

7 Things That Hinder God's Work

by Shane Idleman

The sermon discusses the importance of focusing on God's work and the dangers of persecution, highlighting the need for spiritual leaders and the role of deacons in the church.

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Scripture: Ephesians 5:18, James 4:7

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being fully surrendered to God, addressing hindrances that prevent God's work in our lives. It highlights the need to prioritize prayer, faith, wisdom application, and being filled with the Holy Spirit to experience transformation and revival.

Transcript

Seven things that hinder God's work. Acts 5, if you turn to verse 40, let me just set the stage here. Gamaliel is one of the religious leaders.

We talked about him a few weeks ago. And the apostles were actually on trial, and some men wanted to kill them. And they were doing signs and wonders and miracles and all these things, and the people wanted to stone them, kill them, the religious leaders.

So Gamaliel, this religious leader, said, listen, if this is of God, well let me back up, he actually said, if this is of man, it will come to nothing. But if this is of God, you will find yourself fighting against God. And he cautioned them, and they said, you know what, that's it, that's a good idea, and here's where we're picking up.

And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counter worthy to suffer the shame for his name. And daily in the temple, in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as Christ.

You'll notice something, the major calling, the primary calling of the disciples, of the apostles, was to preach Christ, to bring the Word of God to people. That was their role. And just a side note, they were released, let them go, but they wanted to beat them.

Can you imagine that? You can go ahead and go, but we're gonna beat you first. We're gonna get the club, and the cat-of-nine-tails, whatever it is they use, they beat them, and the disciples left rejoicing that they were beaten for the cause of Christ. And I want to remind you that unbelievers will try to get that last jab in.

They will try to mock you, they'll try to do these things, and they want this tit-for-tat, they want to go back and forth, this vicious cycle begins to happen. And I'll get the last word in, I'll get the last word in, I'll get the last word in, I'll get the last word in. And this happens in marriage, too.

Here's a little marriage counseling advice. Yeah, I know you didn't ask for it, but we're gonna fit it in here. Don't get the last word in.

Rejoice and just say, Lord, I'm gonna trust in you, I'm gonna have patience in this, I'm not going to get the last word, because it's a vicious cycle, isn't it? I mean, in marriage counseling, it's like a ping-pong match. Okay, and nobody wants to take the initiative and stop that and rejoice in the fact that we are so blessed in our nation, so blessed in our families. Look at what God has given us.

Just stop and rest in that. But on a serious note here about persecution, did you know that a Christian is killed every six minutes in the world? A Christian dies for their faith every six minutes across the globe. That's 15 people in the service.

That's 30 people since we started this morning. Why? Why is that happening, Shane? Because the enemy wants to silence the voice of truth and he wants to put out the light of the gospel. That's the plan, to silence the voice of truth and to put out the light of the gospel.

So anytime you talk about truth, anytime you talk about being the light, the enemy wants to go after that and he wants to stop that. The UN estimates that there are 5,000 honor killings every year. You know what that is? When a dad kills his daughter for coming to faith in Christ.

Hindu nations, Muslims, you name it. They die because of that. It's honor killings.

They kill a relative because they committed their lives to the Lord. And it just, this maybe it's me, but this week I was just so convicted about how spoiled we can be in our nation. How unthankful, how ungrateful that we can become.

How bitter when we should be the most thankful, joyful people on the planet. Our blessing has become our curse, hasn't it? The comfort we enjoy, these things we take for granted. I think it's important to remember that people are losing their lives.

If I were to go and do this in some countries, they would kill me. I wouldn't be able to finish my sermon. As soon as you say you're Christian, let alone from California, you're in trouble.

But there's a price to pay. There's a price to pay. And I also thought of this, is if your faith isn't costing you something, you might want to look at your faith.

Have you, is there a genuine salvation there? Do you have genuine faith? Because the enemy will go after you. You will, you will ruffle some feathers. Don't go trying to ruffle the feathers.

It will find you. They'll find you. The enemy, that's the word.

And you can see Christians who are on fire for God. The enemy is going after them. He wants to silence the voice of truth and silence the light that we're being.

It's interesting, you guys have talked about, I've talked about this before, but I think it's important on this point, is one of the things I'm seeing, you know I like to read a lot of church history, American history, revivals, and you're seeing what the now in America, the pulpits are being dumbed down. They're not wanting to offend anybody. Don't mention these offensive things, the cross.

Don't mention repentance. Don't talk about the blood of Christ. Don't talk about judgment, shame, hell, that's so passe.

Don't talk about any of these things. Why? Because the enemy doesn't like these things. These are foundational truths of the Christian faith that set people free.

Because when you avoid the truth to make the gospel more palatable, taste better, you lose the power. The power is in the truth. The power is in the proclamation of the truth.

Timothy, Paul told Timothy, preach the word. Timothy, be ready, in season, out of season. Preach the word because the time will come when they will tell you, and they will look for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear.

So be careful who you're listening to. Make sure that they are proclaiming the absolute truth of God's word and the power of the Holy Spirit with boldness. So that's getting into where I wanted to get with Acts 6. That's kind of the backdrop.

We're working into that. The apostles were released. They were beaten.

So what happens? Well, this passage is, if in your Bible probably says, men or seven men chosen to serve. Seven men chosen to serve, Acts 6.1. Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists because their widows, I'm sorry, the first service should be the trial run, right? I should have this down by now. Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, the church was growing, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

What happened back then is they didn't have like a welfare system where the government provided different things. They had a system in place where the church had to provide for those in need. That was actually, I believe, more of God's design than the government getting involved, but that would be a whole nother sermon.

The welfare system at its core was a good idea to help those who genuinely need it. But then because it's become abused and there's no monitoring system, then people take advantage of the system. That's the problem we see is now, and that's what the complaints are, that the thing that should be good has now turned and corrupt, and they want the government to, in many ways, get out of certain areas.

However, they had to get involved because the church wouldn't step up and help those within the sphere of influence. The church should be the one helping those in need. And what would happen is people would come in for that need, and the church would be able to assess, okay, hey, I used the word in the first service, Olga, to make sure nobody was here by that name.

Olga, we've seen you for the last three weeks. We've gave you a few job opportunities. You haven't taken them.

We can't just keep giving you food. You've got to work now, and you're able. And the church was able to discern who was legitimate, who wasn't.

And they were able to help those people because the Bible says if you don't work, you don't eat. So it tells me there's a propensity in all of us to be lazy. And so the cure for laziness is to work.

Now I'm careful here because I don't want to get mean emails. I'm not coming against anybody per se. I'm saying that a system that's designed to be okay has been corrupted because people take advantage of it.

And the church has dropped the ball, and the church should be helping, reaching out, ministering to people. We've dropped the ball, so somebody else has had to pick up. So that's what's happening here.

I guess I today, modern-day churches like in the culture, like probably this church would be, the Hellenists were Greek-speaking Jews. So they adopted the language of the Greek-speaking community. They also read the Septuagint.

What Septuagint means 70, the books of the Bible. They had the the Old Testament books and some of the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha is non-authoritative books in the Bible.

If you look at the Roman Catholic Bible, it will probably have the Apocrypha in it. We don't identify with the Apocrypha because we look at authoritative. And what that means is, if Jesus didn't quote it, and somebody who walked with Jesus didn't write it, and the church didn't use it, the early church, it's not authoritative.

The Apocrypha will come in later, Maccabees and different books that are historical, but they're not authoritative. We don't look at those for truth. So this group would would read the Septuagint in Greek, Cornelian Greek, I believe it was, and then this group, the Hebrews that weren't Hellenist, were all Hebrew.

They would read it in the Hebrew, the original language of the people, and there's kind of divide there. Kind of like, you know, me over here, my Levi's and shirt, and this group with their suit and tie, and they're King James only. You know, there's kind of a divide there because, you know, we just see things differently.

So this group, this group, the widows were being neglected. So the widows would come, here's your daily distribution. The widows would come, here's your daily distribution of food and different things, and this need was growing and growing, and widows were being neglected.

So they brought this to the Apostles, the twelve men. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, it is not desirable that we have, or that we should leave, which is neglect the word of God and serve tables. Now, for people might think, well, that's a little arrogant.

Golly, who do these guys think they are? Well, what he's saying here is, our whole focus is on preaching the Word of God. Yes, we serve tables from time to time. Yes, we minister from time to time, but we come back to our primary focus to teach and to preach and to bring the Word of God to others, because you don't have 150 hours in the course of a day.

You have a certain amount of time to do what God has called you to do, and that's what really the point I'm trying to get at here. So if all the Apostles, the twelve, were supposed to be involved in this daily distribution all day long, they would not be able to preach and do their primary calling. So this good thing would take away from this great thing that God has called them to do.

So that's the context there. It's not a bad thing. The English Standard Version, which I do recommend, says it is not right that we should give up preaching the Word of God to serve tables.

So we can't do, in other Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business, meaning over this responsibility. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word, bringing the Word to others. So this is very interesting.

Here is the, I don't know, I better not say the first time, because I didn't research this. It's probably the first time that we see a difference in a distinction between elders and deacons. The elders, which there's not a better than or superior, what it is is they complement each other.

Elders, which were the apostles, are men called of God who lead the church spiritually. That's what they're called to do. And as I'm leading the church spiritually, we can't do all these other issues.

So this group comes alongside the deacons, and what it says here in the verse, finding these men, here's their character, they're filled with the Spirit. You find these people who can come along inside and serve. So sometimes this group does do leadership things, and sometimes the leadership people do serve.

They are kind of mixed together sometimes, but the elders are looked upon as the spiritual leaders of the church. And they bring the Word of God. Their focus is on the Word of God, where deacons come alongside and help in these areas of service.

Here's why. This is what this would look like if it didn't happen this way. I would have a.m. morning breakfast meetings.

From nine to twelve, I'd stop by all the hospital homes. From twelve to two, I would go here and do that. Three to six, I would go to the office and organize this and oversee that.

Seven p.m., I would get home, answer emails, and go to bed and repeat. Repeat, repeat, repeat. Well, my walk with God would suffer, the sermon would stink, and my wife and kids would be neglected.

Why, Shane? All those are good things, right? But it's not what God's called me to do. It's not the main calling of what He's called me to do. So I can't do all those things.

We need to find people filled with the Spirit of God who can come alongside and complement us in this area. So this is where you see the difference between deacons and elders. And what happens if you're not doing what God has called you to do.

That's what we're going to talk about when I finally, finally, finally get to these seven hindrances. I'm just trying to build this whole case up. When you finally get to, you'll see that a lot of what we call burnout, or depression, or anxiety, or caring too much is because we are caring too much.

We're not doing what God has called us to do, what God wants us to do. We're taking on all these other things. And a person I look up to, his name is H.B. London.

He was over pastoral ministry focused on the family. I was able to meet with him when we first started the church and got a lot of good counsel. I actually emailed him this week just to confirm some of the stats, and he said it's actually worse now.

But he said 40% of pastors and 47% of spouses are suffering from burnout, frantic schedules, and or unrealistic expectations. 45% of pastors' wives say the greatest danger to them and their families is physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual burnout. 56% of pastors' wives say they have no close friends, and 70% of pastors say they don't have any close either.

75% report severe stress causing anguish, worry, belittlement, anger, depression, fear, and alienation. 80% of pastors say they have insufficient time with their spouse. 80% believe that pastoral ministry affects their family negatively.

Many of you are going, why in the world do you do that? Well, I'm getting to the good news. 94% feel under pressure to have a perfect family. That's probably 100%.

6% is lying. 1,500 pastors leave their ministry each month due to burnout, conflict, or moral failure. But then what I did is you look at people like Chuck Smith, who went on to be at the Lord recently, or John MacArthur, or Chuck Swindoll, or Charles Stanley, or Jack Hayford, or I can say up your name a lot and so can you.

What's the difference? They're not burning out. I remember Chuck Smith talked on, I'll never forget what he said. He said, I don't get burned out because I don't do what God hasn't called me to do.

When you focus on, Lord, this is what you've called me to do. I mean, of course, you gotta have a little flexibility here, don't get me wrong. But when you focus on all these other things, you were not created to carry all the loads of all these different people without support.

You will get burned out. You will have conflict in your home. Life is hard enough as it already.

Why keep adding? It's interesting, I studied that scripture a while back. When it says remove every weight and sin that so easily ensnares us, that weight isn't necessarily a huge sinful habit. That weight is a burden you shouldn't be carrying that you're carrying.

Remove that burden, remove the sin that you're entrapped in, and run the race with endurance and strength. Removing those things. And the reason is these people, the pastors I just mentioned, and like you too, same thing.

This isn't just for pastors. They focus primarily on what God has called them to do. Ephesians 4.12, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

To equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building. That's my job. Because some people say, go call Shane.

Go call, go call, go call. Well hold on, hold on. The primary responsibility is to equip you for the work of the ministry and to build up the body.

So, but let's not forget about this quick thoughts on the office of deacon. I actually have three sermons in here. I'm like, I don't want to make this into three sermons.

So let's just, let me just pull out some of these before I get to the seven things everybody's waiting for. It's a, it's a, this is a long movie trailer, but we're getting there. So quick thoughts on the office of deacon.

Quick thoughts on the office of deacon. Diakonos is what it is in the Greek language. It means servant.

So you'll see that Phoebe was given diakonos. She was called a servant. And you'll see these people were called to the, to be deacons.

So this office, quick thoughts on those who are called to be deacons. Here's the difference. Everybody's called to be in service, but then God identifies those who can oversee a certain area of service and that fulfills an office.

The office of deacon. We have deacons over ushering, over building maintenance, over certain areas. So there's difference between a person serving, diakonos, or deacon.

And then also this, this other person who's in the office of being a deacon. 1st Timothy 3.8, here's the guidelines. Likewise, these people who, who Acts is talking about.

Likewise, deacons must be reverent, not double tongue, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested, then let them serve as deacons. In other words, test them in the character of the church.

That's why we tell people we need to, to usually to get involved, we want to see you have a consistent track record of attendance and to know who you are. We're not going to let you watch your kids on your first visit. It's just not going to happen.

It's going to be a consistent track record of watching and knowing who you are. Then once they prove themselves, they can become deacons and they being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanders, temperate, faithful in all things, and let deacons be the husband of one wife ruling their children and their household well.

That's for the office of deacon. It's interesting, they said likewise their wives. This might be a good time to remind you that wives cannot qualify a man for leadership, but they can disqualify him.

They can't qualify, but they can disqualify. For example, let's say I'm qualified according to elder guidelines. But if, this might not be a good example, let me use some other pastor, other pastor, somebody else I know in Lancaster.

If their wives, this is easy, you weren't here at the 9 a.m. so this is easier, and this doesn't fit our scenario. So, but if their wife, let's just be honest, if the person's a pastor and their wife isn't reverent, like that, I don't know why I married that guy. He's such a clown, he can't even fix the front door when it's not broke.

And he's just, they're not reverent, they're not respectful, they're putting down people. And they're double-tongued, they're slander, and they like to put away that bottle or two of wine every night, and drink, and all these things. And they're not faithful in all things, they're flaky.

And that disqualifies me from leading the church. Or this pastor, not me. That will disqualify them, because a wife has to have these characters, because it's a package.

There's no way around that. You come to serve as a package. So here's, deacons meet these qualifications, wives meet these qualifications.

A wife cannot qualify, but she can disqualify her husband in these areas. So, if it hasn't got controversial, it will right now. The role of women in the church.

You guys ready to unpack this thing? It's actually a good thing, don't worry. Why is this such a big deal? Well, here's a couple things. There's denominations out there that, I said at the first service, maybe I shouldn't have said the denominations, but you can watch on video if we choose that video.

I won't say the denominations, but they have women pastors, and people always say, I got an email this week, and last week, and the week before, and what's your stance? What's going on here? Women deacons, where's their qualifications at? And so, let me just try to unpack this with God's grace, and praying it goes as well as it did at the first service. If it doesn't, I'll use that clip, and then you can watch this on the video. Here's why this is a big deal.

From back, probably since, I don't know when, time began with humanity. Women have been taken advantage of. Women, look in Jesus' day, look in Muslim nations.

They're covered, and they're disrespected, the property. Look at even in America with voting rights, and different things. So, women write equality, equality, and God has made us equal in how he's created us, but he's given us different roles in how we are to conduct ourselves.

So, the problem is, yes, let's fight for equality, but let's don't twist the roles that God has designed in order to fight for equality, if that makes sense. When Paul, I believe it was Paul, said that men, in talking about your home, treat your wife well, because she's the weaker vessel. That Greek word is a valuable, like a vase, depending if you're from France, right? Whatever this thing is, this Picasso, this valuable, it's supposed to be behind you, and you guard it.

So, being the head of the family is not looking down on my family, it's leading my family into battle, to die for them, to guard them, to shelter them. So, God has given me the headship, not to dominate, but to protect and lead. But just this topic, I'm going to get people mad at me, just because they don't agree with that.

And what we believe in is we are not egalitarian, we are complementarian. What that means is we don't believe in the role of women pastors. Number one, there's zero guidelines.

There's nothing. What are their qualifications? Nothing. If it was in the Bible, let's do it.

But God, and the reason is because pastoral leadership is servant leadership. It's dying for the church, dying for your family, leading them in the fear and admonition of the Lord. It's not a male chauvinistic dominating position.

People have abused it, but how God created it was, I will give you a helpmate to come alongside, and you're created to do this, she's created to do this. You look in marriage, it is equal in regard to how the family functions. The role of the wife is absolutely important.

The role of the husband is absolutely important. That's why it's so difficult. Did you know one of the biggest problems in the church is getting men to lead their family spiritually for the love of God? Would you wake

up and turn off that TV and get a job? My goodness, folks, that's why this is such a hard area, because men have dropped the ball.

Men have dropped the ball. So we don't look at it as, okay, I'm dominating on the head, you're down here, they're behind me, I would die for them. I have to die for them and protect them.

You go into spiritual battle protecting that cherished vessel. That's how the approach is. So once you understand that's the foundation, then you look at scripture.

Okay, what's the scripture used to define women pastors? And a pastor is an elder, bishop, overseer, pastor. Those are the four terms in the Greek language that is used. What scripture do we have that says, here's the qualifications for a woman pastor? There aren't any, there's zero.

Well, what about Deborah in the Old Testament? Okay, good example, but that's because Barak would not step up and lead the children of Israel, she delivered them. And it's funny, there are exceptions. And I talked to another person this week that I look up to for advice, Dr. Michael Brown.

I don't know if you follow his podcast at all, he's got a pretty following, he gets right back to me, I so appreciate him. But I said, but what about the exceptions? He said, but Shane, you got to remember the exceptions only prove that there is a rule. Because there's an exception, that means there's an exception to what? To a rule, to a standard.

If I say, okay, kids, I'll make an exception, that means there's a rule I'm making exception to. So just because God, and I know of pastors, women pastors in South America, or in Mexico, or in other places that started to work because nobody would step up. They are exceptions, wonderful, God's working for them.

But let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater. And people get upset, people left the church, and we say we just, we feel that women are vitally important to the church, not below, co-equal in all regards, cherished, wonderful, we come together. But we just feel that men have given, looking through Scripture, God created us to guide and lead them in that direction.

They also help to guide and lead though, don't they? Do you ever ask advice? Do you ever seek support? Do you ever go to, it's like working together. So this is how God created us. Now, when it comes to deacons, a lot of churches do have deaconesses.

And it's an issue I've been working through, I was challenged a few years ago, when somebody said, what is the qualification for a woman deacon in the office of deacon? So I'll tell you, it's right here. Oh, no, it's not. I guess there aren't, I have no clue.

So that again, we use Scripture. Now, if there are women deacons, fine, that's, but in other words, should there be a woman deacon over the men ushers? It just, you know, it shouldn't, that's not how God created, not bad or good. It's just creation.

How did God create us? And people will say, well, Shane, the culture back then, come on, buddy, get up to the speed, it's 2016. But you forget, this isn't about culture, it's about creation. This goes back into Adam and Eve and how he created us and how he designed us to come alongside and complement each other.

That's the whole point. So it shouldn't be a heated, debated argument. And I know I get emails from women pastors who get upset and simply show me one Scripture, just one, that supports that role.

And they go grab an Old Testament example, they'll say, well, these Priscilla and Akula had a church in their house. And okay, that's why do men have all these qualifications, but they're no qualifications. So I don't want to make a mountain out of molehill.

Suffice it to say that is the man that goes forward and dies for his family, that leads his family. So the head is not above, often the head is in front, guarding and sheltering and leading as a servant dying to self. That's the example.

So that's what we believe. Hopefully that clears all the air. And probably won't.

But if you have questions, talk to me, talk to one of the elders afterwards, and we'd love to answer those. So now I'm going to get to the points. Regardless of who you are, these are seven hindrances.

You might say, oh, no, another half hour sermon. No, I'm going to try to go quick. Very quick here.

Regardless, this is funny. I had somebody tell me, I got to get my services down to an hour. With worship, the message and out.

Come on, Shane, quick times are moving. You know, people are media driven now, short attention span. I'm like, I don't care.

I'm not doing an hour service. That's like, that's like microwave Christianity. You might you're still got that you still got the NFL game on what's come on later.

By that time, we got it's gonna take 30 minutes of worship to get that junk out. And to start focusing on God and being filled with the Spirit of God. See, we we were to we're too busy, folks.

You got to stop being so busy. Slow down, wait on God. What do you do with all the scriptures, those who wait upon me shall renew their strength.

This isn't a five minute wait. You don't go just sit down, I'll give you five minutes. This is a heart seeking God and saying, Lord, I don't care what it costs me.

I'm going to wait on you. If that computer is going in the garage, if it's causing me distracted, that TV, forget it. These relationships are pulling me down.

I'm removing these things. And I'm seeking you with all of my heart with all of my soul with all of my strength. And God says, when you seek me under those conditions, you will find me.

You can take down to God to the bank, say, Lord, your honor is at stake. Your word is at stake. You told me this.

And you seek him, you will find him. So where I'm going with this is the majority of of people who have hindrances. They're depressed.

They don't know what God's will is for their life. They're carrying this load. They're hindered.

There's a hindrance to doing God's will. Here's where they are usually too busy with the wrong things. If they're these apostles that we just read were, they noticed they would be too busy, right? But this isn't with the wrong things.

They were too busy. But many of us get too busy with the wrong thing. So take inventory, look at your life and say this has got to go immediately.

Reductive but reduction hurts, doesn't it? You ever tried to lose weight? Reduce. It hurts. Same thing with removing things from our life.

If you want to remove hindrances, you're too busy doing the wrong thing. Shane, how do I know? Does it lead you to a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ? Does it build you up spiritually or does it pull you down? And this is a funny area. This is when I talk to young adults.

A lot of times they're cutting and depression and suicide and all these things. Well, you might want to start stop watching all those movies about the occult and witchcraft and horoscope. I don't know.

Call me stupid. But you might want to remove this darkness that you're allowing and remove these things that are drawing you away from Christ. That's biblical.

Make no provision for the flesh that you will fulfill. It's less. Finally, brethren, when things are pure and noble and honest, meditate on these things.

Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable will of God. David said, I will set nothing wicked before my eyes. Job says, I have said nothing wicked before my eyes.

You have to take the scripture for what it means. It's literal, not figuratively in these areas. People say this spiritualized everything.

Well, it didn't really mean that. Yeah, it did. It did.

Take God for his word. Remove those things that are distracting to you. There are so many people that I know that need to remove wrong relationships out of their life, but they are not doing it.

How long will you continue to play with that bait? Remove it. Number two, assuming that if it's good, it must be God. No, no, no, no.

I shared the first service. Well, I guess I shared everything in the first service. I shouldn't say that.

But I've been asked a couple times to run for the hospital board, local hospital board. Who has that much time? Well, Shane, it's a good thing. You'd make a difference.

You've got to do this. You've got to do the good things. And we get busy with good things.

And by the time I'm doing good things, I'm like, wait a minute, where's the pulpit? Where's the pulpit? Where's all these? I'm doing all these good things. No, but Shane, come back to what I called you to do. The enemy will get you off track with so-called good things to get you focused away from what he wants, God really wants you to do.

Think about it. Prayer and study. Oh, every morning about within three minutes.

Oh, I got to do that email. Oh, shoot, the trash. Did I take out the trash? Is the heater still on? These are all good things.

These are all good things. You'd be amazed what comes to my mind to stop my prayer life. The big one is go back to sleep.

My goodness, that's a good thing. I tried to find out who the author was. It sounds like C.S. Lewis, but I don't think it was.

They wrote this, Satan called a worldwide convention in his opening address to his evil angels. And he said, we can't keep Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth.

We can't even keep them from conservative values. But we can do something else. We can keep them from forming an intimate, abiding experience in Christ.

If they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to church. Let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time so they can't gain that experience in Jesus Christ.

Here is how I want you to do this. Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout the day. But how shall we do this, shouted one angel? Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent numerous schemes to occupy their minds, and they will drift from their Savior.

That's true. Because a good thing isn't always a God thing. And we get so busy.

That's why these pastors, majority of them burn out. I can list three or four pastors who started churches the time I did, and none of them are still pastoring their church. And they're all good men, but focused on the wrong things.

Focused on the wrong things. The best thing you can do, the best thing I can do is make Christ the absolute priority of my life. Absolute priority of my life.

Dave, I think it was actually you said this when I was dating Morgan. He said, follow wholeheartedly after Christ and see if she keeps up. That's a good rule of thumb.

If you're dating somebody, that's a good nugget right there. Follow wholeheartedly after Christ. Here's why.

Christ and my relationship with Him and being filled with the Spirit is the foundation of everything else. Everything else. From that, I become a better husband, a better pastor, a better father.

From that, I can go and minister. See, you're neglecting the foundation. Go build a house out in the desert on the sand.

Oh Shane, we would never do that. Exactly. So why are we building our lives without the foundation? But I have a relationship.

Are you following Him wholeheartedly in full surrender and giving Him everything? See, maybe it's me, but I read old authors like Andrew Murray, A.W. Tozer. They mess me up because these guys would seek

God. The Puritans, Whitfield, Wesley, Spurgeon, they would seek the heart of God.

And as a result, they would have this overflowing power and presence of Christ. That's what I want. Don't you want the aroma of Christ? Or the NFL and Charkies? You know what Charkies is.

Pizza Hut. I better get off that topic. I know you're already getting mad.

Number three, lacking faith. Lacking faith. And most of us here would say, well, I don't lack faith.

But faith hopes and waits on God. When I have faith, I hope and I wait on God. I'm thankful and not a complainer.

See, if you say, I have faith, but you're not waiting, hoping on God. That's why I said we should be the most joy-filled people on the planet. And we're complaining all the time.

And we're not joy-filled. We're lacking faith. Because faith trusts in the promises of God.

Faith trusts who God is. He's an all-sufficient Savior. He encapsulates everything.

So I look to Him. Number four, not applying wisdom to your daily life. Not applying.

These people were full of wisdom. Full of wisdom, they chose. If the number one, here's the number one problem in the church.

If a person's being converted, the number one problem in the church is people are not filled with the Holy Spirit. They have the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit have all of you. They're not filled.

That's the first problem. Then the second problem is this area of wisdom. Not applying wisdom to our daily lives.

Do you know what wisdom is? We've talked about this many times before. Knowledge is knowing what to do. I know this.

I know this. People are yawning. I'm going to start being louder.

I know this, right? I know this. That's knowledge. Wisdom is working it out and doing it and applying it.

Obedience is not a bad word. It's not. See, that's another thing.

Anytime I talk about obedience, they say, legalistic. Legalistic? Obedience. No, you're being a Pharisee.

Let's clarify terms real quick. Legalism is self-righteousness and imposing rules on people to become more spiritual. That's not obedience.

Christ was obedience until the point of death. Obey the Word of God. There's life.

There's life. It reminds me like, son, don't put that knife. Don't put that knife in that socket.

Obey me. Oh, that's no fun. That's what, but that's what, no, God, you're not letting me have fun.

No, son, don't do that. You're not letting me have fun. No, son, don't do that.

Don't do that. Obey me. Obey my principles.

They're guardrails through the canyons of life. Stop calling it legalism because you want to excuse your actions. Allow the Word of God to penetrate your heart and obey.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not consider robbery to be equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation. He humbled himself and he took on the form of filthy man and became obedient to the point of death. Obedience is powerful.

So once you focus on applying the Word of God, Lord, here's what your Word says. I'm going to apply it. You're set free because the reason is personal testimony here.

God knows this. The personal reason, the person, the main reason many of us often are caught in depression and we lose our zeal. We lose our passion.

We're dead spiritually is because we are not obeying. And the Bible says hard is the way of the transgressor. When we're caught in sin, we're miserable.

When you're caught in sin, you are miserable. And we'll think of every excuse in the book to continue, won't we? Six and then seven and I'll be done. Prayer is an afterthought.

This is why many of people are hindered. Prayer is an afterthought. These people, did you hear what it said? We will give ourselves continually to prayer.

It's like breathing, like oxygen. Prayer brings life, like water replenishes, like food it nourishes, like rest it recharges. Here's what happens.

My life is brought back into focus when I pray. Here's the interesting thing about prayer. As soon as I say this point, people are like, I've heard this before in church.

You hear love and prayer, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. This is the most powerful weapon you ever will ever possess. The reason you're not living for God is because you're not dying on your knees in the prayer closet.

The reason you're not filled with the Spirit of God is you're not men and women of prayer. Shane, you're being hard. It's time to be hard sometimes.

It's time to be hard. You don't have to always put on little kid gloves. We need to all hear this, that we need to we need to petition God more.

We need to pray more. Prayer moves the hand of God. Prayer, through prayer, my life is brought back into focus.

I don't remember who said it, but maybe it was Tozer, but he said one hour with God, one hour with God in prayer can change a man's entire life than a year's worth of sermons. One hour with God praying, because it's hard. You don't want that time.

You don't want that quiet time. Your flesh wants to fight it. Just a couple years ago, I was up at, I went to the Oaks on January 1st, New Year's Eve.

They let me go there. It was dark outside and scary and coyotes and stuff. And I was like, okay, I'm in this cabin for two days, just me and the Bible.

And guess who wanted to go home after three hours? This is boring. Just going, oh man, what am I going to do? What am I going to do? Where's my phone? Where's my phone? Doesn't work. But once that flesh was brought in submission, he gave me the entire sermon series for the marriage series that followed in 2000.

I think it was 2012 now. It's been a while, four years. All from that, I didn't want to leave that mountain.

But you have to press in. You have to fight. You have to say, God, I want you more than breakfast.

I want you more than Facebook. I don't care how many people are following me. Do they like my post? Do they like my post? Do they like my post? Will they comment negatively? I'm going to have a nervous breakdown.

And we miss this focus. We've got to get back. Listen, this is the biggie.

We will give ourselves continually to prayer. You don't just sit at home and pray, but it's a life of prayer. Who cares who's going to win up in the NFL? Just go and pray and say, Lord, help me today.

Let me be a blessing. Help my children. And it becomes a life of prayer.

Prayer just flows out of you because the essence of Christ is in you. The indwelling power of the Holy Spirit is in you. And out of that, you have to pray.

It's the crying, Abba, Father. Not get away from me, Father. Abba, Father, this life of prayer, finally number seven, and you can go eat.

Not full of the Holy Spirit. Not full of the Holy Spirit. Are you overflowing with God? These men, isn't it interesting? I was regretting this in my mind if I should have said this first, but I did, so I might as well blow it at the second service.

It doesn't matter. We've had people leave. When we were in Lancaster, they'd say, gone on is truth.

Shane, you talk too much about the Holy Spirit. And somebody just left here when we first came together. There's too much focus on the Holy Spirit.

And guess what? In every single case, those people need to hear exactly what they're running from. I've never had, and this will offend people good. I'm sick and tired of being politically correct.

Let's offend for a minute. Oh, there we go. I have, and just being honest, because I let people go home.

I don't like what he said, but you know what? I need to think about that. I have never seen a man or woman filled mightily with the Spirit of God, prayer warriors, loving the Lord who have ever said, you talk too much about the Holy Spirit. Now, granted, you can get on topics and come back to, okay, hold on, but the whole book of Acts, you know what the book of Acts is? The Holy Spirit working in the church, the Holy Spirit working in your life.

Why is there no Acts 29? Because you're Acts 29. We're Acts 29, and the work of the church continues. Listen, Jesus Christ will build his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail.

Nothing Satan can do, nothing the demonic realm can do will stop the work of God unless we, in our brokenness, and in our misery and our sin, turn from our Savior. That's all a stronghold is. You read in the

Bible, stronghold is when Satan gets a stronghold in your life and retwists and turns you into a direction away from Christ.

The fully surrendered life. Remember it was said before D.L. Moody was filled mightily with the Spirit. I'll recommend a book.

It's called They Found the Secret, and it gives short biographies of men and women filled with the Spirit of God. They were in ministry. They were dying spiritually, and then they were mightily filled with the Spirit of God once full surrender took place.

That's a whole other topic we'll talk about some other time on being filled with the Spirit, but let me just say this. It's the most important decision a person can make to be filled with the Spirit. That's how you become a better husband, a better father, a better mother.

You're filled with God's Spirit. Here's a testimony I got from a man. He wrote a while back, I'd become someone I never thought I would become.

I was in complete darkness. I would sleep in my clothes for as long as I could. I began wishing that I would die.

The emotional pain was unbearable, and I talked to him about this Spirit-filled life and fully surrendering everything. And some of you might be confused on what I'm talking about. As a believer, I believe you have all of the Spirit at conversion.

You have the Spirit. I don't believe in a second work of grace that might happen years from now that you might get filled again. I believe a person at conversion has the Spirit.

You have all the Spirit, but does he have all of you? In many cases, no, he doesn't. We quench and we grieve the Spirit to such a degree that we die spiritually. So once that quenching and grieving is freed and you allow that freedom of the Holy Spirit to reign, you repent of those besetting sins.

You give Christ everything. There's this overflowing, overfilling. The Bible uses a Greek preposition called epi, E-P-I.

It's an overflowing endowment. When Jesus came out of the wilderness, he was filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon Peter, came upon Paul. This word is different from para, periculus, running alongside, and it's different from E-N, in the person.

This is an overpowering endowment of the Spirit's power. All these people you like to read that are dead, all of them, oh, I love this Christian author, I love this, they were filled mightily with the Spirit of God. All the people dying spiritually in the church today and in years past are not filled with the Spirit of God.

And folks, that's my heart, that's my wife. My heart beats for those who are dying spiritually, because it's one, it's one step away. Remember I said it's living water.

Christ said, come, take of the living water. It's one, just come. Would you come? And I watch people die spiritually everywhere.

Homes fall apart, and I want to say, come, come and drink of the water freely. Freely, just drink of it. Out of your belly will flow rivers of living water.

Christ says, just come, just come. He's not going to force you. You're not a robot.

But the human heart is so arrogant that the preaching, the preaching, the same sermon I'm preaching right now, just like the Son, the same Son that hardens the clay will melt the wax. And as preaching goes out, the same Word of God will either harden your heart or it'll melt your heart. It's your decision.

You've got to be filled with the Spirit. This young man wrote me back, I only wish that everyone could feel the love that I experienced. I'm able to forgive others and genuinely love them.

I feel like I have been reborn. Elusive peace has now been found. Comment after I fully surrendered my life.

I mean, I might just be way out there, but that's a big difference. To go from darkness to light, from suicide to tremendous peace. Where does that come from? Only from the peace of God.

Listen, you say, if I could just try harder. The problem is we're broken. People, we're broken.

I just try harder, you're broken. A broken mom cannot fix her broken daughter. A broken dad cannot fix his broken son.

You cannot fix your broken spouse. You can't fix a broken church. You can't fix a broken nation.

Only through the power of the Holy Spirit working through my heart and your heart can we accomplish what God wants us to accomplish. And when you're filled with the Spirit and it's overflowing hindrances, what hindrances? I'm on fire for God. I'm not going to burn out.

I'm going to keep preaching until the day I die, because it's Christ carrying that burden. That's the imagery coming to me. All that are weak and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Rest from what? From your burdens. And He carries those burdens. And that's what happens.

That's a fully surrendered life. Shoot, I could go another hour if you guys want. Because God is drawing and convicting.

Just think about this for a minute. If God wanted you to make some changes, and God wants you to be filled with the Holy Spirit, everything I'm talking about, how would He go about doing that? Number one, He'll convict you. Number two, He'll bring His Word to penetrate your heart.

That's how He does it. You're not to fully surrender your life. Oh, He does want me to do that.

It doesn't work that way. Folks, I love you guys. I pray for you guys.

I'm here in the morning praying. I say, Lord, move on the hearts of these people. I want to see revival.

I want to see broken people before the Lord, humble in His presence. I remember when the church would pray. I remember the church wasn't in a hurry.

Hurry up an hour, hurry up an hour and a half. Hurry. When was the church going to sit and wait on God? We'll sit there and we'll watch a pigskin go 100 yards for three hours.

But then, when it comes to church, we're bored. How long is this guy going? Oh my goodness, I didn't know the service would go this long. Like Charles Wesley said, I love what he said.

How do you build a church? You come and you light yourself on fire, and people will watch and come and watch you burn. You light yourself on fire and people will come and they'll watch you burn. It's contagious.

It's contagious. See, I understand something. What awoken something in me was passionate, spirit-filled preaching.

Passionate, spirit-filled preaching. I remember one time, took a man, hungover, waiting to go to the liquor store, would be dead by now, depressed, no direction, hated my life. I still remember the couch.

I remember the address. I know where I was laying. And spirit-filled preaching hit me, and it hit me hard.

I cried. I ordered the CDs and the tapes. I ordered more.

I got on my knees. I said, God, fill me with your spirit. I need to come home.

I need to come home. God, please. And I just cried and cried.

He filled me with such love. The Word of God became alive and living. I couldn't get enough of it.

Turned off. What a great American country. What's it called now? Country just listened all day long.

Tim McGraw. Actually, my wife, you guys don't know this. Hope I can say this.

What's his name? Okay, I won't say it. I don't forget his name now. What's his name? Huh? Oh yeah, Craig Morgan's first video.

So I'm sitting there, Craig Morgan's first video. I'm like, oh, I'd love to meet someone like that. Lord, please help me.

And it's not a joke. I mean, it seriously happened. But that's what I said.

But Morgan was coming out of that. God was changing her heart out of that Hollywood lifestyle, and God was changing my heart out of the party, make big money, you know, steamroller. Get out of my way.

I'm going to steamroll you. And God was working on both of our hearts. But it took spirit-filled, passionate preaching that called me on the carpet and said, man, you're failing.

You need to get up. You're on a detour to destiny. You need to turn around.

And I just praised God. And so I see that's my heart for you, is you be convicted and fully surrender your life.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32048.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/XCcZo-zy7W8.mp4>

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