

7 Reasons Why Christian Leaders Fall

by Shane Idleman

Christian leaders fall due to the same struggles that all Christians face, including evil desires and sin, and the key to preventing this is humility and prioritizing prayer and devotional time.

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Scripture: James 5:16

Topics: "Christian Leadership", "Moral Failure"

Description

This sermon addresses the importance of recognizing and overcoming the struggles that can lead to moral failure, particularly in the context of Christian leadership. It emphasizes the need for repentance, accountability, and restoration, highlighting the dangers of minimizing sin and the significance of genuine transformation through God's grace and forgiveness.

Transcript

The sermon kind of changed way midway through the week. I had the sermon already prepared and then Thursday morning got here. And I just had this issue on my heart.

Last two weeks, we've been talking about when the enemy strikes, right? How to defeat the enemy. He's coming after our families is coming after our marriages. He's coming against our children and all these different areas.

So what I did was, to be honest with you, a couple of my heroes in the faith have recently fallen from grace, admitting to sexual immorality and having to resign. One of them endorsed a few of my books. In addition to that, I've had pastoral friends that are in close proximity here recently have to resign.

And I just wanted to send out not only a warning to Christian leaders, but also to help all of us, because these points are going to apply to all of us. And sometimes when we walk close to that line, the enemy wants us to think, well, it's no big deal. But God wants to wake us up.

And what was what happened is Thursday morning, I had all this written out. And I said, Lord, I don't want to bring this kind of message. If you know this is just something, you know, I'm passionate about because I'm seeing the devastation or just give me some type of confirmation.

Lord, show me that that, you know, you want me to change directions on the sermon. And no sooner had I said that, I walk out into the kitchen and my my wife's having a difficult call with a friend of ours that we

found out that the affair took place and they both have to resign from ministry. And it's just it's reaching epidemic levels of of what's happening in the church.

And what we want to do is, number one, say. That it can happen to any of us. There is a lion that we've talked about, that is sent to kill, steal and to destroy.

We can't play with this lion. He's an enemy, not an inconvenience. And he's taking down marriages.

He's taking down families. He's he's he's causing children to walk away from the Lord. He's causing people to resign from the ministry because of this area.

So it's not just Christian leaders. This is happening to everybody. So it begs the question, why is it happening to Christian leaders? Well, why does it happen to Christians? James says that we have evil desires within us.

And when these evil desires are acted upon, see, that's the key word. They come in the mind. They go out into the trash.

That's how the door of temptation. You've heard it said it swings both ways. You can enter or exit when those evil thoughts come in.

We submit them to obedience to Christ and we move on. But when we allow those root, those those thoughts to take root and we open the door, James says once that evil desire is conceived like birth. Once it's conceived, it gives birth to what to sin.

And then when the sin is fully grown, when it's ran its course, when sin's fully grown, it brings forth death. It brings forth death spiritually, emotionally, physically. In all areas, death is what sin.

So I think what happens a lot of times in the church, we minimize. This issue, when God wants us to maximize it, put it out there. Don't give the enemy a stronghold.

Don't give him a foothold. What a foothold is, is, you know, when somebody tries to close the door, right? And you put your foot in front of that door and they're not closing it. So we give him he's got a crack right there.

He's right there just just to open that door. Just all I want is a foothold. And then I'll be able to enter in when the enemy goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

What is he looking for? That open door. So this is going to be applicable to all of us. And after having some of my heroes in the faith fall in the last few weeks and and this just a devastating topic, we have to remember something, too, though.

I want to give a couple, not disclaimers, but before I get to the actual points, a few introductions. Is that this isn't really a charismatic issue, and I hear that sometimes, oh, it just happened, those charismatic clowns, you know, the Holy Spirit, they're all weird and then they're falling, falling, falling. Why can name just as many on this side of the camp as this side of the camp in our own valley? So it has nothing to do with charisma, it has everything to do with character.

And it's not just charismatic leaders, it's all types of leaders are falling in this area. And we have to at some point with humility address this topic. And the big difference is pride says I've never committed adultery.

I've never done this. It'll never happen to me. Humility says by the grace of God, I haven't committed it, but I can.

Right. We're admitting that area of weakness, that's what humility does. It says, listen, Lord, we're all susceptible.

Don't think we're going to get away from this one where the enemy comes in because he wants to destroy our marriages and our families, and that's how he does it. He does it by this. He doesn't do it by encouraging you to get into the word of God.

He doesn't do it by encouraging you to put on worship music. He doesn't encourage it by having you go to church and loving you. He doesn't encourage it with all those things.

He takes what God has designed sex and perverts it and allows the destruction to take place. And the one thing also I've learned through all this is we're only to put Christ on the pedestal, not man. We put him on the pedestal, we look to him and I told the first service, I'll tell you guys, I appreciate, you know, everybody loves the messages and they're built up, but don't look to me, look to him.

My job is to just the vessel, point you to him, point you to him because I can let you down. You can let me down. We let each other down.

That's why we look to him and people ask the question, oh, you're, you know, isn't your faith shaken because of this? My faith isn't shaken. I'm disappointed, but I look to Christ, not man. Anytime you look to man and put him above Christ or equal to, you will be let down.

And people waver in their faith and oh, I can't believe it. The church is falling apart. Is his faith really real? Sure.

But you look to him and you have to remember something. The value of the battle reflects the value of what we're fighting for. Because there's a battle raging.

That tells me there's something vitally important that the enemy wants. If there's no battle. He doesn't want it.

So we have to, on one hand, be warned that the enemy is coming in like a like a thief to kill, to steal, to destroy, warn us. But then at the same time, encourage us because to be forewarned is to be forearmed. If I know he's coming through the back door, I'm locking it and I'm putting a nine millimeter Glock right there just in case he gets in.

Because you're prepared, right? So that's what we're trying to do with these types of sermons is prepare. And I would say the majority of counseling appointments that the church does, the majority of the reason why marriages are falling apart is because of this issue. We can't ignore it.

We have to address it head on. And we have to remember something, too. Conviction is not always a hammer to the head.

It's a still small voice to the heart. Many times people do not repent or change because they haven't received the hammer to the head. You know, God's going to bring out a sledgehammer or a lightning bolt and he'll stop me.

But no, it's a still small voice to the heart saying, stop, return, come back. See, I've learned God doesn't compete with our time. He doesn't compete with the noise of the world.

He calls me to be still and know that I am God. Wait on me. He doesn't compete.

Hey, Shane, listen, I'm going to get louder, too. Hey, look at me over in the corner. He says, no, I'll draw you to me by the still small voice of God.

And then we start to confuse patience with approval. God's being patient with us. We say, oh, he approves of my behavior.

No, he doesn't. He's calling and drawing us back to him in that relationship through repentance and restoration. So be very careful, because I do when I counsel people, they say.

I thought God would give me a wake up call or something. I thought he would have stopped me. I thought he would have broke my car down on my way to the hotel.

I thought he would have really it's often it's a still small voice of a loving father. Don't go there. Don't go there.

And we know it, right? Because what do we like to do? Not right now. Oh, I've heard this sound before and I'll just ignore it. I'll ignore it, I'll engage in the sin, I'll repent later, and then it's an ongoing cycle that never ends.

So this is a vital, vital topic, and let's begin with point number one. Many say it will never happen to me. Right, I've read books and studies and research on Christian leaders who fail.

This is on the top four of the whole, you know, interviewing thousands of people. This will never happen to me. Really? What does 1st Corinthians say, 10, 12, that if we think we are standing firm, we should be careful that we don't fall.

Spurgeon said, we are never, never. Let me add some more nevers in there. We are never, never, never.

So much in danger of being proud is when we think we are humble. That's when you're that's when the enemy comes in. When you think you're humble.

That's why I often say I'm a prideful man. I'm admitting to everybody right now, national media that picks us up on YouTube, Vimeo, radio. Shane Eidelman is a prideful man working on humility by the grace of God.

C.J. Mahaney said that many years ago at a pastor's conference. I'm a prideful man working on humility by the grace of God. So I can say I can't stand up here and say I have never committed adultery by the grace of God.

But I can. It's in me. Oh, how can you? It's because it's in all of us.

If that sinful nature is given full reign, watch out because it will progress. See, we have to remember something about sin. I love what the prolific author John Owen said, be killing sin or sin be killing you.

It's terrible English, but it makes its point, right? Be killing sin or sin be killing you. Sin either withers or it grows depending on whether you feed or starve it. See, sometimes you, oh, I'll just keep it right here in this

little bottle right there.

There's my little pet vice right there. You kind of cute, isn't it? It's going to stay right there. But it doesn't work that way.

It's either growing. Sin is growing in my life right now or it's withering. Depending on whether I feed or starve it.

That's that's biblical. Look, we have time. We go through all the scriptures dealing with be not conformed, flee sexual morality.

Do not let this mind be in you, but let this mind be on being you put on the full armor of God. Turn from this. Don't engage into that.

Withdraw from this. Don't do that. Come out from among them.

My people, unless you share in her sins or receive of her plagues. Revelation, it's a constant. Listen, life is a battleground, not a playground.

Paul talks about being a soldier, being having weapons. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They're not they're not going to do it, but pulling down a strongholds, how right here, conquering sin here first.

So it begins here. Number one, you have to say it could happen to me. It could happen to me.

The enemy likes likes it when you say it can never happen to me. I don't know how they do that. We hear it a lot, right? Somebody chastises somebody who's addicted to alcohol, but they couldn't stop caffeine if their life depended on it.

Somebody's addicted to cigarettes, but they couldn't, you know, they put, oh, how could they smoke? Well, you're addicted to this. We like to put our little, you know, sins aren't as bad, mine aren't as bad as yours on on things, right? But this is the first step. If you want to keep a solid marriage together, a solid Christian foundation, this is number one.

It could happen to me. You see somebody, you know, falling. This could happen to me.

And Paul said, for when I am weak, I am strong. We talked about this last week, so I don't want to belabor the point, but it begs you. It begs repeating our strength is found in weakness.

So how in the world does that work? Because see, when I admit my weakness, if I said, hey, guys, I'm weak in this area, I'm weak in this area. Can you help me? It's in this weakness that I'm strong now because the enemy goes, well, I can't really go up for there. Not only is he admitted it, he's brought in godly counsel.

He's put safeguards around the area. He structured his life in such a way that that weakness is now protected, right? So if I ran into some of you Trader Joe's and I said, hey, guys, I'm really addicted to chocolate. That's my weakness.

Guess what? You're going to be checking when you see me in my car, right? Because it's exposing a weakness on this area. And that's what that's the difference between pride and humility. Pride says even

this sermon isn't for me.

You know who needs to hear this? I can think of. Well, guess what? You've already turned a deaf ear to what God is trying to do in your own life. Anytime we think this sermon preaches to me before it preaches to you.

Anytime we say, oh, this doesn't apply to me. I know who this really applies to. There's a good chance we're wanting to do this.

That's my kids do now. And my other kids get upset. Listen to me.

I'm not listening. I'm not listening. That's what we want to do.

We turn a deaf ear to the very way God wants to speak to us. So humility says I'm not only coming full ears, Lord, I'm coming full heart, full surrender saying, Lord, speak to me. What areas can I improve in? I want to come Lord.

I'm a weak vessel because when I'm weak, it's in my weakness that I am strong. Because here's the other thing we forget when we admit our weaknesses, when we surrender them, when we repent, then something dramatic and dynamic happens. It's called the filling of the Holy Spirit.

You empty yourself of self and now you feel the spirit of God. Now you can live out what they call the spirit filled life that everybody's scared of. The spirit filled life full of love, joy, peace, contentment, long suffering, gentleness, kindness, goodness, and self control.

The spirit filled life. That's how you defeat the enemy, because somebody's filled the spirit of God. They're humble.

They've been humiliated probably too, but they're humble. And from that humility now we can minister because you go into a situation saying, oh, I could fall there. I'm getting away from that cliff.

That cliff too. I don't want anything. I'm humble, Lord.

I'm weak. I'm a sinner. I need you.

Keep me grounded in your word. So this is priority number one. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.

In due time, he will exalt you. Exalt yourself and he will abase you. If we had time, we'd also go through pride, right? He humbles the proud.

The humble, he teaches his way. God told the prophet, I believe it was Ezekiel, that I will drive. I will bring back what was driven away.

I will bind up the broken. I will strengthen the sick. But the fat, the proud, the arrogant, I will feed in judgment.

Thus sayeth the Lord. God almighty. That's some serious stuff.

He hates pride because pride is that satanic type of attitude that says, I will be like the most high God. So if you want to overcome the enemy, especially in this area, it begins with humility. Number two, what

happens in those who fall in this area? Most of them are too busy.

You've heard me talk about that before, right? But we have to say it again. If you're too busy to stay in God's word, if you're too busy to find time in that prayer closet, you're too busy. Some things need to be adjusted.

The enemy loves to get us too busy. Oh, are you doing all these things? You're ministering. You're going here.

You're working. You're making a good living. You've got kids to raise.

You're doing all this stuff, but you're too busy for God. Well, guess what? While we're too busy, life is falling apart. Families are crushing.

Kids are rejecting Christ. Things, the world is shaking. The church is falling.

Why? Because everybody's too busy. Too busy doing what? Who knows? Those who wait upon me shall renew their strength. You know, waiting is not some five-minute devotional.

Poke fun at that a lot. If you have a five-minute devotional, that's fine. Do it, of course.

But you might want to add some time onto that because waiting time, it takes, I see this sometimes at worship, worship nights. It takes 20, 30, 40, 50 minutes sometimes to get the junk out of the heart and for God to finally move and finally break. And then once breakthrough's starting, now let's flip on the lights.

Let's go home. Because we didn't take the time and seek Him. So guard your, you should guard your prayer time and your devotional time like nothing else.

You have, you should safeguard that. This is a, this is not something you might fit on the calendar. This is, this is my life.

This is my anchor. I have to have this. I have to have this.

Because from that, everything else is built, right? That's the foundation. The Word of God is foundational. Prayer is foundational.

And I've noticed that people who are truly praying, not just, oh Lord, here, bless me today. And Lord, just, you know, I'm a sinner. Just thank you so much.

And, and, you know, a couple other things and that's it, while they go cheat on their wife. See, we can say a superficial prayer, but you can't do heart searching prayer and repentance with the Word of God open in front of you, crying out to God saying, Lord, all these areas, Lord, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me. Lord, don't withdraw your Holy Spirit from me.

Lord, let the bones that you've broken, that they may rejoice. Read Psalm 51, quote it, look to God and let him repair the heart. There's no way abounding sin, besetting sin can exist in a praying heart that's praying like that.

You can't, because if you're doing that, you sure don't want to be in that prayer closet. And if you're in that prayer closet, you sure don't want to be doing that. There's no way that they can coexist.

So the devil says, I'm going to get you so busy with your friends, with social media, with your kids, with everything. I love busy Christians. Why? Because they're not powerful Christians.

The most powerful Christians I know don't have TV and a lot of media going on. They've got their time in the Word of God, their time ministering to fill with the Spirit of God. They make time for God because that's where the power comes from.

It doesn't come from being too busy. And I often say, if we're too busy and God's not first, then we're too busy. Some things need to be changed.

That might cost me a career. Yeah, it sure might. Jesus said, carry your cross.

It cost me a career, stock options, 401ks. It wasn't easy. He took me out of there kicking and screaming the whole way.

But why? Because there's comfort in that. Basically, Lord, I don't trust you. You don't know what's best.

You're not going to be able to see me through. And once I begin to put him, see, once you put him first from that priority, then everything else flows out of that. See, if that's a priority, right, then everything else is prioritized around that.

Ask Morgan how many people made fun of me for going to bed early. Guess who's not making fun of me now? Because I need that time in the morning. Does it happen all the time? No.

No, once we heard the death last night, I've been up since three this morning. I want to go to bed right about now. I feel I could go to bed very easily.

It's difficult. But where does that strength come from? Being filled with the spirit of God. And that's what people often and I'll just throw this in there.

I'm not I'm trust me, I'm not trying to my own horn or do anything. I'm just telling you people say, how do you find time to write books? Turn off the TV. You'll find 20, 30 hours a week, a week.

I go through six or seven books a month on my dresser, just no media, that's all there's not special, I'm not holy, I'm not spiritual, I need God, I need him so much, I need to read about prayer at night before I go to bed and then guess what, what I'm thinking when I get up in the morning, Lord, I want to pray, I just need to get in your presence, I don't care what time it is, Lord, and because I'm filling my mind with that at night, is there attack against that often? Oh, yeah, of course. Of course, everybody wants to drop off movies and watch this and go check out this watch this video. OK, hold on.

What's my priority? You can call me a holy roller or Jesus freak or whatever you want to call me, but don't call me lukewarm. Because if Christ isn't priority, something else is, and if something else is, it's called idolatry. Very simple terms.

Jesus doesn't say, hey, would you consider me and if you want to carry your cross and you might want to do this, he says, come die, follow me. That's all he says, die to self, carry your cross, follow me. I don't know what that looks like.

Follow me. Trust me. But many times we're too busy.

And if you're convicted, what's that mean? Good. Just make some changes. It wasn't easy for me.

I moved, remember I told this story, I moved in with my mom in 2000, for six months, fighting and screaming the whole way, I ended up staying there a couple of years. But I get in there and I go, Mom, where's the TV, and she goes, oh, I don't have cable and TV. I'm like, what? Well, okay.

And then I pick up, you know, Billy Graham's autobiography and church history and missions and all this stuff and just can't stop reading, the Word of God comes alive because you're feeding your mind what it was designed to feed on. Finally, brethren, whatever things are noble and right and of truth, Lord, meditate on these things, not all the junk in the culture. And that's one of my big concerns.

The Holy Spirit isn't leading many people, it's Hollywood. Think about it. You fill in the blank.

What are we allowing? So if we're too busy, that's how God will draw us away. Oh, I'm watching on Desperate Wives, why don't I act it out in my own life? I'm watching out on CSI Miami, why don't I act it out in my own life? I don't know, are those still airing? I don't know. You could date me probably.

And I know I make this a big issue, but this is the big issue that's taking people down. Ask people who counsel other people that have happened this, tell me about your devotional life and your prayer life. You think anybody's going to say, Shane, it's fantastic, I'm on fire for God, I'm in hours and the Lord's speaking to me.

No, nobody says that. Nobody's ever said that. They say, I don't have one, I've drifted from God, my foundation has been shaken, I need to return to the Good Shepherd.

I don't have that, that's why I'm in the predicament I'm in. You know the old saying. Somebody whose life is not falling apart usually owns a Bible that is falling apart.

And that's truth. Sometimes we need to be jarred out of our comfort zone and wake up. It's hard to fall when you're already on your knees, is it not? The greatest asset you will ever have and you will ever cultivate is what I've been pounding at this pulpit for three and a half years.

You better make time for God because He's not going to compete with your time. He doesn't compete as a little kid. Oh, come on, let me.

He just says, here's what you need to do, do it. And if you don't do it, here's the consequences. And I don't know why people don't do it.

This baffles, well, I won't say that either, I want to be careful here. Blows my mind, whatever you want to say. But if we truly, I guess maybe it's a belief issue.

If we truly believe that this is the inspired, inerrant Word of God given to guard men, given to direct men, the very words of God speaking breath through the Holy Spirit prompted men moved by God, moved through the Holy Spirit of God as a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path, that it is living, sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing, even, joint and marrow. It is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of man. If it's God's Word to man, why does it sit on the shelf and grow dusty? Get dusty.

Why? Well, think about what we're saying. I don't have time for that. The God of the universe has written to us, well, it's boring, Shane, it's boring because all you're putting a bunch of junk in.

That's why it's boring. Light and darkness cannot live together. We're watching all these horror and all these media things and now we're, oh, this is boring.

I don't like this. Why do you like this? Because your flesh is saying, get me away from that. That's why many people don't like it.

But they need it. The very thing they need is the very thing they're afraid of. You doubt this? What about if I was able to say, as soon as you read this cover to cover, slowly, methodically, take a few notes, I will give you \$10,000 cash.

How many of you would do that very quickly? So \$10,000 that we probably misspend is more important than spiritual health. Now don't get me wrong. I would probably read it pretty quick, too, because that added extra motivation.

But compare, oh, man, I would devour that thing for \$10,000, but I'm not going to devour it with my marriage falling apart. Oh, I came to stir it up tonight. I'm not in a real good mood.

Because I see what the enemy is doing to families. And we're going to have to bury somebody in a few weeks because of this. And I'm getting really tired of it.

Because the answer is right there. I'll take \$10,000, but I'll continue to be drifting away from God for the rest of my life. I'll take that, but not this.

I'll take the \$10,000, but I don't want to kick this addiction. I'll take the \$10,000, but I'll stay depressed and suicidal instead. Think about that.

I got it. This is just a book at the library. I got it.

But once we realize that God himself gave the Word of God, and a lot of times why it's boring is because you've got to push through that discipline yourself. Get some study Bibles. Get some commentaries.

When I read the Levitical priesthood, people say, that's boring. But if you understand the significance that God said, I'm going to bring animal sacrifices for a time. And the Levitical priesthood is going to be my mediator between God and man.

It's slaying the blood of animals for the Passover. Study the Passover, the foreshadowing of Christ to come, and the consistency of Scripture. And then you get into the study Bible, and how does James apply to me? Be patient through tribulation, all these things.

And you begin to live off the Word of God. I don't know how people get through it without it, because it's going to be hard to commit adultery when you turn to Proverbs, and it says, stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But you do not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of hell.

You think you might make a different decision if that's what you're living in? The problem is we're not living in this. We're living in this. And as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

So the enemy doesn't want you to have any time for this. Now please don't misunderstand. I know there's single moms, you know, with four little kids, you know, I know it's difficult.

But I also know it can be done. Every one of us, even legitimate excuses, would find the time for \$10,000. Who wouldn't? Maybe somebody, I don't know.

But as soon as you read this cover to cover, you would have a \$10,000 check, I bet we'd be giving out a lot of money. But nobody else has time for it, for no money. A lot of it has to do with the fact that many people are not truly filled with the Spirit of God.

Because when you're in His Word, and a scripture speaks life to your heart, you have worship music on, that's the greatest high you'll ever know. Once you're filled with the Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit in me cries, Abba, Father, I'm spending time with my Father, He's speaking to me through His Word, I will encourage you, I will direct you. Be courageous.

When I read, though my servant Moses is dead, Joshua, be strong and be courageous, pick up where he left off, move, it's not gonna be easy. And I read that, it comes to life in me. Life is difficult, life is hard, but I need to be courageous and not worry about what the enemy's gonna do.

It comes to life. If you believe that. If you don't believe it, why are you even here? If you do believe it, why aren't you making a lot of time for this? One thing of motivation that might help you to get your kids in the Word of God, or get your grandchildren in the Word of God, I made a promise, it's gonna be hard to keep, but I'm gonna do it.

I've got four Bibles for my kids, I'm reading through their Bible, some of them are 2,500 pages. Each one I'm reading through in my own personal notes, I'm praying for you today on this issue, watch this issue, Satan comes in right here, going to Psalms, look at this, I'm encouraging you today, and it's gonna be two years worth of reading, here you go when you're 16. They're already looking forward to it.

I say, oh Shane, that's so great. No, I have to, I need to, I need that motivation. That could be the greatest gift you ever give your kids.

My daughter wants me to hurry up and finish in this week. So you know, it's time, praying for you, and when it's God speaking to you, when it comes, when the Scripture jumps out, watch it here, he's gonna come in like this, be guarded up, be built up, look, no matter what you're going through, don't let depression, God, and you're, this is, you're leaving this treasure to them, if you believe it, if you believe it's real. See, I do, because it's radically changed my life.

When you apply the Word of God to your life, things change. Doesn't mean it gets easier, but now I'm on that solid foundation. You know what Jesus said, right? Those who hear my sayings and do not do them, I will liken him to a man who built this house upon the rock, or I'm sorry, built it upon the sand.

And what happened? When the winds came, when the rain beat down, when everything happened, that house fell, and great was its fall. Why? Because they did not build their house on the Word of God. But the one who hears my Word and does it, well, how do you know to do it if you don't know what's in it? You gotta start there.

If you're not in the Word, the Word won't be in you. So, he who hears it and does it, I will liken him to a man who built the house on the rock, and it was sunny all day. No, same storm came.

You see the difference? Same storm, same rain, same wind, everything came. But Christ said it did not fall because it was founded on the rock. And many people can quote it, but very few people do it.

You see the difference there, right? It's not that we hold the Bible in our hands or bring it to church, our own one. It's we're actually obeying what's in there. I spent a lot more time on that point, but I believe it's important.

Number three, look at number three. Before a person falls, holiness is often hindered. Holiness is hindered.

What I mean by holiness is God calls Christians. If you are a believer, God is calling you out of the cultural mindset. I know that's hard to believe, but God doesn't want us to go in there and be missional if we fall when we reach.

Right? Everybody's like, so we got to go engage the culture. We got to go engage the culture. Why is everybody falling when they reach? Yes, we need to be missional.

We need to reach our culture. But at the same time, the Bible says, come out from among them and be separate. So I can still engage the culture without the culture engaging me.

And that's all holiness. Holiness is a breastplate of righteousness that we talked about, saying, I'm going to live my life a different way. I'm not going to watch the same things.

I'm not going to consume the same things. I'm not going to go to the same places. My life's going to be a little bit different.

Why? Because the light of the world resides in my heart. I'm not going to put it under a bushel. Oh no, I'm going to let it shine.

Right? Remember that song? There's some truth to that. It's doctrinally correct as well. Holiness.

Actually without holiness, no one will see the Lord. Without holiness, you will not be filled with the Spirit of God. And anytime I speak at youth events, this is the biggie for them.

It's the most difficult and the most challenging. Right? Because this one, they want to be popular. This one, they want to be cool.

They don't want to upset people. They don't want to be... I'm not going to be viewed as, holy shames, I got Jesus, but can you not let people know, please? You'd be amazed at how often... I've made jokes about this last summer. I think I'll do it again.

But the sermons you know are picked up a lot of different places now. They're getting out nationally. And young adults, you know, oh, I love this message, this and that, you know, hey, post it on Facebook.

Why don't you share it? Oh, no. No, no, no. Sure.

No, thanks. I'm not going to do that. Why? Well, bless me, but I'm sure not going to let them know I listened to this fruitcake, this looney tune, this charismatic nutcase, right? Yeah, it really helped me, but no, I don't want people to think I listened to that.

I'm not going to put it on my face. I'll offend a whole bunch of my friends. Exactly.

The gospel, the message, the gospel is offensive. It's supposed to offend, but this is a big area because holiness is often hindered. Before somebody falls in sin, holiness is not a part of their life.

And we have to be careful here because I'm not talking about legalism, right? People can be legalistic. Oh, I'm so holy. I don't do this.

I don't do that. I don't go there. I don't do this.

I don't drink and chew and hang out with those that do. You know the whole saying? And that becomes a form of legalism. Oh, I'm so spiritual.

Holiness is just saying, listen, I can't go there and do that and associate. My lifestyle is going to be different. There's power in that.

Actually, did you realize that the power of the Holy Spirit resides in a pure heart? Not a perfect heart. Power and purity flow together. When a person is pure, repentant, filled with the Spirit of God, that's where the power comes.

That's where the power of the gospel comes. That's where the power to live a victorious Christian life comes. That's where the power to change lives comes from.

That's where the power to be a husband, a loving husband comes from. That's where the power to be a loving wife comes from. From the purity of life, it cannot come from a corrupt and polluted mind.

So holiness is often hindered before somebody falls. Number four, many build relationships with the opposite sex. Say, oh, Shane, that's a real good one.

I didn't even think of that. Yeah, right. That's a no-brainer, right? 80% of Christian leaders who fall, this is why.

We must be on high alert in this area and have tremendous steps of accountability in place. The devil doesn't show those involved in a counseling appointment or a fellowship meeting or a get-together, he doesn't show them the pain and the anguish and the years of regret that moral failure brings. He deceives them with a false sense of freedom and ministry that we are simply helping the other person.

So here's the advice on this one. If you're married and you're attracted to somebody, don't fuel that desire. Don't fuel that.

It's just wisdom. And we have high standards, even at this church. If young girls want to be counseled, guess who they're going to be counseled with? My mom or my wife.

Absolutely. It's the way it is. Well, Shane, aren't you? Well, sure.

Take heed lest you fall, though, right? We got to have steps of accountability in place. If there's an attraction there, I don't need to be feeding that attraction. I need to be fleeing that attraction.

I told the first service, I reminded my wife, she laughed a little bit, but when we first got married, we were in a Bible study. And we left, and she goes, I'm really attracted to that leader. We can't keep going to that Bible study.

I said, you're absolutely right, we can't keep going to that Bible study. We're done with that. So I wanted to say, well, there's probably some cute girls there, too.

Yeah, that's right. We better leave. It's painful, to be honest, isn't it? But it's truthful.

And she says, listen, I can see we cannot go to that Bible study, because I'm really, you know, that's all I need to know. Okay, thanks. But the same thing applies.

We're not going to build relationships when there's a big attraction there, because that attraction needs to be to your spouse. That's how God created it. See, sex and attraction, very good thing.

Hollywood makes it a very perverse and bad thing. It's a good thing. It's a good thing.

God created this union, man and woman to come together. There's an attraction. That's one of the dangers of pornography, is it takes the attraction off of your spouse and onto another.

That's why you don't want to touch them anymore. That's why you don't love them anymore. That's why you get upset at them.

That's why you fight with them all the time, because you're in love up here. It's meant to be towards our spouse. But once that attraction breaks, and now it's focused on somebody else in the name of fellowship or ministry or counseling, that's a footholding enemy, if I've ever seen one.

Because that attraction doesn't stay neutral. What does it do? It grows and grows and grows. That's why Paul said, fight sexual immorality, right? It's all what comes after the F, right? Fight it or flee? Paul said flee it, because you can't fight it.

You cannot fight sexual immorality. You'll lose. So the best course is, I see it, bye-bye, I'm fleeing.

Have nothing to do with that. I'm not going to sit there and, oh, I wonder, now you better not. You know, you just keep fighting, okay, I beat you today, I'm going to beat you tomorrow, and you just keep fighting.

Eventually, the day will come where it will defeat you. Because you have to flee from it. As soon as it enters up here, you have to take your thought captive to Christ.

I don't think people realize the power of that scripture, bringing every thought, not a few, bringing every thought under the obedience of Christ, taking our thoughts captive under the obedience of Christ. And then what we do with that thought is up to us. And I've been called, quite frankly, people say, oh, he's kind of arrogant and distant.

He doesn't really... So I'd rather be called arrogant than an adulterer. You catch that when you drive home, too, on that one. Right? Yeah, it'll be a little arrogant, a little standoffish, right? Okay.

Okay. I'm attracted to you, I'm not going to build that relationship. My wife can.

Vice versa. You see how that works? Not going to go there. Call me arrogant, call me foolish, call me mean-spirited, whatever.

It's not going to happen. Because as soon as it does happen, you open that door, and the enemy comes in. Eighty percent of people who fall in this area, number one, say it won't happen to me.

Number two, they counsel the opposite sex. Now, can you counsel or help the opposite sex? Of course. But you've got to be careful.

Everything I'm saying, bring your spouse. Let them know, hey, listen, you know, it might seem silly, but say, listen, we don't want to spend a lot of time with that couple. You know, I'm attracted to their spouse.

I don't know what's there, pray for me. See, now you're exposing the weakness. Saying, oh, I wasn't aware of that.

Because what happens? A lot of times you'll see this, they left me for my best friend. How does that happen? Because you start going out to wine tasting, and wine at Bible studies, and there's beer at everything now, and everybody's getting closer, and vacations in Las Vegas, and then eventually it all falls apart. What happened? It didn't all fall apart right here.

It fell apart months ago or years ago when the attraction started, and you fed the attraction, and fed the attraction. So then it was just a matter of time. It's what they call a ticking time bomb.

Tick, tick, tick, tick, boom. That's how it happens. This is a ticking time bomb.

Because at some point when the attraction's there, you're saying, you know what? My spouse doesn't make me feel loved and appreciated like they do. They're actually a jerk. This one's really nice.

They understand me, mine doesn't. They listen to me, this one doesn't. You know what? I think I married the wrong person.

I think God, I've heard this. I heard this, and I'm like, Lord, what is wrong with these people? Shane, I married the wrong person. God showed me.

How did God show you this? Well, through this, well, it's a wrong relationship, but he showed me how this other person loves me and cares for me, and that's, he showed me, and this is who I should have been with. Just throwing this out there, but did your spouse make you feel like that when you first met? Oh, they sure did. What happened? Love doesn't leave people.

People leave love. So the feelings they have for this person, they just felt 20 years ago. They forgot all about it, though, and then what happens? Step by step by step, they take the bait, and then all hell breaks loose.

The divorce attorneys are called. The kids are choosing homes. It's a hard one, folks, because you don't know how many people I've talked to that say, tears in their eyes, Shane, if I could go back, if I could go back, I would change it.

I'm in too deep now. Then the damage is too great. So to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

That's why we put precautions in place so we don't look back and say, if only, if only I saw that coming. And we see this everywhere, right? Attractions everywhere. Guys are visual.

Guys are visual. God created us that way to be attractive for our spouse. So when our attraction is on something that's not our spouse, it's a no-brainer.

You don't think about it, you don't know, maybe, and you just say, oh, that's taking this thought captive. That's what that means. Actually, I'll make a statement here that I hope you understand.

This type of temptation is very easy if it's dealt with like that. Very easy. Emails.

Oh, I'm 22 in town. Here's my photos. Delete.

That's it. It has to happen that quick. You get those emails, Shane? Oh, absolutely.

That's why my wife has my Google password account and everything. I have a software that every single website I visit is emailed to her on Monday. And if I go in there somehow and remove the file or the whatever you call it, software, she gets an email that says, you've been removed as the accountability partner.

Well, Shane, you have to do that? I don't have to, but I sure want to. Because see, if you want purity, you'll do these things. I talk to guys often.

I say, here's, have your email, have your website sent to your wife. Oh, bro, I'm not going to do that. You think I'm crazy? Well, I guess not.

What are you looking at then? No wonder you don't want to go in there. How bad do you want it? How bad do you want a healthy relationship with Christ? How bad do you want purity? How bad do you want to be filled with the Spirit of God? How bad do you want to defeat the enemy? You've got to make some serious decisions and serious changes. That's how he comes in.

That's why we're fleeing sexual temptation. As soon as it happens, delete, delete, delete. That's it.

They start to go, oh, I wonder, maybe this is a genuine. This is somebody from church I haven't thought about before. Maybe this is a genuine need.

You know, you start to play that game. As I said, you're toast. You're done because that's how the enemy works.

Fight it, fight it. No, he says, flee it. Flee these things.

Number five, they fail to strengthen weak areas. I won't spend a lot of time because we're running out of time. But they fail to strengthen weak areas.

People that fall don't strengthen their weak areas. Do we all have weak areas? Yours, and yours, and yours, and yours is not mine. And mine is not yours, yours, and yours, and yours.

We know what the weak areas are, do we not? And by exposing those weak areas, well, for guys, it's the majority of men in our country look at pornography and are addicted to it. I talk to speak at men's conferences and different things like, oh, not me. Nobody, I don't know, nobody, they don't want to admit it.

Why? Because it's pride. If they say, listen, yeah, I need some precautions in place. Can you help me? Yeah, you're human.

Let's get, let's look, identify that weak area, put some accountability software in place, put, let some people know, ask, they're going to ask the hard questions every day. Are you sure? Yeah, absolutely. We need those kinds of things.

But many people fail to strengthen their weak areas. They don't expose them. And I don't want to go through the whole list, but you know what that weak area is.

You need to expose it sometimes. I wrote about this in the AV Press. I put in the bulletin last week.

It's one of the reasons why I obviously have to take a view, an abstinence view on alcohol. Because from my younger years, even as a Christian, you know, I could have a few drinks now and then, no big deal, but nine times out of 10, it might be fine, but it's that 10th time that's going to take me down. So I got to worry about that 10th time.

Well, Shane, don't you have liberty? Sure, you could, but because of that 10th time, because of that addiction always wanting to rear its ugly head, that's a weak area for me. Now I have to just say, hey, you know, I've told trusted friends, my wife, people, you guys know, I've shared this before, that that can't be anywhere that I can, you know, I can't play with that little tiny, fine, nine days out of the week, but that 10th day, they'll take me down. That's a weak area that now I've got to have safeguards around.

So I go to Trader Joe's, not only do they look for chocolate, they look for wine in my thing. That was just a joke, I'm throwing it in there. But see, then you have those areas, right, the weak areas.

That's why a lot of times I'll go out, if I go to town, you try to bring somebody, right, but you tell the place, hey, listen, those little refrigerators, don't pack mine. I want it completely empty, I don't want the TV in my room. I'm gonna study, I'm gonna fast.

Because if I decide to do that when I get there, oh, the enemy says, oh, come on, put your feet up on the tube and enjoy some TV for a while. Let's see what you're in there, M&M's, \$6 M&M's and a Heineken, what the heck, who cares? Right, I mean, that's how it works. Think I'm being too transparent today.

You gotta work on that. But sometimes, you know, I get frustrated because I listen to pastors on television or TV, not television too much, on radio, and the same, I just never hear them admit to anything. It's like they just don't struggle with anything ever.

They're just perfect holy men of God. And I think it's good to let people know, hey, there's some struggle, we all struggle with areas, we gotta be transparent and open about these areas so the enemy doesn't gain a stronghold. So that's vitally important.

That's how you strengthen your weak areas if you expose them, right? It's funny, when I was digging, when I was in construction, you'd see a little, you know, you see water coming out of the asphalt in the street, that's not a good thing. That means about five feet down, there's a big water line that has a leak in it. And surrounded by that water line is high-voltage Verizon, or high-voltage electrical Verizon and gas mains right next to it.

So we gotta dig down, open the street, expose, what do you do with that weak area? You clean all around it, you expose everything, show me exactly where that leak is, give me that big hammer with that \$3,000, or the saw with the big \$3,000 blade on it. Cut right down that pipe, remove that weak area, expose it. Expose that weak area, then build it back stronger.

And then once you build it back, now what are you doing? You're keeping an eye on it, we're driving by every day to make sure it doesn't come back. Now it's stronger, right? Because it's been exposed, it's been repaired, and now we keep an eye on it. That's how it works, a lot of times we wouldn't backfill with the dirt or the trench, we'd leave that pipe open for a day or two to make sure that was no longer leaking.

Same thing applies in our own lives, expose the leak. Let repair take place. We know we're not so, we think we're more spiritual than people think we are, right? Well, people think I'm so spiritual.

No, they know, they know. They know that we all struggle with things. And the sooner we confess these areas and work on them, you remove the enemy's stronghold.

The sixth thing, accountability, of course, is always breached. We have accountability and it's breached or it's diluted. Now let me make a statement here, don't take the wrong way.

Accountability in and of itself is useless. If you're trusting on the accountability, you're already in trouble. If you say, keep me accountable, nobody should keep you accountable.

The Holy Spirit of God keeps us accountable. But accountability can add an extra layer of protection. In other words, if somebody is battling something, they say, keep me accountable, and they're trusting on that, then they'll just tell the person, yeah, I'm doing okay, yeah, mm-hmm, pretty good, check in next week, thanks.

Oh, they didn't ask anything. Oh, yeah, I blew it, yeah, okay, pray for me, thanks. Talk to you next week.

Next week, oh, I blew it again, brother. Pray a little harder, thanks, yeah. That's accountability.

That doesn't work. Why does that work? Because I'm trusting in that. If I was just relying solely on my wife's getting those emails from my computers and my phones and everything, if I was just relying solely on that, I'd be worried every Monday.

I'd go in, find her email, try to delete stuff, oh, go, go, go, go, make this work. That's just an extra added protection. I already wanna be holy and set apart for God.

But by the way, because the enemy is sent to kill, steal, and destroy, he would love nothing more than to put his 30-06 sights right here on me. We gotta have this extra precaution in place. Not only do I have this, let's have boundaries and hedges.

Let's protect this, here's my passwords, here's my this, here's my boy, here's all, just expose it, enemy, you have no grounds here. You can't move in this house. He'll try, but you have to have those safeguards in place.

That's the purpose of accountability. And I think too many people, two things happen. We either minimize it, because no guy wants to admit, they need, hey, can you hold me, I'm struggling in this area.

Can you hold me accountable? Because it's probably, it's humiliating. So either we either minimize it, nobody does it. Because I ask people all the time, I talk to guys at conferences, and here's a site for it, I think it's called X Watch.

You can go ahead and Google X Watch from XX Church, from X Watch, it's a free download, and they'll send your accountability partner on your site. I'll tell people that, they'll say, no, no, brother, I'm not doing that either. You're not gonna, no, I don't wanna do that.

Why don't you wanna do that? Something must be going there, right? That tells me there's a problem, put your wife on there. Now, I don't recommend, in some cases, putting your wife on there, right off the bat. You know, you need counseling, or men, you know, this isn't like a blanket approach, but that'll, what we call, up the ante a little bit, right? Have all the websites go to your, either your wife or your mom.

Not your friend down the street, who's gonna click it too. See how that works? Come on, guys, I wasn't born yesterday. Guys like to hide things in conferences, but I, we can, the more I talk to men, I see there's this huge need for accountability.

But on one hand, it's loose accountability, there's no accountability, or on the other hand, if all my trust is in the accountability, you're already set up to fail, because you can't have somebody else hold you accountable, and you can't have that be your, what do you call it, fail safe. You can't have that be the solution, because it's not a solution. Everything we just talked about is still a solution.

Living in the word of God, being holy and set apart for him, and then putting safeguards in, so the enemy can't come in. Because even though we have the weapons of our warfare on, right, the bread plate of righteousness, the sword, all these things, you know, here he is coming after me, I don't even want him in this room. I wanna lock that door, and I wanna lock that door.

I don't even want him to come in this building. Yeah, I have the armor of God on, but I don't even wanna shoot down any fiery darts. Stay out there, that's all that is, that's just an extra precaution.

Not only that, let's put in another doorway, another lock system, so he can't even get in. So in addition to the armor, you have other precautions in place. And nine times out of 10, when somebody falls, accountability was breached or avoided or diluted.

And that's what happens, especially in the pastoral ministry is if there's nobody, no accountability. There's nobody, you know, at this church, the board knows Morgan, the elders know Morgan, they can ask her anytime, how's your marriage going, how are things going? You know, Jane hit me last night. Well, it's gonna raise some concerns, right? Accountability, I know that people are gonna ask, how's the marriage going? How are things going? How's it doing? It's good, it's healthy, it's accountable.

And then I can ask them, right? You tell me how it's going. And so there's that healthy accountability there, so it has to be in place. Because without accountability, here's what happens, I or you become king, King David syndrome, right? That's what you see a lot of these charismatic TVN guys, that's the truth is what happens, they become king of their own castle.

They think they can get away with all this ungodly stuff because they're up here, they're celebrity stars, they're idols, God, you need me so bad that you can overlook these sins. Look what David did, all these wives, God forbid, shame on us. We have to have these things in place.

And then number seven, the final thing is loneliness becomes a license to sin. Have you ever felt that before? Loneliness. Look, everybody's having fun on Facebook except me.

Man, trips to Vegas and wine tasting and vacations. Oh, I'm stuck in the Elm Valley. It happens.

Especially, that's why you see a lot of Christian leaders fall is loneliness. It's hard. I mean, unless God calls a person to do this, don't do it because it will kill you.

I live in a fishbowl. Me and my wife live in a fishbowl. Everywhere we go, every word we say.

Think I can yell at my kids in my backyard with neighbors 20 feet away? You guys get to, I can't. Everywhere we go, fishbowl. Watching my kids like a hawk.

That's a passage. So loneliness can set in because you live in this isolation. You have to go to homes where people have just died and you don't know what to say.

Suicide call, all these different things. It's a lonely, hard life. To preach the gospel, to truly preach the gospel, not water it down, not be a motivational speaker, but to truly preach the gospel is hard because people don't want to hear it.

We have statistics that would shock you. From when we started, there's been at least, at least 2,000 people come into this church. 10, 15 new ones a week.

Where are they at? There's a cost to pay. They don't like to hear this and I hear it. They let me know.

So what exactly didn't you like? That's just God's word. And nine times out of 10, they're caught in a lifestyle that they enjoy and they don't like me challenging it. Somebody loving their sin is not gonna like this message.

That's why the negative editorials I get, the negative emails I get are often from Christians. T-totaling, legalist, fundamentalist. Don't let anybody have any fun.

You need to get a life. Why, what happened, what upset you? Oh, oh, that article upset you. That tells me that God, but I know God's working in that area in these people's lives.

So it's a lonely life. It is, it's a very lonely life. You can't have a lot of close friends, right? Somebody's stabbing you back, the other one's pulling it out, right? That sinful fallen man.

We say the wrong things, hurt people's feelings, we do this, we can't get close because if you get too close, oh, you know, you get close with the wrong people. You know how that goes, it's just, it's a very difficult, lonely life. But on the other hand, it's the most encouraging, transforming, uplifting life I could have ever chosen.

Because when you see people filled with the Spirit of God, when you're worshiping God, you get to proclaim His truth, see lives radically changed, see them reach from the brink of hell and destruction into the everlasting arms of the Heavenly Father, that brings tremendous peace and joy. So there's this constant tension of loneliness and rebuke and heart, and it's this heart carrying this cross and you're offending, you're upsetting, you're irritating, you're challenging, you've gotta go and you can't say certain things you'd love to say, but you can't say because you're a pastor. And as I was leaving the house this morning, I was just driving slow, thinking about my own kids, and I had this guy just tailgating me, he's in a hurry, and he's going like, oh, Lord, not today.

Not today, this guy, this guy's gonna drive, he's gonna get it, we're gonna go old school, get this guy out of, and finally he left, but I'm thinking, can you imagine front page of the Valley Press, pastor knocks somebody out? But see, that's a constant, you can't, you know, it's that tension that ministry lives in, because you're ministering to the very people who are hurting you, or are going to hurt you, and vice versa, I hurt people too. We minister to people who are hurting us, they're gonna gossip, they're gonna say mean things, they're gonna hurt my family, they're gonna say hurtful things, but I've gotta minister to them, so it's a very lonely life, but it's a very rewarding life, so don't be discouraged, and that was my point to you guys, life is sometimes lonely, but don't allow it, because what the enemy does, he brings in, it's very hard for sin to live in a thankful heart. If I'm thankful of the things that God has done, it's very hard for sin to gain a stronghold, what he'll do is, it's from that critical, negative heart that flows sin.

Think about it, before somebody sins, they're pretty critical, and they're pretty negative. They're not filled with the spirit of God heading towards Motel 6 to go cheat on their wife. It doesn't happen.

So watch this area. What must we do at this point? Well, number one, we must recognize, we must repent, we must repair, we must restore. If you're on the cliff, or you've fallen off the cliff, it's much better, the fruit of repentance far outweighs the fruit of exposure, because exposure will come.

If somebody commits adultery, they might get away with it for a week or two or a month, but it will come. The exposure will come, and then the fruit of that is much more painful than the fruit of confession. Yes, it hurts, sin has taken place, there are consequences.

And here's what happens, we must take full responsibility for our actions without blame and resentment, without bitterness, when repentance is genuine, we want to be reconciled with those we've injured. We seek forgiveness without conditions. We take full responsibility for our actions.

We don't say, but this and but that, or is that just me? Right, your spouse brings something up, oh, I've got some butts in here, let me tell you something. But this and but that. No, a broken, pennant person, a humble person, truly repenting, saying, listen, I was wrong.

I was wrong, I'm sorry, do you forgive me? I'm not throwing any butts in there. I'm taking full responsibility. That's ownership, that's repentance.

Repentance is taking ownership of our choices. It's a very healthy thing. If this is not occurring, repentance has not taken place.

Excuses need to stop before change and restoration can occur. And often at this point, many people ask, well, when can a person be restored to ministry? And honestly, that's a difficult question because the Bible isn't real clear on when a person can be restored. But I've seen a lot of pastors step down, elders step down, and it's not pretty.

But what has to usually happen, in my opinion, is the restoration is God's job. The person should stay out of it as long as they can until God restores them. Because you see a lot of people write Ted Haggard, removed his accountability group and began getting on TV again.

All these guys that, you know who I'm talking about. They just, oh, I'm gonna do my thing again. God wants my gifting, maybe.

But let him push you on the stage. Let him, you should say, Lord, I've sinned against you and you alone. Create in me a clean heart.

Renew a right spirit within me, Lord. I just wanna serve you. I don't wanna do all these things.

Lord, you promote me, it's up to you. But then when self-promotion comes in, you know repentance hasn't taken place. So that's my answer to restoration.

It's up to God. It may never happen. Or it may happen.

Let him restore, let him open. The same God who called you is the same God who's gonna restore you in his time. Don't try to rush these things.

Allow the healing to take place. But many times we wanna rush it, right? We want the status again, this is embarrassing. You know, my gifting, all these things.

And we push ahead and that's why they know not that the spirit of the Lord has departed from them. Like Samson, they know not that the spirit of the Lord has departed from them. Let him promote you.

And that's a message to somebody here, I'm sure. Even if moral failure hasn't occurred, let him promote you. Let him push you.

Let him guide you. Let him prop you up. Don't go for that.

Go for serving him and allow him to do that. But if you fall, fall forward into God's grace and forgiveness. This isn't a license to sin, but it is permission to call on God for forgiveness and restoration.

As much as we need to be challenged in this area, we also need to be encouraged. And here's why. Many times when somebody falls, you know what they're wanting to do? Take their life.

It's over. They wanna end it. So you allow sin's work to take place in the heart, to break the heart, but you also build the person back up.

Let me read Psalm 51. This is a wonderful chapter for, this is David when he got confronted by Nathan the prophet about his adultery. Here's what David prayed.

It's a very healthy prayer. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your loving kindness, according to the multitude of your tender mercies. Blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me. Against you and you only have I sinned and done this evil in your sight that you may be found just when you speak and blameless when you judge.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, the desire of truth in my inward parts and the hidden part you will make known to wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness that the bones that you have broken may rejoice. Create in me a clean heart.

Renew a right spirit within me. Lord, don't take your Holy Spirit away from me. This is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who will not only redeem you, He will forgive and He will restore.

It's better to fall into His arms received and forgiven than to live outside of His will. So it begs the question, which way will you run? Which way will you run tonight or when this happens? Or even now if this hasn't happened? But some people might be in the brink of it, of the marriage falling apart, of maybe another couple choices away. Listen, this is how God gives warnings, right here from His Word.

He goes, here's what my Word says. Enter the door and allow the Holy Spirit to take residence, clean your heart, and let me create in you a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me.

Let me do business in your heart. That's how it works. You're not gonna get a hammer on the head or some lightning bolt in the sky saying something.

God's gonna draw you through the power of His Spirit.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/XBYczC4HmCE.mp4>

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