

# 7 Things I Would Tell My Younger Self

by Shane Idleman

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of standing for truth, reviving God's church, and not giving up, especially for the next generation. It highlights the need for parents to put on the full armor of God, contend for their families, and leave a legacy of faith. The speaker shares personal regrets about not fully surrendering to Jesus early on and the journey of pain and brokenness that led to a deeper relationship with God.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:21, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Proverbs 24:16, Romans 8:31, Isaiah 54:10

**Topics:** "Standing for Truth", "Legacy of Faith"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I don't need the comfort, I don't need the, you know, thinking about me and my life. As I get older, I start to realize how important it is for the next generation that we stand for the truth and that God revives His church, and we don't give up. This is the time, parents, to put on the full armor of God and suit up and come to battle, come to prayer meetings and begin contending for our families, because we're leaving that legacy for our children.

And I truly believe the more time I spend in God's Word, the more time I realize that the more parents seek Him, the more they find Him. And the more they find Him, the more they leave that blessing for their children and give their kids a solid anchor. And so I'm going to surprise you at the end, at the beginning, and tell you probably the biggest thing I regret looking back over my life is I surrendered my life to Jesus up in the mountains, somewhere by Wrightwood, 12 years old, I'll never forget.

It was the most incredible experience of my life. The power of the Holy Spirit was present, and I came home so excited. But my dad did not know the Lord, and without that fatherly influence, my goals were in a different direction.

He kind of made fun of going to church, which I had my mom for, didn't want to go, and then I got mixed up with the wrong crowd. And that's why your parents, many times you don't like their advice, but it's because

we've been through hell and back, and we're trying to help you avoid the pitfalls and the detours to destiny. And looking back, I see how God used it all, but my biggest regret is that I didn't fully surrender at that young age.

I had to go through a lot of pain, a lot of disappointments, a lot of tragedy. I don't know why I'm still here. I was telling Pastor Abram on our way to San Diego that I had 357 pulled on me at least three times by people just being a jerk and not sure how I made it through life.

And so on one hand, God works all things together, but you don't want to go through it if you don't have to, because I think there are scars that you carry. There's baggage that you carry, and it makes life more challenging. For example, sexual purity.

Sure, God can still work and restore, but there are scars and there's deep wounds that will make marriage even more challenging because of the past. And so that was my biggest regret just looking back, and I still think about, man, if I would have just, Lord, I wish I would have surrendered to you at that early age instead of drifting from you and rebelling against you. And I lost maybe 16 years until I was almost 29.

God finally broke me. And that's often what He has to do, and we don't like to see it. I know it was hard for my mom to see it, and I won't open up about a lot of stuff with my kids here, obviously, but it was a painful time.

But then realizing, had it not been for that pain, had maybe God not drawn me so close to Him. Because through that pain and that brokenness, you seem to dive in deeper and hold on to the cross tighter. Those who have been forgiven much, love much.

And so although I wouldn't repeat it, I wouldn't go back and change anything because of what God did. And I think it's through that brokenness. There's strong anointings.

If you hear John's story or Blessing or Madeline's or Brandt's or anybody that helps lead worship, that anointing. There's one thing they have gifting, but the anointing of God upon their life often comes through that anvil of brokenness. You're being beaten on the anvil, so to speak, through life, and God begins to break that pride out of you.

We pray often, Lord, humble me. Well, watch out because often it doesn't just happen. Lord, humble me.

I wake up tomorrow. I am so humble. Often you have to go through that difficult season, and God uses that pain to break us.

But I do want to share just seven things. I don't want to keep you long. I'm a little excited to get back into worship myself.

So seven things I would tell my younger self. And I had a list of 20. I narrowed it down to 15.

I got it to 10, and now I got it to seven. And if you have questions, let Phil and Carrie know. Those questions I'd be happy to go into Ignite in the future and answer some questions.

But number one, this is so important. This is going to be great for parents as well. Looking back, I would worry about my future a lot less.

How many of you are stressing out because I don't know what I'm supposed to do? That's a good thing. Often God doesn't show us the end of the story. We're to trust Him step by step.

And I remember I was just out of high school. I wanted to be a game warden. You know, that didn't work out because I liked hunting and fishing.

And then my dad made me work for him, and I didn't want to work construction. It's hard work. You ever dig ditches all day? You know, and blisters and hard work out in the sun.

I just told my son today, I'm really glad I did that because it really toughened me up. You know, the hot weather everybody's complaining about in the summer, well, try working in it, I mean, or the cold. And so that hard work has just really instilled in me principles of hard work and discipline and not giving up and seeing things through.

I remember one time that my dad left just a mark on me that I'll never forget. We were supposed to, you dig on each side of a fire hydrant, and he left me there with the shovel and another guy there with the shovel. And we're supposed to tunnel underneath and meet to run the electrical Edison pipe.

And we both said, this is too hard, it's too hot, forget it. And we went home, my dad said, we can't, they're coming at six in the morning to run the line, let's go. So we went back in his truck, embarrassed, my dad's down there helping me, we finally tunneled through.

And just those things, you know, that embarrassment and that you can work harder, you can work, you can be stronger and just not quitting and giving up. And so how it ties in here is sometimes God will use these lessons to teach us for the future. And I look back over my life, even with 24-hour fitness, I was a district manager, I'm like, boy, I sure wasted eight years.

But that's actually how I learned payroll and income expenditures and board allocated budgets and working with people. And I had 150 employees underneath me and management and EEO and sexual harassment and paper trails and all kinds of things that you have to learn. And I thought it was a waste of time, but seeing how God will use those things that he's doing in your life for your future.

But many times I remember like, what am I going to be? Do I got to go to college? I mean, that lasted like two months. Or do I got to do this? And we can get so worried about our future. And what happens is you can become paralyzed.

I don't want to do anything to make the wrong move. Well, it's hard to move a vessel that's, it's hard to move a car that doesn't have the engine on. It's not going in a certain direction.

So God wants us to step out in faith, work hard, put out applications, try something and see where God directs you. Because you might not know, oh, this is what I'm going to do in 20 years. Often you don't know.

This is the last thing on planet earth I thought I would be doing. I made fun of pastors. Honestly, a bunch of weak sissies.

That's my view of them back in my 20s. I didn't want to be around them. I went, don't tell me about God.

But God. God often guides us step by step rather than the long jump. And I've got verses that will really help you.

And what I did, I normally don't do, I gave you the notes in advance. Because you can take these home. If you didn't get them, get them on your way out.

You can take these home and begin to saturate your mind on God's word throughout the day. It will make a huge difference. So here's one of the key verses.

Teach us to number our days that we may be able to apply our hearts unto wisdom. Teach us to number our days. In other words, Lord, show me how to be wise in every day that's been given to me.

This day I want to make the right decisions. And I found that next week, next month will work itself out. Let me just worry about today.

Lord, teach me how to number my day. And a very important scripture. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The reason there's a distinction is, have you ever been out at night and you need to know what's right here? But I also need to know what's out there. So God's word has the ability to not only guide you step-by-step daily, but also future direction. And you can make decisions now that will severely affect your future, positively or negatively.

And God's word is that powerful. And I know it's hard, but we've got to get off of TikTok and get into Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We've got less time on Instagram and more time in God's word.

That's how you change your mind. You change your focus. And I know it's hard because that's why it's called clickbait for a reason.

Do you know they have scientists that study, and Google executives have come out and said this before, there's algorithms, all these things to keep our attention, to keep us hooked, to keep us in the day. It's no different than an addict having his drug removed. You try taking this away for a day, you'll be like, what did I do with my time? What did I do with my time? And that's why I think a lot of people are having difficulties during this season is because God's word needs to be the forefront in their mind because your mind really affects more than you think.

As a man thinketh in his heart and his mind, so is he. You take your thoughts captive, and those thoughts are able then to direct you in the right direction or the wrong direction. And of course we talk about knowing the future, and what is God's will for my life? Well, let me give you three points about waiting in the will of God.

Waiting in the will of God. Especially at your age, it's okay to wait. You're not going to go wrong by waiting as much as you will by rushing.

How many of us, maybe not me of course, but how many people rush ahead to the wrong college, or the wrong career, or the wrong date, dating relationship? And we rush ahead. So waiting in God's will is incredibly important. Here's what it does.

As you wait, it redefines. It clarifies what you're asking for. Also, as you wait in his will, you just don't see it yet.

So it's in his timing, not yours. Also, waiting renews your fellowship with God, more time with God. The more I don't understand his will, the more I want to press in, and then get to know him even better.

Also, waiting makes us more aggressive in a good way, taking action, stepping out in faith. And then finally, waiting in the will of God will help you deal with besetting sin. And we are a church that talks about sin from time to time.

We talk about repentance from time to time. We talk about the blood of Christ. It's so important.

And besetting sin can really trip you up in your pursuit of God. Now, be encouraged. There's nobody in this room, including the guys up here on the platform, that are perfect.

I'm not saying, you know what? Gosh, it's been, what, a couple months since I've sinned? Well, I don't know. What's the date? I think it's at least February, mid-February. Let me tell you how to do it.

Right? Sin comes up, the pride comes up, or the anger. And anger is actually a secondary emotion. It's not a primary.

It reacts to things that maybe we get frustrated at or angry with. It's a secondary type of emotion. And that besetting sin, though, God wants us to deal with it.

We repent of it. For example, I go to the Lord and say, this is not right. I need this to end in my life.

I need to repent of this. God, I need to get back in your will. I need to feel the Holy Spirit's power and presence again.

God, would you help me? That's repentance. Why was David called a man after God's own heart? David, because he repented. Number two, oh, goodness.

You're going to have to highlight this one. Don't worry about the opinions of others. This drives me crazy.

Looking back, I am so mad at myself for listening to these jokers. I was so worried about their opinion. What are the guys thinking of me? Back then, parachute pants were popular, and they were tight, and I was chubby.

My mom was like, shh. It was Husky, right? Husky. Son, those are not going to work for you.

My parachute pants, and I had to have just the right outfit. Back then, I had good hair, blonde hair, and everything just had opinions of others. That's obviously because I wasn't hearing God's opinion of me in His Word.

Then as I'm pursuing these opinions of others, it led me down wrong paths, because I began to compromise, because I wanted the applause of men rather than the applause of God. You say, well, that sounds boring. It actually isn't.

When you surrender to God and walk in His will, there's tons of joy and peace. But when you're trying to keep up with the others, and trying to impress others that really don't care about you, all these people, after the first year of high school, I didn't see 99% of these people again. And the ones I were with, friends, they're either divorced, and they're alcoholics.

Their life is crumbling from beneath them. All these people I was trying to impress. The opinions of others.

Opinions, advice, and influence actually shape us. That's why I turned to alcohol, because I was low self-esteem. And I became 10 foot tall and bulletproof.

And now I'm the life of the party. I'm this joking kind of guy, and class clown, and didn't get good grades. 1.8, graduated high school, don't follow that.

But 1.8, I remember my mom said, Son, that's not good. But many of you know, you've heard my story with dyslexia and learning disabilities. And I honestly tried, but I just could not even get past, in geometry, 2 plus 4. All the numbers don't work.

It was a very difficult season, but I wanted these opinions. And on my way through high school, I cheated on so many different tests, just to barely get by. And what are these people thinking of me? And that's when they, of course, started to make fun with Husky and Chubby.

And I think I still have to, I'm going to find that school yearbook. It was Bethel Baptist. I went there the first year, and I broke my leg, and I'm in this little red wagon.

And it said, Stuffed Pig. In the school yearbook, because I have an apple in my mouth. And they're pulling me, and I wasn't that, I mean, I don't think I was that husky.

But, you know, and I broke my leg, couldn't move, gained a lot of weight, ate bad. But the opinions of others, I said, What are people going to think? What are people going to think? For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. So you look at all these popular people, all the way around.

What is highly esteemed, what is highly esteemed among men, meaning what men value in our culture today is often an abomination to God. Look at how far we've drifted. We have to make sure we're getting our information from the right source.

Woe unto you when all men speak well of you. Now, of course, we need to have a good reputation, good character, especially in the church. That's not what this is talking about.

Jesus is saying, Woe be to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets. So the generation before this time, even if you go back in the Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Amos, all the prophets, they would actually, the children of Israel would say good things about the false prophets. Because the false prophets would tell them what they wanted to hear, not what they needed to hear.

That's what you guys need to find people. If you watch some social media, find people who tell you what you need to hear, not what you want to hear. What you want to hear is, Hey man, just love everyone.

You can do whatever you want. God is a cosmic ball of love. That's an abomination on the side of God.

And Jesus said, Woe be to you when all men speak well of you. As a pastor, the world, I know this is controversial, but it's true. The world should not speak well of me.

I mean, they're not going to, man, he's a cheater. He's a liar. That's not good.

But they're not going to like what I say. And so if I'm concerned about what people say about me, let me go online. Oh, what are they saying about me? Oh, I better be nicer.

I better not say that. I better not get loud. I better just be calm.

Don't talk about sin. Don't talk about judgment. Don't talk about repentance.

I want to please these people. Then Jesus said, you're not pleasing God. Woe be to you when all men speak well of you.

Actually, they actually killed the prophets. They wanted to stone the prophets. Prophets were not popular.

Anytime you're speaking God's truth and loving God, you will not be popular. But it's okay if you're forewarned, you're forearmed. That way you know what to expect.

Cherish the advice of godly parents. Guys, cherish the advice of godly parents. Godly parents are God's guardrails.

Godly parents, that's a lot of G's. Godly parents are God's guardrails through the canyons of life. And I know it's hard.

And one thing I do regret after my mom passed away a few years ago is that I didn't spend more time with her the last few years. I didn't respect her as well as I should have. Even as an older guy as I got into ministry and things, I was too busy.

Too busy for her and too busy to really spend some time with her even though I did cherish the advice of godly parents. So many things she said that I always will remember. And so remember, your parents know what's ahead.

It's like I told my kids, it's like I'm training you as a Navy SEAL hoping you won't have to go into too much warfare. We've seen the battle. I've seen the battle.

It's like when David went to fight Goliath, King Saul said, you're just a youth and you're going into battle. He's been in battle since his youth. He knows.

He has seen it. He has seen what is out there. And so godly parents are trying to steer you in the right direction financially, relationally.

So always remember this, you will be disciplined. You will be disciplined either by God's word or by society. Either by celebrities or by Christ.

You will be disciplined. Like, no man, I'm a tough guy. I'm my own man.

No, you're being disciplined by someone. By whatever is influencing you. Right? Andrew Tate or Jesus Christ.

You can't have both. Who is influencing you? Children, obey your parents. Colossians.

Children, obey your parents in all things for this is well pleasing to the Lord. And that is what I regret because I would obey my dad that said how to go partying last night and I would ignore my mom's call to go to church. Obey your godly parents.

And of course, questions come up. What about if my parents aren't godly but there's still a level of respect and a submission to authority? Not that you go and sin if they want you to sin. That's a whole different ballgame there.

But there's a respect. And God honors that respect. For example, I thoroughly disagree.

I'm going to try to be real nice here with our current president. And that's an understatement. But I respect the position.

I respect where God has put him. And we are to pray for our leaders. Honor your father and your mother.

Honor them, meaning with your words, with your actions, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you. Now, obviously, this was to the children of Israel. They just came out of Egypt.

That's why it's called Exodus. They're in the Exodus. They haven't come to the promised land yet.

This is written to them. But the principle is for us. The importance of honoring your father and your mother.

And I believe it absolutely can lead to longer life. Because you're doing things and making choices that promote longevity. And then Hebrews 12.

No chastening. Basically, no spanking seems to be joyful. No discipline seems to be joyful for the present.

But it's painful. Nevertheless, it yields a peaceful fruit of righteousness. See, if we're not disciplined, it's like a wild animal that gets more dangerous.

You get a little. Let me just use an example of a pit bull. Don't get mad at me if you're a pit bull ever.

But that just came to my mind. And you're not disciplining or training. You're actually making that dog more ferocious and kicking at it.

You're creating that monster, so to speak. And same thing would happen with children. We see what's out of control in our schools.

I mean, when I went to school, it was, Yes, Mrs. Adams. And now it's like, beep, beep, beep, beep. Explicit.

Middle finger. It's like, wow, how did this happen? It began in the home. There's no respect.

There's no disciplining of children and telling them no. But it does yield righteousness. Proverbs 22.6 Our parents are to train up the child in the way he should go.

And when he is old, he will not depart from it. Train them up. Point them in the right direction.

And then also under this heading of the opinions of others. Read God's truth every day. Every day.

Did you know the most important things are the hardest things to do? Do hard things. Do hard things. There was a couple young adults who actually wrote a book by that title probably a decade ago.

Do hard things. Those things build and strengthen you. Isn't it true? What is so important? Prayer is so important.

Prayer will get you through your school semester, will get you through life, but we don't want to do it. Getting to church and fellowship and repentance is so important, but we don't want to do it. Those things that are the most important are the hardest to do.

It's like there's an enemy within trying to stop us. Perfect example, broccoli and hummus or a Snickers bar? Snickers bar. Yep, let's be truthful.

But see, the things that are the most important, the best for us, spiritual nutrition, it's the hardest to do. And number three that I would tell my younger self, fully surrender now versus later. Fully surrender now versus later.

Guys, and many times the reason I preach with maybe people say too much passion, too much excitement, you get too worked up, it's because I see the devastation on phone calls this week, seeing certain things that I can't even, I can't share from here. It's just, it's devastating, absolutely devastating to watch men and women destroy their homes. All because they do not fully surrender.

They want to fight God and do it their way. And I tell people, you want to restore your marriage? It's not that hard. You tell God, you tell your spouse, I will do whatever it takes to make this work.

I humble myself. I am so sorry. I'm not even going to point out flaws in you.

I'm going to work on my own flaws, my own inconsistencies. God, I need you. And if you'll see me through this, it'll be worth it.

And you see, you can, you can make things work. Or if you go to your kids, like I told them recently, I said, Hey, am I on Monday who I am on Sunday? Cause if not, I need to know. And you, you, you work on those things you need to work on.

See, God, isn't looking for perfection. He's looking for direction. What direction are you going? That's it's so many kids, especially in Christian homes.

And try being pastors kids. Oh, there's the item. It's I bet they don't mess up, man.

That's a hard one. And I don't put that on them at all. I want them to be normal kids, make normal mistakes.

But there's that, the pressure to be perfect. You don't have to be perfect, but you have to be surrendered. And sometimes it's a, I still do it.

God, I fully surrender my life to you. Pride is coming in. Pride is trying to take me out.

I humble myself before you. God, would you help me? Psalm 25, nine, the humble, he guides the humble. He teaches his way.

God will actually guide the humble. But what does he do to the proud? God's the Bible says God resists the proud. Have you ever been walking? I'm embarrassed to admit this, but I do it a few times.

It's been a long time. But you're walking, and the glass door is real clean. I mean, the glass door is just perfectly clean, and you just, you're going out.

You think the door's open, and bam, it just stops you. That's what God will do. He resists the proud.

And you're not, with God, you're not going to get any leeway. I was so cocky, I thought I could negotiate. All right, God, I'll do that if you do this.

This isn't let's make a deal. He says this is the deal. And so you submit, fully surrender.

And even if you're having a hard time, say, Lord, I'm having a hard time with these issues. Help me submit. Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. Matthew 16, for whoever desires to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

This verse really stood out. When I came back to the Lord at 29, I began weeping. I read this verse, and I said, I wanted to save my own life, meaning this is what Shane Eidelman wants.

This is what I want to accomplish. I'm going to be retired by the time I'm 40. Drinking margaritas in the Baja of Mexico.

And I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this. I'm a Christian if you ask me, but these are my plans.

This is a life I want to lead, and I will lose that life. But if I lose my life for the gospel's sake, I've gained everything. Lord, what do you want me to do? Wouldn't you want to be guided by the arms of God? And then if you're having financial issues, it's your will.

It's your bill. Hey, this isn't working out, but I'm trusting you. See, there's a lot less friction.

There's a lot less uncertainty. There's a lot less anxiety. And then number four, this is so important.

It kind of goes with what we already talked about. Remember that fame never satisfies long-term. Fame never satisfies long-term.

We're pursuing all the things that Solomon would say, everything is vanity. The richest man in the world, the wisest man in the world said, I've tried it all. At the end of my life, these women led me astray.

It all is vanity. You can look at all these actors years later who have no career, depressed. Michael Jordan, so depressed.

I remember when he turned 50, ESPN did an article, and he said, Michael has lost the game, but the game has not lost him. Yeah, he's left the game, but the game has not left him and his mind mentally. The addiction, he said, I would give anything to be able to play basketball again.

So he's going to live for the rest of his life in misery because it never satisfied. Money doesn't satisfy. That's why billionaires are killing themselves and millionaires and suicide and depression.

Nothing's satisfied because nothing can take the place of God. I remember they asked one multimillionaire, how much money is enough? He said, just one more dollar. And they pursue these things to their grave.

He who loves silver will not be satisfied, nor he who loves abundance. All this is vanity. In Acts 14, 15, they said, you should turn from these useless things and turn to the living God who made heaven, the earth, and the sea and all the things that are in them.

And number five, trust in God's sovereignty. Trust in God's sovereignty. Did you know there's no fear on the winning side? There's no fear on the winning side.

And I'll be teaching about the rapture and end times on Sunday mornings, and I always want to remind the members that you're on the winning side. So there shouldn't be any fear. Yes, I understand how things are looking and things seem bleak, and there can be a lot to be fearful about, but you remember who's in charge and who you'll ultimately spend eternity with.

There is no fear because He sits high and lifted up on the throne. He is in control. That doesn't mean there's no pain.

That doesn't mean there's no challenging situations. But it does mean that God will see us through. Trust in the Lord with some of your heart.

What's that say, guys? Trust in the Lord with a portion of your heart. Trust in the Lord with 50% of your heart. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart.

And again, because we're not perfect and because I cannot give all of my heart on my own, I pray, Lord, help me. Help me to give you all of my heart. And I lean not on my own understanding, right? I'm not leaning on my own understanding, trusting in my own understanding.

But in all your ways, acknowledge God, and He shall direct your path. In other words, I'm trusting in you, Lord. My understanding is limited.

Would you show me? Would you show me? I'm acknowledging you. I need to know your way. Would you show me? I don't trust me.

And God will answer that prayer faithfully. Be anxious for nothing. What am I going to wear? We young adults say.

What am I going to wear? What am I going to do? How's this going to work? I'm going to be embarrassed. Be anxious for nothing. What's going to happen with my future? We'll look at cryptocurrency and what's happening with China and Biden.

Look at the news and all these YouTube videos that are talking about scary things. Well, number one, don't watch a lot of those things because those guys are trying to get you to more views so they can get paid more money. So they do all these titles and all these things, and half of it never happens.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication. Supplication is a crying out to God. It's a, Lord, help me in these dire times.

And I'm bringing my petitions to you. And be thankful, and then let your requests be known to God. And then the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

How did you see so many Christians with tremendous joy and peace and no worry at all during COVID? And then you saw things that I still cannot believe. The fear was incredible. But it's because they don't know their maker.

And when you don't know God, you begin to fear what is going to happen to me. I don't know where I'm going to spend eternity. I don't know if there is an eternity.

I'm living in fear. And God says, I will take away all of that as long as you're anxious for nothing. Then Proverbs 16, commit your works to the Lord.

Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established. Did you know that God can put thoughts in your mind? You know we bought a radio station 91.9 a few years ago, and 88.5, and back then a few more. And this thought came to me.

I would never think that on my own. But commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established. Or planting the church, or other things.

You can relate. Sometimes God will plant thoughts in your heart. But be careful.

So will the enemy. Well, how do I know? Live in God's Word. Does it line up? Ask for confirmation.

Get godly counsel. Don't have a renegade spirit of rebellion. The Lone Ranger might have been great for TV, but it's not good for a believer.

And we know that all things, not some things, all things work together for good to those who love God. Uh-oh, there's a comma there though. To those who love God, and to those who are called according to His purpose.

So if you're walking in God's will, not perfectly. You're repentant. You're humble.

Lord help me. You're in His Word. You're reading.

And you're seeking Him. You're pursuing Him. That direction will be orchestrated by God.

And know that the things that come alongside will work themselves out for good. But a normal person just can't claim this. Say, oh, everything's going to work out.

Not if you're in disobedience and rejecting God and fighting against God. And then number six, coming to the last one here shortly. Know the difference.

I would tell you, know the difference, or myself, the difference between religion and relationship. Guys, this is huge. There are so many different religions out there.

All of them are man's attempt to reach God. Do these good works. Follow this system from Scientology to all kinds of religions.

Buddhism to I can name a lot. And I often do on Sundays. And it ticks people off.

But that's okay. I'm telling you the truth. Christianity is not a religion.

It's a relationship. God came down from heaven to save man. Man cannot save himself.

We have to believe and trust in Christ and that sacrifice on the cross. There's nothing I can do. I can't earn that salvation.

I'm not good enough. My good works is but filthy works in his sight. He doesn't expect anything except faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

That's relationship. And religion goes through the motions. I have to go to church.

I have to read my Bible. This is what good people do. I go to a Christian school.

My parents are Christians. I try to do good. I hope God, and I hear this.

I heard this from people close to me before. I hope God sees my good works and weighs it on the scale. What? Just think about what you're saying.

Number one, when we try to do good works, often there's ulterior motives. Right? Let me help this old lady across the street. Is anybody watching? This will be good for Instagram.

Hey, look. I'm going live. Look who I'm helping.

Oh, I just gave to this mission in Africa. Our good works are but filthy rags in the sight of God. Nothing.

We will not stand before God and say, Here's what I did. We'll say, Here's what He did. And I repented and I believed and God saved me and set me free.

That's relationship. And I need to share these verses with you because they really stood out to me when I came back to the Lord. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, I'll break it down for my version of it.

He says, Lord, Lord, we have done all these things in your name. I went to church in your name. I prayed in your name.

I went to school in your name. I went to worship and service in your name. I did these things.

This is what good people do. And Jesus will say, Depart from me. I never knew you.

Wait a minute. How does Jesus not know you? Of course He knows you. That doesn't make any sense.

Well, our understanding. For example, you can take, I've been using Michael Jordan. Let's stick with that.

Let's say he was here tonight. And I said, Michael, man, I watch, I remember the NBA Finals and the Bulls. And I was, I mean, I was really into that in the late 80s, 90s.

And I just, you know, idolized this guy, bios and stats. And I said, man, I know all about you. I know.

Oh, my goodness. I can't believe it. What would he say to me? Young man, I don't know you.

Wait a minute. You don't know me? See, there's no intimate relationship. It's mutual.

So Christ is not saying, I don't have head knowledge of you. Of course I know who you are as a person. But I don't know you intimately because you don't have a relationship with me.

Many will say in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not do all these things in your name? He'll say, depart from me. I don't know you. Those who do the will of my Father are the sons of the kingdom of God.

And it's a wake-up verse. Jesus is telling the truth. And then 2 Corinthians, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

All things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. And that's what's so beautiful right now is so many young adults are searching for identity and gender, what their gender is, and identity, and who am I, and the media is just fueling all of these things.

In Christ, you are a new creation. Spiritually speaking, you've been reborn. And sometimes you might still struggle with something.

See, that's a big lie, I think, we tell people. Hey, just take it to Jesus, man. He'll take that away.

Sometimes God does. But sometimes, come on, can I get an amen? Sometimes that little stinker likes to hang on. That little demon likes to just draw you back sometimes.

And that propensity or that dispensation, yeah, you know what I'm saying, that propensity to want to go back into that lifestyle, but I thought I'd been set free. You have. You're not under bondage anymore.

God has set you free. But that's the influence, the pull of sin that needs to be repented of and turned back to the cross. So make sure tonight, do you have a true relationship? Because we have found that many kids, they don't.

They have religion because they've been taught what to do. They've been taught what to do, but it's not what you do, it's what he did. And we repent of our sin, and we believe and have faith in Christ, and that witness of the Holy Spirit comes in and just sets you free, sets you on fire for God.

It doesn't mean you don't struggle. It doesn't mean depression doesn't come in. It doesn't mean anxiety doesn't try to take you down.

But now you know you have and know the King of Kings. And then finally, I'll leave you with this. If I could tell my younger self this, I would say this.

Fall forward. Fell forward. Fall forward.

Get back up and fight again. Don't stay down. Don't keep beating yourself up.

I'll never measure up. Young adults think, I'll never measure up. Neither will I. But we get back up and we fall forward.

For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity. In other words, the righteous man gets back up and falls seven times, but he gets back up. Another verse, though the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and though he falls, he will get back up because the Lord will pull him up.

And then Psalm 119, it is good for me that I have been what? Oh, I don't like that. In other words, it's good for me that God has spanked me. It's good for me that I went through hell, or I went through this difficult circumstance, or this thing happened to me.

It's good because because of it I have learned your statutes. It's your statutes. I've learned your ways.

It's like saying this, it's good for me. Actually, you won't see it. I don't know if you can, but my arm went on a searing hot pan that just came out of the oven.

And boy, did it leave a mark. Guess what I'm not doing again for a while. It is good for me that I've been afflicted.

Now I'm not going to touch that hot pan. I'm not going to touch that. I'm going to check to make sure the oven's off.

I'm going to be very careful around fire. It's good for me to feel the pain of disobedience for a little bit to know that I don't want to do it again. So use that pain to draw you to the cross.

God, You never fell, and You won't start now. Remember that. God never falls, and He won't start now.

Fall forward. Get back up. Encourage yourself.

As I said earlier, who can stop God Almighty? Who can stop God Almighty when He's on your side? No bully in the school is going to defeat you and be worried about you. God can make that bully wake up sick. God can deal with it.

If God before you, who can be against you? Like young Joshua and Caleb, you too can say, We are well able to take this land. Like young David, you too can cry out, Who is the enemy? Goliath, who dares to come against the living God. These men were young.

Young men, young women. Esther. And like the three young men in the fiery furnace, you too can say, My God will deliver me.

My God will deliver me. But even if He doesn't, I will not bow to the false system of this culture. I will not bow to this agenda.

I will not give in. Because my God is great. What entity can ruin His plans? What leader can overpower Him? What government can overwrite Him? What army can defeat God Almighty? What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Isaiah said, even the mountains tremble in the presence of Almighty God.

So let me leave you with this question. God often shakes the physical to get us to respond in the spiritual. Are you being shaken today? Are you at your wit's end? Are you dealing with depression?

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