpful to you. As a matter of fact, my wife said when she came here to this country, she said the one difference that she noted between Christianity and Latin America and Christianity and in the United States, she said she's very inept in languages and she she speaks English so well, she picks up colloquialisms and everything.

She said, you Americans are so thin skinned. No one can urge you, no one can rebuke you, no one can correct you without you literally flying off the handle and leaving the church. And yet that is that is one of the most spectacular gifts that God has given us in his economy.

To help us. You see that I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God. Now we go back to this.

We talked about it this morning, that the motivation of the Christian life is the person of God, the person and work of Christ. It's what was done for us on the cross, the mercies of God given to his people through the person and work of Jesus Christ is the motivation for the Christian life. Now, notice, I didn't say and I said this purposely, I didn't say it was one of the motivations or even one of the top motivations.

I don't want to say it that way. It's the motivation. Now, surely there are other things I ought to do things because I genuinely love people.

But all that is eclipsed by this. Who God is and what he has done for me in the person of Christ ought to be the thing that motivates everything in my Christian life. You see that? Boy, that's clean.

Solid, basic. There's a just a firmness to it. You say that's right.

Well, I don't need all these artificial things, these made up little mechanisms and five step principles to get my Christian life going. I just need to drink deeper and deeper from who the person of God, who God is and what he has done for me in Christ. Now, he says to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, the word body here, of course, the idea being don't don't come with any of your super spirituality and don't talk a whole lot about heart religion unless your body is going to be attached to it.

OK, because just like the Bible says, you'll be judged for your words now, why would it say something like that? Because the content of your heart is revealed by your words, the content of your heart is also revealed by your actions. Just so that, you know, as I said, I think that the day we started this, the idea of a book not being able to be judged by its cover, Jesus never said that. He said, you'll know them by their fruits.

And so we know that you're offering yourself, your heart, your soul to God by what you do with the rest of you. Sometimes our religion needs to needs to be a little less mystical and a lot more practical, a lot more real. I've given him my heart.

Yeah, well, what about your eyes, your brain, your ears, your mouth, your tongue, your feet, your hands, your body? Is there any evidence that you've given those to him? Do you say now he says a living and holy sacrifice, a vibrant sacrifice, as we spoke about this morning, and a sacrifice that is holy. You know, listen to me, Paul warned the church in Corinth, he says, you compare yourselves by yourselves, that's not wise. And just because I'm I'm just as clean or just as dirty as my fellow churchmen doesn't prove anything, especially in this culture of ours today, especially in a Christianity that does not make holiness a priority.

OK, so if you're in a youth group, I wouldn't advise that you compare yourself to other youth to see how you're doing. I would suggest you compare yourself to scripture and then I would suggest you talk about it, because we look at scripture many times through our culture. Had one Scottish young man tell me one time he goes, I can't imitate a Scottish man, but he he said, you Americans, because you interpret the Bible through your checkbook and your flag.

And ways, well, I could have said the same thing about him, but I didn't feel like it was the right thing to do at the time, I might as well just take the rebuke. But the thing about it is, is we will interpret this stuff in here through through our culture. Through our presuppositions, what we already think we know to be true, that's very dangerous, very dangerous.

Now, he says a living and a holy sacrifice acceptable to God. This word also means well-pleasing. They need to ask yourself something.

Just how are you going to figure this out? How are you going to figure out what's acceptable? Well, I don't want to admonish you to do much figuring. A guy came to me one time in my office when I was pastoring in Peru, he says there are just so many decisions to make in Christianity. I said, really, there's there's not.

He said, there's so many things you've got to make decisions on. I said, you know, really, there's not. And he said, why are you saying that? I said, because there's not.

I said, God's basically made all the decisions. You only have to make one. Are you going to find out what they are and submit to them? And you say, I see so many people, even myself, I want to offer something to God.

It may be something God doesn't even want. We see that Leviticus 10, some men offered some strange fire and they were judged. You see, you and I, part of the Christian life now, we have to be careful with legalism here, but part of the Christian life is sitting down and looking at the word.

And I don't want to put it too basic, but let me put it as basic as I can without danger. Part of the Christian life is going in the word of God, just figuring out what he likes and what he hates. And then running as far away you can from what he hates and running to what he likes, what he considers acceptable, what he considers pleasing.

You see, this is this is so important. I hear people say, well, this is a love letter, this Bible, in a sense, that's true language, even though we have to be very careful of romanticism. But it also it is it is the revealed will of God.

There are precepts here, there are wisdoms here, it's propositional truth, it's things that maxims. I mean, there's actually things you can write down. And.

Now, the sum of the Christian life isn't a bunch of principles, but principles are involved, there are laws. I can think of 10 of them just right off the top of my head, but I'll tell you that the Christianity today in America has. It's almost divorced itself from anything that it would consider law, you mentioned law today, you mentioned principles and automatically, especially from the forty five year on down, you're going to hear that sounds a little legalistic to me.

That smacks of legalism. We need to be very careful how we use that term, because I think more of some of the Christians, if the whole bunch of Christians for the first eighteen hundred years came back and looked at us, they would say, I think you guys smack of antinomianism. That means lawlessness.

You know, you hear preachers that especially want to get in a building project or they want to build their own kingdom and they start quoting that passage where there's no vision, the people perish. Have you ever heard that? I mean, you've got to have a vision. It's only one problem.

Continue reading the passage. It's a Hebrew parallelism. What he's saying is people who have no revelation of God's law.

So if you're going to offer what is acceptable to God, you better not do it according to the way you see things in your own eyes. That own our religion is very dangerous. How many people, when you talk to them, they'll say, well, my way of worshiping God, this is my way.

Frank Sinatra and his song, My Way, has absolutely nothing to do with the Christian life. Some of you are too young to even know what I'm talking about. That's pitiful.

You see what I'm saying? OK, it's going to be acceptable. Wonderful. Now let's go on acceptable to God, which look, if God is holy in your culture, basically isn't.

Then stop whining when you're not acceptable to your culture and quit trying to be acceptable to your culture. One of the reasons that the power of the church has been vacuumed out is because the church thinks it has to be like the world to be relevant to the world. The only way you're going to be relevant in the world is not to be like the world, to be a distinct alternative in the face of your culture.

Do you see that now he says acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And that's where spiritual can also be translated rational, rational. Do you want to be spiritual? I literally one time I was in the city of what us just like the foothills of one foothills, about 12000 feet or so, 8000, 10000 feet of what's going on, which is the highest peak in the Western Hemisphere down in Peru.

And I'm walking through the streets there. I was going to preach in a church and I was in a part of town that I'd never been in before. I didn't really know.

And I came across a sign that said something Baptist church. And I thought to myself, well, I didn't know there was a church here. That's wonderful.

And all of a sudden, somebody behind me shot it, shouted out, hallelujah. And I literally almost jumped through the window of the church. And when I kindly, you know, I got my composure back, turned around, there's this little Indian woman stand there.

Hallelujah. I said, well, hallelujah to you. And she said, are you a Christian? Hallelujah.

I said, and I got into it. I mean, hallelujah. Yes, I am.

You know, and she just kept going with hallelujah, praise the Lord. And it took I mean, just to find out what her name was, took me like forty five minutes. And finally, I looked at her.

I said, ma'am, would you stop saying hallelujah just for a minute for me to find out who pastors this church? Now, that's that's an extreme illustration. But I tell you something, folks, it's not so extreme. There is so much spirituality so-called based on that kind of stuff, and it's not spiritual at all.

Spiritual. Is submitting yourself to the law of God out of love for God, remember, if you love me, you keep my commandments. That's spiritual.

Now, let me share something to all you young radical street preachers. It's not hard to preach on the streets. Not really, it's not hard to really suffer for Jesus.

It's not hard to put yourself in dangerous situations to preach the gospel was hard loving your wife, being kind to your brothers and sisters in Christ, being a servant. Inward loyalty, as it says, blessed are the pure in heart, that means blessed are those who don't have divided loyalties in their heart. So many times we want to do all these great things and these extravagant things.

Oh, he's a preacher with power and he's this and that. That means absolutely nothing. It can mean something, but it doesn't necessarily mean something to offer your life to be spiritual.

Is to be a person who submits himself to the revealed will of God in scripture, not someone that screams hallelujah or someone submits to some supernatural vision, but someone who takes the commandments of scripture and submits his life to it in humble loving service to their Lord because of the mercies of God that's been revealed in their life. That is true spirituality. And as a husband and a father, I teach a lot on marriage, I think, because I need to hear it.

But I find out that true spiritualism, well, let me put it this way, a young guy came up to me, maybe you've heard this before from me, came up to me, says, oh, I just want to be a missionary in China. I just want to be a missionary in China. I just love the Chinese.

I want to give my life to the Chinese. I just want to be a missionary to China because I love them so much. And I said, do you want to know why you love the Chinese so much? He said, why, Brother Paul? I said, because you don't know any.

Now, I'm not speaking against the Chinese. My point is, when someone's 10,000 miles or so across the ocean, it's really easy to love them. It's really easy to be spiritual with them.

That's why girls know this. When a guy's courting you, he's going to be a whole lot more spiritual than after he marries you. It's easy to love someone at a distance.

It's easy to do things at a distance. It's easy to talk about the extravagant things and even perform them. But to do the simple submission to the commandments of God is quite another thing because you don't get on the Internet doing things like that.

You're not called radical because you just seek out the commandments of God, the will of God, and seek to submit to them. Now, not only is it spiritual, it's rational. Well, let me say this.

The most irrational thing you could ever do is follow a man. I mean, that's irrational. It's dangerous and it's irrational and there's no foundation for it.

So if any man comes to you and says, look, I want you to present your body a living and holy sacrifice to me, you need to run. It's irrational. It's insane.

It's dangerous, perilous. What other word can I use? Don't do it. But it is not irrational to offer your life as a living sacrifice to God.

As a matter of fact, not to do that is insane. I think when we talk about sin now, the old guys seem to do this a little bit more than we do, and I can't really don't remember their names, but I know I've read this because that's where I got the idea. Sin labeled as insanity.

It's insane. Insane. It's insane to hold back your life for yourself, to give yourself to self, to present your body to yourself as a creature and deny giving that to the Lord who made you and sustained you.

You see that it's insane. We are insane people. Remember the prodigal son, he came to himself.

That's what repentance is. To realize this is insane, what I'm doing. To give myself over to him is not insane, it's the only logical, rational thing that I can do now, he goes on in verse two and he says, now this is a command, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Do not be conformed to this world. Do not be pressed into its mold. We make a lot of churches in Peru when I was a missionary.

They would make them out of adobe bricks. And believe it or not, all the bricks were the same size and the same shape. Why? Because we could only afford one mold.

They all came out of the same mold, take a box. It's made out of wood. It's about four or five inches high.

It's got a bottom to it, doesn't have a top. You take some sand, you throw it all over the box like this and then you just pack it with mud. It's very simple.

Get it real packed down really good. The sand is there to keep the mud from sticking. And then you flip the box over and then you've got a brick and you make another one and another one and another.

And they all look alike because it's the same mold. When you look like the world. It's only because the world is pressing its mold on you and it's doing it because you're allowing it.

And one of the reasons you're allowing it, there can only be really two reasons that I figured out. One is ignorance. That's why you need preaching.

That's why you need Bible study. That's why you need iron sharpening iron. One is ignorance.

The other is a lack of the fear of the Lord. Now, the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and I want you to know there isn't a whole lot of that running around today. There isn't a whole lot of wisdom because there isn't a whole lot of the fear of the Lord and there isn't a whole lot of the fear of the Lord because not too many people really know who he is.

Now, let me put it this way, you can be a Christian, a true Christian, but such a babe in Christ, a beginner. That did you don't understand who this God is and the more you grow to understand his attributes and his works as they are revealed, the more you're going to fear him, to reverence him. And that is a healthy, healthy thing.

Now, this is do not be conformed to this world. Now, I want to be a little practical. How is it that I see men being conformed to this world? Well, if I had to pick the primary thing of.

And again, I'm going to sound like a 1950s or 1960s fundamentalist preacher, this is it. I would say the greatest tool of worldly conformity today is the television in your house. I just want to be practical.

I could sit here and be super spiritual all day long, but I tell you, that's what it is. It's one thing to have to walk in a world because we're not called to withdraw from this world and go live up on a mountain somewhere, because if we were, I'd do it. But I want to tell you something, it's quite another thing to pump the world's filth into your house.

And gentlemen, it's quite another thing to pump the world's filth into the mouth of your own children, probably the greatest tool the devil uses to conform men to the image of Christ, to conform people to the image of Christ and families is the television. Now, not only that, I want you, I just want you to hear some principles here. I've discovered even with my own little children.

That if now they they're not going to TV as we got a DVD player and things like that, that's it, they watch certain things, but I want you to know something. They can watch a very good little Christian film or something, something completely moral and something completely right. Right before they go to bed for an hour, let's say.

And it creates a busyness and a nervousness in the house, whereas if I will substitute that for sitting down and reading the same story to them. It changes the attitude of the home. It sweeps away the busyness and makes it personal and relational.

It does test it. Or if it's just too hard for you after church, I come over to your house, I throw your TV out. That's one of the means.

The other thing is ungodly, unbiblical relationships. This is a battle. Look, you put me on an island by myself, send the devil to Palm Springs, give him a free vacation, put Paul Washer on an island by himself with just good books and a Bible to read.

I'm still going to struggle against flesh. Knowing that I shouldn't be inviting things into my life to make this thing more difficult. Do you see that? And one of the things is relationships, and I'm not talking just relationships with unbelievers, I'm talking I'm talking about relationships with believers who do not edify, who do not have gracious speech, who always want to talk about everything under the sun except Jesus.

I need to be around people, iron sharpening iron, people to comfort me, people to console me, people to rebuke me, people to correct me and people just to teach me. I mean, if you go over, let's just go over for just a minute to to the book of Colossians just for a second and look at this 3:16. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness into your heart to God.

Now look at this. Let me ask you a question. Have you done this? Do you do this? Is this practiced around other believers with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your heart to the Lord? Is your conversation, as in Ephesians, literally spirit filled conversation in which what comes out of your mouth is edifying? You need to be around people like that and you need to stop being around people who do not edify you.

Now, of course, we all need to ramble out there and we need to minister. But when we're not ministering to the lost or reaching out to to wayward brothers or something, we need to make sure that our lives are surrounded by men and women who are going to be edifying in their speech. So.

TV relationships, things like that can all conform us. And then here's another thing. Be very careful of fashion.

Fashion, I mean, we all know that a person who is a slave to fashion is a very insecure individual. I mean, they've just, you know, every year the new fashion comes out. Just molding people, even churches, as we were discussing this afternoon, you know, there was a while when it was the yuppie craze.

You know, we got to reach the yuppies. So what are we going to do? We're all going to dress up in khakis loafers and have, you know, Oxford long sleeve shirts on button down collars. We're going to reach the yuppies.

Now everybody's beyond the yuppie stage and they're either, you know, managers at Walmart who are part of a Harley club or they're dressing grunge. So now we got to stand up there with, you know, holes in our pants and a half beard, as the pastor was saying, to look cool. I mean, what is happening? You know what that is? It's not just funny.

It is an outward manifestation and it may be something trite, but it is revealing an inward reality. We're being conformed to this world. And I'm not saying dress up like a Puritan.

I'm not saying just draw attention to yourself with some strange odd clothing. But I'll tell you this, I'd much rather have someone in some strange odd clothing, if that's what the world calls it, than someone conforming themselves to the world. Do you see what I'm saying? Be very careful.

I remember one time this young man and we were preaching in a small town, probably, I don't know, six thousand people or something. And the young man, you know, he just had his hair was just rather amazing. I don't know how he did it.

And he had earrings and collars and everything. And then he was he was walking. I thought maybe he had a problem with his leg, but no, it's just he was cool.

And yeah, from the horse's mouth, that's what he told me. And so I talked to him for a while and he I don't know, he must have felt uncomfortable or something. Maybe I was looking at the earring dangling from his nose.

I don't know. But he said, you got to understand, Mr. Washerman, I'm on the streets and I go, man, how big is how many streets does this town have? I go, listen, I appreciate you trying to win the streets, you know, I said I worked inner city Fort Worth for three years, even at the end of it, lived with street people. I said I wrestled a guy off of an overpass one night, put him in a sleeper hold and drug him back to the mission.

I was pretty much on the streets. And I said, and I dressed just like some farm boy from the Midwest with Chuck Taylor Converse, all stars on normal hair and. And none of those street guys cared what they wanted to know is, did I love him? You see, so we put all this wrapping of culture and everything else on us trying to be the man.

But we're more like a clown, culture's clown. We need to find out what God wants. We don't need to be conformed to this world.

Now, what we do need to be is transformed. Now, I don't want to push this too far, but this word transformed from the Greek word from which we get metamorphosis. And conformed here, when I read this word, it's it seems mechanical to me.

It seems mechanical, conformed like an industry, like a factory, like a machine that that presses out like a mold that presses out the same shape on everybody. Bam, bam, bam. There's nothing organic about it.

There's nothing life about it. It's just industry and machine and pressing and nudging and pulling and cutting and conforming someone to something. But when I come to this word transformed, it seems more organic, more spiritual, more real life.

It reminds me of John 15. I am the vine, you are the branches. It's something that occurs through.

I don't think it is a wrong statement to say the divine sap flowing from Christ. It's relational, it springs forth from our union with Christ and he says, be transformed that you know what that does, it fills me with hope. It fills me with all kinds of hope, be transformed, I can be transformed.

I have been changed. I am being changed. I will continue to be changed, not by my own power or some some dedication or oath I've made to God, but I will be changed and continue to be changed until the end, because he has set his seal on that.

He's promised it. He who begins a good work will finish it. So so here we have someone transformed.

Now, what is the instrument or the means by which this occurs? The renewing of the mind, he says, by the renewing of your mind. Now, I am not a great Christian historian. Matter of fact, I'm still trying to find out what I'm great at.

But let me share with you something I've seen, I believe in Christian history, there's this pendulum that just seems to swing back and forth. We never seem to center in the center. We're always at extremes.

And. There was a time when. When in the I think probably the early 20th century, the early 19th, the late 19th century around in there, there was an intellectualism, especially in Germany, that kind of breathed over the church and turned everything to ice, a cold intellectualism that had more to do with philosophy and and such than it did with a vibrant relationship with the scriptures and a fidelity to the scriptures.

And it created this idea, and then many of our seminaries and universities, Princeton and Yale and others, were just taken over by it like a monster of frost and ice that just just enclosed everything in death. And because of that, there's there was a reaction, a reaction in the United States. It was something like this.

I don't want none of that doctrine stuff. I just want Jesus. You ever heard that? I'm not a religion of the mind, I want a religion of the heart.

And there was a rejection of the mind, a divorce, which is absolutely insane, a divorce of Christianity from the mind, from the intellect. That's impossible. You can't grow that way.

First of all, if you ever say I don't want none of that doctrine stuff or I don't want none of that theology, I just want you to think about that for a moment. Theology from theos, the Greek word for God logos, which means word or discourse or governing principle, a lot of different things. But this is hold on discourse.

When you say I don't want none of that theology stuff, you're saying I don't want to hear any discourse about God. That doesn't sound very Christian to me. And in fact, what we need to see is that vital, vibrant, zealous Christianity begins with the mind.

True, vibrant, zealous Christianity begins with the mind and your mind must be renewed, renewed with what truth. Truth. Now, once you think about something, you say, boy, it is so hard to live this Christian life.

I'll give you that. But I got a feeling we make it harder than it is, even though it is hard, we make it even harder. I want you to think about most of you are awake about 16 hours a day.

Some of you teenagers, probably about four. But most people are awake about 16 hours a day. Now, let me ask you a question.

How much how much time are you reading and meditating on scripture, memorizing scripture? Let's say you do it for an hour. And that's that's that's high cotton. And that's that's quite a bit for most Christians.

So you have one hour in the word and 15 hours being bombarded by the world. And then let's just go another step further. Not only are you bombarded by the world, you're going to pump the world into your house through a television set and watch it three hours a day.

And then you're wondering, I don't understand why I have such wicked thoughts. You see, I don't understand why I have so little power in my life. Well, realize it begins with a renewing of the mind, a renewing of the mind.

Now, how do we do that? Of course, first of all, it's with scripture. Although there are many fine books out here, necessary books, needful books, good books, helpful books, they're all a book. There is one, the book and no book will replace it ever.

And you must have it. You must consume it. It must be the chief instrument of the renewal of your mind.

But then again, also making it our grand priority with not even a close second. OK, we're not talking about its first and coming in right behind it is another book. No, it is first.

There is no close second, but there is a second good books could be that virtuous things, godly relationships, godly conversation. There is a sense in which, for example, I remember when I first went to art appreciation class, you know, I mean, I'm a farm boy from Illinois, you know, what's art appreciation? I don't know. I walked in, I looked at the painting and I said, I appreciate that.

I didn't know what it was. But, you know, over the years, I don't know how it happened. I mean, they say you can train monkeys.

I guess I'm proof of it. I, I love Renoir. I love Monet, the water lilies, spectacular Van Gogh.

I like him a little crazy, cut his ear off, gave to his girlfriend. That's not really normal, but exceptional. And the thing about it, the more the more trying and the more disturbed his mind, even the greater is painting.

So I learned to appreciate it. Something happened. Now, there's another thing.

I mean, when I first met my wife, it's like, won't get a hamburger. I mean, McDonald's was fine dining, but she is, you know, European influence and all these different things. And she says, no, I'm going to teach you how to eat.

You uncultured beast, I'm going to teach you how to eat. I'll never forget I was on a week we got bumped up. Someone was real rude to my wife in the airport, some attendant.

And so they bumped us up to first class. And my wife is sitting there sitting there. She knows how to read the menu and all this stuff.

And the waitress comes by and looks at me and she goes, sir, what would you like? I said, I like this pork roast. My wife goes, it's roast pork, you idiot. I totally uncultured.

But over the years, what did she do? She refined my palate. Now, beginning early stages of my Christian reading, you know, just read pop theology. You know what I mean by pop theology? Well, let me give you an idea of what I mean by referring you to pop science.

Pop science is kind of a science you're going to get on the news and on programs. And usually it's about 25 years behind real science. Pop theology is all these little books written by guys who really they're not.

I don't want to sound snobbish, I can say this because I'm not one of those theologians, but they're books that are written by men who grapple with the text, who look at the grammar, who try to discern what's being said, who cry out to God, who read other men, who are trying to bring forth a correct portion for the people of God. And sometimes a lifetime of work goes into a single writing. As opposed to someone, I got an idea about how you could grow a church, I think I'll write a book or I've got a book says five steps to the victorious Christian life.

You ever get one of those just don't read it. Well, when you start off, you're like, oh, that's a cool book. Do you see this new theory he had on how to be holy? Instead of going.

To someone who's worked on this his entire life. You refine your palate, your spiritual palate in reading, and this is what I want to encourage you to be transformed, not by feeding on tears, trash, garbage, the superficial, but refining your palate to be able to appreciate spiritual things and to weigh them and enjoy them. You see, and so it's the transforming of our mind by reading the word of God, but also by by godly fellowship, also by godly books, also even godly hymns.

Music. Things that bring beauty, excellence. To refine us, to renew our minds now, I want to get back to the primary source of being transformed, and that, of course, is the word of God.

So we're renewing our mind so that we may prove what the will of God is. Now, I want you to look at this. Most young people walk up to me and almost I mean, it's amazing.

The majority of young people go, brother, Paul, I'm struggling with the will of God. I want to know what the will of God is for my life. And the problem is we look at the will of God almost in the way a diviner looks to discern what he ought to do.

And we come to a situation in our life and we don't know the will of God. And so we kind of just throw open the Bible and hope that it'll speak to us. OK, I will go around and ask people a whole bunch of different questions.

Do you think this will of God, do you think that's not the way it works? How does it work, discerning the will of God? In knowing the will of God, there is no substitution. For a lifestyle of renewing the mind in the word of God. What we learn from this is it is very dangerous to think you're going to discern the will of God by simply flipping open the Bible and finding a passage that seems to apply to you.

You come to understand the will of God by doing what? By living a lifestyle of renewing your mind in the will of God. Then as you renew your mind in the will of God and you come to understand his precepts and his wisdoms and all other things, what happens? Eventually, you begin to prove what is the will of God. You begin to understand it and you find out that many, many situations where where you have to make a

decision, should I marry this person? But since her name is Betty and she's not found anywhere in scripture, you're kind of left open.

I don't know. But there are so many principles in the Bible regarding character, regarding marriage, because you've been renewing your mind in the word of God, you work your way through those principles and you can begin to see whether this is a woman of God for you or not. Do you say it's a lifestyle? Now, let's bring this to a close by saying this.

What is the will of God? It's good, acceptable and perfect. Now, what I teach young people to do is to build a fence. To build a fence around their life, and I use this passage as soon as Philippians four, eight, whatever is good, whatever is perfect.

Whatever is true, all those things. And what I do is I take take the word good, make it a fence post. The will of God is good.

Will prosper you spiritually, it'll benefit your spiritual health, it is good, it is acceptable to God, whether or not is acceptable to your culture. Put another post in. It is perfect.

What do I mean by that? It's not off colored or contradictory. And what I mean by that is simply this. You don't have to violate the will of God in one aspect of your life in order to fulfill the will of God in another aspect of your life, like the pastor who says I must sacrifice my family on the altar of ministry to carry out the will of God.

No, because what he's saying is I must disobey God with regard to my family in order to fulfill the will of God regarding my ministry. That's absurd. The will of God is perfect.

And so you start looking through scripture at every characteristic of the will of God. This is the will of God, your sanctification, and you start building a fence around you and everything that comes to you. That is not good, that is not perfect, that is not acceptable to God, you know, immediately that's not the will of God for me.

It's how simple it can become. The scripture is very useful, very useful. Now, this is my ending exhortation on discipleship.

That I'm afraid today that people define themselves as disciples because of some radical thing they do. Or some radical lifestyle that is just radical for radical sake, but when you come down to the simple commandments of scripture, it has really nothing to do with it. I'm a street preacher, you can be lost.

I'm radical for Jesus, you could be in disobedience. It's looking at the commandments of God, discovering them because you're renewing your mind in the will of God and living in simple obedience, knowing you cannot do that by yourself and that you live in a community of brothers and sisters in Christ who are both going to love you, exhort you, rebuke you, challenge you, so on and so forth. All right.

All right. Let's pray. Father, I pray that you would use your word to help your people in Jesus' name.

Amen. We invite all of you to stay for fellowship for however long you'd like to stay. We have plenty of refreshments out there.

Some of you may want to meet some people from other churches you've never met. Stay as long as you want to do some informal singing, praying. But again, if God is dealing in an especially deep way with

anybody here, don't lose this moment.

Shark while the iron's hot, while God is near. You may want to just go into one of these rooms and sit there and pray for a while. Some people did that last night or perhaps speak with Brother Paul or someone else here.

Don't miss it if God is dealing with you. We're in the presence of God and God's people. Let's seize the moment.

OK, let's pray. Father, smile upon this final session of this conference. Bless the fellowship that will follow the word that we have heard your word.

Put it deep down into our heart. May it renew our mind and change our lives so that we will be conformed to the image of Christ and thereby prove ourselves to be true disciples of Jesus in Jesus' name. Amen.

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