

# Can We Really Know God's Will?

by Shane Idleman

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*God's will for your life is to be saved, worship Him, be holy, be set apart, and walk in His will.*

**Duration:** 49:28

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 15:22, Isaiah 1:18, Matthew 25:31-46, Acts 21:10, Romans 3:22, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22, James 4:7, 2 Peter 3:9

**Topics:** "Gods Will", "Holy Obedience"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the topic of understanding God's will, emphasizing the importance of focusing on what is revealed in His word. It highlights the principles of righteousness, self-control, and the impending judgment to come. The speaker encourages waiting in God's will, dealing with besetting sin, and the need for repentance and trust in Christ for salvation. The message underscores the significance of obedience, gratitude, and being filled with the Holy Spirit as key aspects of living in alignment with God's will.

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## Transcript

The topic, or actually the message this morning is can we really know God's will? Now I'm going to touch on things we've talked about over the last year or two, obviously, because God's will in many areas is inexhaustible. But there are principles, and some of these principles I'm going to remind you about. And I'm also going to use a lot of quotes from people.

We have Scripture, and we also have quotes. Because what I want to do is reignite that passion to follow God and understand His will. I would say this is probably the number one question out there, isn't it? What is God's will for my life? I just don't know where God's at.

He's not answering my prayers. Should I sell? Should I buy? Should I move? Should I listen to Shane yesterday in his sermon on health? Lord, what is your will? And just first off, let me get this out there. What I'm concentrating on is what we know to be God's will in His word.

You can never go wrong that way. And I think many times we try to worry about things that aren't in His word, neglecting what we do know to be in His word. For example, people, let's say buying a house or selling a house.

It doesn't tell you, okay, on June 20th of 2017, go and do this. Lead of the Spirit, these things. And sometimes, is it God's will that this church ever starts another service? Is it God's will that this church ever

plants another church? You can't turn to Matthew.

But there are principles that you can apply to your life. And we find ourselves in Acts 21.10, talking about the ministry of Paul, and as we stayed many days, Acts 21, verse 10, and as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And when he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, so he took his belt off of Paul, and he bound his own hands and feet and said, thus says the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

I actually had a five-minute point here on this, and I keep going back and forth on this because of time and things, but this is a genuine word of wisdom or a word of knowledge. You ever hear that in the Bible, that the Spirit gives some the word of wisdom, some the word of knowledge? This is a genuine prophet. It's okay not to, you know, that term's okay.

The Bible uses it. We worry about the guys who put prophet on their business card, right, and then telling everybody that they're a prophet. The people will know that you are working in that gifting.

Now this is a prophetic word. It's this man, Agabus, he was a prophet. The Holy Spirit showed him that Paul was going to be bound in Jerusalem if he were to go.

So often we would, if somebody gives you a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge, it's usually something that's burning on their heart that, you know, I've got to talk to you. I've been, all week this has been on my heart. I don't know if this is, I don't know what it is, but I've got to share it.

And once you share it, it confirms the word of God or confirms many times what they're feeling in their own spirit or it will rebuke them. That God brings something, you know, to your, are you cheating on your spouse? It's been on my heart. And then the person breaks down because that word of wisdom, that word of knowledge that was used because the person's obviously not in the Bible, right? They're not going to be studying the Bible many times if they're in that, that point of sin.

So a prophetic word can come in and correct a person. Now on this, there's the two sides of the camp, right? There's always a prophetic word every Sunday. And you know, prophets are saying this, and you've got all these, some of these charismatic news sites, you know, posting the prophets are saying doom and gloom.

The prophets are saying there's peace in America. There's prophets are saying war's coming to America. The prophets are saying Trump's life is in danger.

There's like, whoa, what are we doing? And you just get way caught up into that stuff. And then the other side, though, is we're not open to those things. So we as a church are open but cautious.

And things like this usually take place maybe in a prayer room or through fellowship groups or people getting to know each other. And God puts a burden on a person's heart to share with somebody else. So it's not weird.

It's God. It's supplemental to the word of God using it to help correct and lead his people if it's done correctly. I've shared this many times before.

And when I was struggling to pastor or even preach, for weeks I was struggling. I don't know what God's, I have this desire, but I don't know, I mean, it just seems this message he's giving me to preach seems so bold and arrogant in your face. I mean, my goodness, but it's a burning fire.

I don't know what to do with this. And we prayed for weeks. And I went somewhere, and there's 250 people, and this guy said, young man, would you stand up? He said, God is calling you to preach.

He's calling you to be bold. It's not arrogance. It's God.

Coincidence? Some would say. No, that's not coincidence. And he went on even more, that God's gifted you, and you've got to break out of this shell that you're in.

And the shell was the fear of man. I mean, it was so dynamic that it still stuck with me now 13, 14 years later. Those kind of things that God will hear his people crying out, he will answer.

He will deliver. So back to Acts, verse 12. So that was a legitimate prophetic word by a legitimate prophet.

Gosh, I could even clarify. We don't believe in the office of prophet that speaks, supersedes God's word. We believe in those gifted, maybe, that have a prophetic type edge to them, a prophetic element that you can tell a preacher from a teacher, those who have a prophetic element to them, the Isaiahs, the Jeremiahs.

Verse 12. If there's questions, we can answer those too. Verse 12.

Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, what do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. So when he would not be persuaded, we see saying, the will of the Lord be done.

The will of the Lord be done. So Paul was warned, he was not persuaded to change his course. Or was the prophetic word not to have Paul change his course, but to tell Paul, to forewarn Paul, here's what you need to be prepared for.

So that's what that was for. It really gave him clarity in this area, but he said, I don't care, I'm still going. The will of the Lord shall be done.

Corrie Temboom, who was in the concentration camp during World War II said, there are no ifs in God's world and no places that are safer than other places. Remember that. There are no safer places.

The center of his will is our only safety. Let us pray that we may always know it. Now we would need an entire series to scratch the surface of God's will.

We've got his moral will. We've got his sovereign will. We've got his perfect will.

We've got his permissive will. The perfect will of God is what is going to happen. The permissive will of God is what he allows.

The moral will of God is what he wants and how he wants us to live morally. So you see these areas of God's will in different facets. His sovereign will, of course we know that he is sovereign.

He governs the affairs of men. But I'm talking about practical will this morning. Now it's interesting.

We have something that many in the early church and throughout the centuries and even today do not have. We have this. Can you imagine not having this? And you get an idea and you're like, huh? Where's that coming from? Is that God or is that me? Or is it the enemy planning thoughts? Because a good thing isn't always a God thing, right? So we need to be so thankful because we have this that can guide and lead and give us direction.

But I've seen many people pray even fast and worship but still be led astray because they walk outside of God's will. They neglect the blueprint. They neglect the course for correction.

Here's what happens. You know, I'm going to, well, okay, I won't go too far. There is an element of Christianity that is, for a lack of a better word, very emotional.

Hyper something. And they are worshipers. They will pray and they will fast.

But it's hard to discern what voice it is unless you're grounded. Because just because an idea comes to us or a thought comes to us or a concept doesn't mean we should act upon it. And actually, these people sometimes are the most confused group of people I know.

Because they're not grounded in the Word. What happens when you're reading through the Word, you begin to understand the nature of God. You begin to understand the character of God.

You begin to understand the heart of God. So when you make decisions, your heart is in alignment with what his heart is. So it's not just some super spirituality being led away by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men.

You are actually grounded. And in that grounding, we're able to make the right decisions. And I'm all for, all for praying and fasting and worshiping and being led of the Spirit.

It's biblical. But how do you know what Spirit you're being led on, led by, if you have no reference point? And there's people, there's people many times, and I know them, that will say, I don't need to go to church to be a Christian, for example. God has told me, I don't need to go, Shane, I don't need to go to church to be a Christian.

Did you ever read what Paul wrote? Do not forsake the assembling of getting, of coming together? Well yeah, but in Paul's day, it probably meant this, and see, see, but he led, fasting even. Oh, and I just, I'm just, I let no man teach me. I just let God teach me.

Did you know that's incorrect as well? That's an area of submission and pride. You see, but they're all off in la-la land, with no grounding in the Scripture. And they'll make terrible financial decisions, being led by the wrong Spirit.

So make sure, this is such a blessing. We're grounded in it. It actually renews your thinking.

It renews your mind, the heart of God. You can see, this is the heart of God. If you're ignorant, Billy Graham said, of God's Word, you will always be ignorant of God's will.

And I talk to people that are passionate about God's will, and they'll tell me Scriptures that aren't even in there. They'll say, well, didn't Peter say, no, he didn't say anything like that, and they just don't know what it says. And these are good people, good, but you have to be grounded, or you'll be led astray, and, and by every different concept, because I get ideas.

I don't even know if it's God's, right? I told you a few weeks ago, I had an idea, but I have a radio station that was going out of business locally. Well, is that Shane or God? Well, time will tell. I don't know.

But we have biblical principles. Be good stewards. Don't take on more than you can.

What king goes to war doesn't count the cost. Is it financially feasible? See, if you're staying in that, that's the groundwork, and then you can build your house of God's will on top of that. And then he went on to say, God will never, never lead you to do something that is contrary to His written Word, the Bible.

Never. And this is one of the problems with missionary dating. Catch that one? Missionary dating, right? I'm dating, I'm a solid Christian, and I'm dating, maybe gonna get married, to somebody who doesn't know the Lord.

God has called me to do this. I can sense it. What do you know? It says, do not be unequally yoked.

Yeah, but I think I can lead them to the Lord. And many times, we found that if the person does come to the, or at least I've seen, if the person does come to the Lord, it might be for the wrong reason. They said they won't marry me unless I join their church or become a Christian.

And then all hell breaks loose once you say, I do. Now I believe, though, that God will honor His Word if that person is for you. You break it off.

You do what is right. Sexual purity. You break it off.

And let God bring back that relationship. He will do that. I mean, when I met my wife, we went on one date, and we said, nope.

Not going that direction. And she said, I'm not going that direction either. And then a year and a half later, at church, oh, hmm, this is interesting.

See? Now, we were both believers, but we were coming back to the Lord. It wouldn't have been a good spot. We both needed to work some things out.

And then God brought us back doing it the right way. But I'm not an example of this, please. Every time I give examples, I'm like, people don't think I've done this perfectly.

I'm just trying to be transparent, honest, that you can't go against this. What about in the area of giving? Many people told me, Lord told me never to give. I don't give.

Okay, what does the Bible say? I mean, what does the Bible say? What is the Spirit is leading you? Now, there's obviously different things around that topic, and I'm not going to go into that, of course. But just look to this. What does this say? So here's some things that are clearly God's will for our lives.

Clearly. I've talked about these before, but I have to do it again because we're talking about God's will. His will for your life, number one, is to be saved and to worship Him.

So if you're not saved and you're not worshipping Him, start here. This is the number one will of God for your life. I'm not willing that any should perish, but all come to repentance.

His will is for you to be holy and set apart for His glory. I have all the references, 1 Timothy, 1 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Matthew, you can find these there. But it says, my will is for you to be holy and

set apart for His glory.

And we all go, oh, thank you. What's the next point? No, that's important. Number one, be holy.

There's something different about you. Be set apart. You reflect the character and the nature of God.

See, that's very important when it comes to questions, should we live together? We're not married yet. I just answered your question. Should I watch those things? Should I do that? Should I be holy and set apart? You see how easy it is? Kind of.

I mean, God's will, the closer you draw to Christ, you're not as challenged with God's will as a person who's not. You go, Shane, don't you have, yeah, I just wait. I don't know what your will is, I'm going to wait.

See, waiting is being in the will of God. Waiting is part of that process. So to be saved, to worship Him, to be holy, to be set apart, really, God's will, let me sum it up for you.

It's walking how He told us to walk. Be holy, be set apart, be saved, worship Me, be filled with the Spirit, make disciples, and you walk in God's will. Then you have a better understanding of who to marry, where to move, because you're walking in His will.

His wills are clear. To be filled continually with the Holy Spirit. That's His will for your life.

So if a person is not humble and broken and surrendered to the Lord, something I always talk about, they're not mightily filled with the Holy Spirit, then you are outside of God's will in that area. That's why I often make comments about those who are bored in church, or looking around during worship, or on their phone, or playing around. They're not filled with the Spirit.

You cannot be filled with the Spirit and ignore worship. That's a tweet, that's a Twitter. That's a Facebook post.

You cannot be bored during worship and assume you're filled with the Spirit of God, because the Spirit of God has to worship. The Spirit is crying, Abba, Father, Father, I love you, I adore you, I have to worship you. So if that's not there, something is missing.

The will of God is to worship Him, and to be filled with the Spirit. Spurgeon again, you will never glory in God until, first of all, God has killed all your glorifying in yourself. You'll never be able to glory in who God is until all your glorifying of yourself is killed.

Also, He's called us to witness, to make disciples. That's His will. That's why I love the Hospital Homes ministry, because that's what we're doing.

You're in God's will, right there. You're in God's will. People say, well, should I do that or not? Well, you're in God's will, if you are.

Or at your place of work, or what about your neighbor? People, are we ministering? Are we creating disciples and teaching them? And then we jump to Acts 22, 17. Now what happened? When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance, Paul said, and saw God, basically Him saying to me, make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly. See, He disobeyed the prophet, right, and He went into Jerusalem, and now God says, get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony.

So God says, go. You think Paul listens? He does, but he argues first. Like many of us, right? We go kicking and screaming.

Reminds me of you, a little two-year-old. Come on, you're kicking and screaming, we're leaving Disneyland. Come on, you're going, you're going, but you're just not going happily.

That's a word. You're not going with joy, you're kind of being pulled. So Paul said, Lord, they know that in every synagogue, I imprisoned and beat those who believed on you, and when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death.

God called Paul, who consented to the murder of people. He can use you, no matter what your past is, no matter what you've been through, God can use you. He actually wants us to come as we are, that wonderful song, come as we are, let Him clean up.

Let Him clean up and renew your character. I was also standing by consenting to his death and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him. But then God said to him, depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.

So Paul is, you've called me to this area, or at least, well he didn't call, but he goes, I think you called me to this area, I'm going to preach to the Jews, they can relate to me, and God says no, go. So another part of God's will, the will of the Lord often does not make sense. Has anyone figured that out yet? Calling me to plant a church did not make sense at all.

Calling us to do certain things, that just doesn't make sense. Be careful what you say, you don't want to do something for God, you don't want to do something because you'll usually do it. Those people, I don't ever want to go in the mission field, guess where they're going? I don't ever want to work with youth.

I'll never go help in children's ministry. It doesn't make sense to our senses, have you ever thought about that word, senses? It doesn't make sense to our senses, sight, taste, smell, what we know, what we think. See we can only see a certain thing, we don't know, we're not all knowing, we're not all powerful, we're not everywhere.

God is, he knows the future, he knows, he doesn't live, he lives outside of time, many would say, and I would have to tend to agree, but he lives in this area of knowing what's going to happen. So he can guide us based on what's coming. Where we're, Lord it feels right, it feels right, I don't know what's coming, but trusting in God's will often does not make sense to our senses.

C.S. Lewis said in Gethsemane, the holiest of all petitioners, Jesus, prayed three times that a certain cup might pass from him, and it did not. It did not make sense to his senses how he was feeling tremendous anxiety, where blood was actually mixed with the sweat, and he was, Father take this cup, take this cup, it doesn't feel right to my senses. It doesn't, it doesn't, this is, Father, Father, but then he ultimately said, not my will but your will be done.

I like what Charles Spurgeon said, or Charles Wendall, he's still alive, said, when God tells you to do something, you better do it. He always has a reason. When the Lord makes it clear you're to follow him in this direction, focus fully on him, and refuse to be distracted by the comparisons with others.

My goodness, if we had time we could camp out there the rest of the sermon. We buy, we sell, we do things based on the comparison of others. Churches will look at another church and say, well they don't do

it that way.

We'll look at where we live, right, or what other people, we'll look at what they're doing and we compare. But when God calls us to do something, we must listen and do it. So that leads me to the next point, his will is obedience.

I know it's a given, I know everybody knows it, but it bears repeating. His will is obeying what he says to do. 1 Samuel 15.22, so Samuel said, he's rebuking Saul, has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.

See, God said, Saul, don't do this, don't do this, and he went ahead and did it, but then he made a sacrifice. But see, God saw my sacrifice, but yeah, but you still obeyed. It would be like me saying, but I go to church, but I preach, but I stop doing such and such, I cleaned up my act.

Yeah, but he wants you to stop. This area is his will. So this area he's telling us to do, we know we need to do it, we try to circumvent it, but I did all this, Lord, I prayed, I fasted, but hold on, just hear me out, I made sacrifice in this area.

I went to church and I sacrificed so many things, God says it's better to obey than to sacrifice. I often wonder how many, would it be better, now let's not try it, but to not come to church one Sunday and go through the motions of sacrifice and being here, but instead go and do what he's called us to do. That relationship that needs to be mended, that unforgiveness you need to release, that besetting sin that needs to be killed and conquered and crucified, no, God, I know you want me to do this, but I'm not, I'm doing these other things, to obey is better than sacrifice.

So that's God's will. His will is that we obey, that we obey what he says and he knows we are broken, we are imperfect, we can't do this, I don't want anybody ever left, be left here thinking that they can never measure up. God doesn't take perfect people, he takes broken people, submitted to him, wanting to do his will, broken and shattered with the crutches, with the broken leg, with everything and he says, God says, now I can use you, because you're moldable, you're teachable, you're flexible, I can use that, but we say, oh, I can never come perfect, no, me neither.

So let's not focus on that, let's focus on getting back in the center of God's will. And then Acts 24, now after five days, Ananias, the high priest, came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullius, these guys don't like Paul by the way, they gave evidence to the governor against Paul. They said, for we have found, verse five, that this man is a plague, a creator of dissensions among all the Jews throughout the world and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes and he even tried to profane the temple and we seized him and wanted to judge him according to our law.

Now none of that was really true, he didn't profane the temple, he was actually in alignment with things. So remember this about God's will, men will not always speak well of you. Men will not always speak well of you.

Your family will not always agree with you. And we get our feelings hurt, right? Well, that must not be God's will, they didn't agree, not everybody agreed with me. They won't, oftentimes God's will is controversial and challenging, it breaks people out of that comfort zone.

I mean, when we, here's an example, when we moved the church up here, it broke people out of their comfort zone. We heard a lot of grumbling and complaining. Some of it was mine, right? It doesn't make

sense and sometimes, oh it doesn't fit, many times we get upset because it doesn't quite fit my schedule, it's not close to my home, it's not convenient, it's not on the way.

So we make, our attitudes are affected by how it affects us versus God's will overall. Also remember that people will alter the truth against you. They will spin it, you ever hear that, the spin doctor? When Bill O'Reilly was on the air, he said, no spin zone, right? Spinning it, spinning it, the truth and we can get so worried sometimes, well they're saying this and they're saying this and they're saying this and we get so worried about the opinions of others and it's good to have a good reputation and be a person of character but don't let the spin doctors or the spin people in your life that are coming against you, throw you off course when it comes to God's will because people, many people will not be happy.

Now here's some areas of God's will that I wanted to share, 1 Thessalonians, that's always a hard one for me, 1 Thessalonians 5.12, this is God's will, he said, we urge you brethren to recognize those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, be at peace among yourselves. The reason he throws this out, the reason it's God's will is because, and I've learned this lesson the hard way, leaders are often the number one target for gossip and blame. If somebody's marriage is falling apart, it's my fault.

The church could have done more. The church never email every day, you know, and they can blame, we can blame those often at work or that are above us in leadership and different things and God says the will of God is be careful in this area, do not critique unnecessarily and because it's easy to blame, right? We need to blame shift if we're not humble, we have to blame on somebody, blame it on the spouse, spouse blames on their spouse, spouse blames on the kids, the kids blame on the parent and we just, we go around blame shifting. So the word of the will of God is not to do that, but to take responsibility.

Verse 14, now we exhort you brethren, that's a challenge, warn those who are unruly, warn those who are unruly. So as a church and sometimes we have to warn those who are proud, unteachable and eager to dispute. That's God's will.

So there's grace and there's mercy, but if somebody's constantly being that thorn in the side, right? We have to, you know what, you're unruly and we have to lovingly confront them from time to time, but we also comfort the faint hearted, those who are barely holding it together. We're there to comfort them, uphold the weak, be patient with all, see that no one renders evil for evil, but always pursue what is good for both yourself and for all. That's the will of God.

So are there areas that we're being convicted in right now? That means he's wanting to get us back on track with his will. Rejoice always, this one's hard for me. Rejoice always, not just an hour a day.

It should be an attitude of rejoicing, praying without ceasing in everything. Give thanks for the Lord for this is the will of God for Christ Jesus in you. Isn't it funny how these things are so crystal clear, yet we just ignore them? Now I want to know God's will on the meaty stuff.

I don't care about the lettuce. I want the God's will on the big stuff. What college do I go to? Do I sell my home and move into this? Do I move here? Do I do this with my kids? Do I get my kids involved in this? Should they go to charter school, Christian school, public school, home school? I want the big, big, meaty stuff.

And God says start with the salad, what we call the salad. He's saying start with what you do know. Think about this, always rejoicing, praying without ceasing, and everything gives thanks for the Lord for this is the will of God.

This, my friends, is an attitude adjustment. This is about attitude. So next time we think that grumbling and complaining is okay, and not being, you know, oh this, and woe is me, we're out of the will of God.

We should be thankful and joy-filled. That's the will of God. Now it does take some mental exercising, doesn't it? Because that grumbling and complaining comes in, and the mental exercising says, no, bring it back.

Bring it back to what God's will says. So quick test, are you thankful, or are you known as a person who complains? Are you joy-filled, or do you grumble and complain a lot? And you know my answer to those who don't know, just ask your spouse. Ask your family.

Ask your friends. Am I joy-filled? George MacDonald, not the one who had a farm, a different one. George MacDonald, doing the will of God leaves me no time for disputing about his plans.

This is so true, the more we are doing for God, when you're in God's will, say at the hospital homes, or involved in ministry, or going out doing things, or just busy doing the will of God, you don't have a lot of time to sit and be a nitpicker, and complaining, because you're busy doing the will of God. You're going here and there, you're just worried about what God's called you to do. And actually, excess time on our hands leads us to the bad attitudes often.

Idle hands are the devil's, right? Playthings, toolbox, whatever you want to say, idle minds, same thing. Do not quench the spirit. So here's God's will, do not quench the spirit.

Do not despise prophecies. Test all things, hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

My goodness, his will is crystal clear. Do not quench the spirit. Do not put out the fire of God in our lives.

Do not despise prophecies. Prophecies are the gift of communicating revealed truth. If truth is revealed to you, don't despise it, don't discard it.

Embrace the truth of God and what he's trying to do in your life. Now the next point of God's will, and I'll hurry up and get through this, is waiting in God's will is his will. Waiting in God's will is his will.

Because many times we're waiting, we get impatient, right? Or just me. Come on, come on, come on, come on, I'm out of your will. I'm out of your will, something's not right here.

No, waiting is God's will. Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. Waiting in God's will, I actually pulled this from my Bible from 17 years ago.

I don't know where it came from, so I can't take credit. But it really has helped me in this area, waiting in God's will. When prayers aren't being answered, when we're waiting and we're just getting confused, my prayers aren't being heard.

God, it seems like nothing is happening. Here's a couple of suggestions. Number one, this waiting time could redefine what you're asking for.

Could it be we're asking for the wrong thing? So as we wait, at least I know in my life, as I wait, I don't even know how to give you an example. Here, I'll give you an example. As I'm waiting, and this is an example, not a real thing, of course, I'm praying for Cold Stone.

But as I'm waiting, and waiting, that desire turns to something different. It turns to, yeah, raw yogurt with honey, okay. It turns to a good thing, right? This waiting time, it redefines my focus.

Lord, I want this. And the closer you draw to God, you realize my flesh wanted that. God, I just want you.

So that waiting time can redefine your focus. It can actually get you closer to what God really has. And I've noticed, I've explained this before, that I often say, okay, here's God's will.

He says, Shane, you're close. It's actually this door. Okay, I almost got it.

You know, it's like, it's right, and every time it's just off a little bit. Right, just, I knew he was going to give us a building, I just didn't think it was here, right? And we're excited now, I don't want to downplay that. But those things, okay, kind of, you know, that wasn't what I thought.

And I've told this story before, I don't know why I tell so many stories. And if it's too much, just let me know. But we actually live in a house that four years ago, we said we'll never live in that track.

But once you think you've got all these options, and then you're waiting on God, the market's getting higher, the price of homes are getting higher, you just want to get out of this rental, then it starts to redefine your focus. So the waiting time can bring you back to a good starting point. Also, God maybe has already answered.

We just don't see the answer yet. It's His timing, not ours. We always want microwaved chicken, don't we? We don't want to go out back and get the chicken and cook the chicken.

We want microwaved, we want now. Now, I want to know, Lord, what are you doing now? So waiting means He might have already answered, just wait. Number three, waiting time, it renews our fellowship with Him.

The more I wait on God, it renews my fellowship with Him. More alone time, right? Time, if you get your prayers answered, you're like, thanks, God, thanks, God. But if you have to travail and press in, go to the throne room and wait on God and bring in His Word, it begins to build that relationship.

So personal opinion here, I think many unanswered prayers are actually a wonderful opportunity for us to draw closer to God and get that direction. Then the fourth point, be more aggressive. God wants us sometimes to be more aggressive, to take action.

That's actually what faith is. It has to take action. When I've been praying about, you know, we did an atheist debate a while ago.

I did one at the college. And I was praying about that months, if not a year or two, before it actually happened. But at some point, I had to take action.

I had to, OK, Lord, are you doing this? I had to step out. Let's do this. Let's do it.

I had to take action. So we could still be waiting, had I not took action based on faith. And then the fifth point, deal with, and it's not going to be popular.

Sometimes the waiting time encourages us or actually forces us to deal with besetting sin. The thing that many churches don't want to talk about is the thing we need to talk about. James says that besetting sin can actually lead to sickness.

Besetting sin, taking communion and not examining your heart, leads to sickness, to weakness, and to death. When a person is caught in sin, caught in a transgression, the Bible says to go to them. So often, when we're praying for something, God could withhold that until we deal with this issue of our lives that He wants us to deal with.

It's OK for the church to talk about that. It's very healthy for the church to talk about this area of sin can prevent the will of God. We want God what you've, how many of you, don't raise your hand, but you feel, Lord, are you calling me to some type of ministry? Are you calling me to ministry? Do you want me to minister to the kids in this area? Do you want me to minister worship? Do you want me to go, Lord, are you going to use me? And if you're not dealing with a sin, as you say, of pornography, and it's going to continue, God's not going to open that door until that is dealt with.

Because He loves you so much. He loves those. He disciplines those He loves.

So besetting sin can keep us from the will of God. And then we see that Paul was in front of the governor Felix. He went in front of the governor.

He spoke the truth in love, and it cost him two years jail sentence. So he's in front of Felix. Acts 24-25.

And I am skipping ahead for those who are curious. I've got to finish Acts before the marriage series. That's why.

Now, as he reasoned about righteousness, so he's talking to Felix. Acts 24-25, he's talking to the governor. Can you imagine going to the governor of California? I would pay to have this opportunity.

And you go to the governor of California or the Senate in Washington, and he's reasoned about righteousness. It means he talked about righteousness, about self-control, and the judgment to come. And Felix was afraid and answered, go away for now, Paul.

When I have a convenient time, then I'll call for you. Well, let's not just assume we know what this is. Righteousness.

If you look up that word in the Greek language, the New Testament was written in Greek. It means the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain to a state approved of God. So how can we be righteous and holy and stand before a holy, righteous God? How am I going to be able to stand before God someday? Christ.

Nothing but the blood of Christ. That's the only way I can stand in front of God someday. It's not going to matter the church I planted.

It's not going to matter what I've done. None of that's even going to matter. What did you do with my son? What did you do with this sacrifice? So Paul reasoned to this governor about righteousness.

Because he often thought, I mean, when you're in a position of authority, you often think you are the cat's meow. You are just on top of the world. You are righteous.

You are holy. But Paul started to say, no, unless you know. And he explained Christ to him, I'm sure.

What about self-control? He talked to him about self-control. And funny, I'll talk about self-control or discipline. And people say, oh, you're just a moralist.

Well, what's the other option? No self-control? See, you either have self-control, which means controlling yourself, right? You know that. As Christians, you can say no. You can say no.

As Christians, no temptation has overtaken you. What you're going through is common to man. But God will provide a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

So we can say no. Self-control. The other option is no self-control.

We just do whatever we want. I don't know what came over me. Have you ever said that? I don't know what came over me.

But actually, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, goodness, thankfulness, all these things. Self-control. Self-control, to control.

And I think that's healthy. I think it's OK to tell people to discipline your body. Bring it into subjection.

Because it will tarnish your testimony. It will tarnish your character. It will tarnish what you stand for.

Paul said, I discipline my body. And that word actually means I bring my body in control and submission to me. I punch it.

It's black and blue. I beat my body. Now, don't do that.

He's not saying that. But he's giving an example. That's one of the wonderful things I love about fasting.

You will beat the tar out of your flesh. It'll say, mercy. I'm done.

I am done. You got me. Self-control.

When we're confronted by something online, or a situation at work, or self-control. The ability to say no and turn from something. That's godly.

That's His will. And the trap we can get caught into is if we keep giving into something, oh, the grace of God. Just gave into it, the grace of God.

The grace of God. That's abusing grace. God's grace actually makes me live under a higher standard, not a lower standard.

Because of God's grace, I live underneath a higher standard. God's grace doesn't mean I can excuse my lifestyle in any way, shape, or form. And then the last point, I'm closing on this one.

The judgment to come. Isn't it interesting? Jesus talked about the judgment to come. Peter talks about the judgment to come.

Jude is, read that book. Paul, and here we have in the book of Acts. Paul is talking to the governor about the judgment to come.

But nowadays, we seem to freeze up on that, right? We want, well, I don't want to get to that. Can I just tell them that Jesus will make them happy? And they just need Jesus. Why do they need it? That's part of God's plan.

Because I feel just, what they would call, people say, Shane, do you take the Bible literally? I take it literally when it's meant to be taken literally. I take it allegorically when it's meant to be allegorical, in some cases. Is the devil in Revelation really going to be bound by an actual chain? Like the chains you see that hang down from a ship, right? Hanging an anchor into the ocean.

Is the devil going to be carrying around this big chain? Is he really a serpent? So there's things in the Bible that are literal, and there's things in the Bible that God will use to explain His Word. But what I mean by that, I'm a literalist. Judgment to come.

I have no problem telling people you will be held accountable for your actions. See, eternity is written on our hearts. We've talked about that.

And we are born to worship, right? That's in our DNA. But we also have a sense of judgment, don't we? Most people know there is a day of reckoning coming. There is a day of judgment.

I'm reading right now David Brainerd's journals. He ministered to the Native American Indians in the 1700s. Incredible story.

He died, I think, at 29. And I mean, I read his journals. I'm like, I'm not even a Christian.

I mean, be careful what you read. It's good, but it's like, these guys fasted and prayed. Their whole life was, Lord, I don't care if I die ministering to these people.

I don't care if I'm eaten and cooked. Lord, just give me more salvations. Give me more salvations.

And just in their weakened state, riding by horseback. But he said it's interesting, a lot of the tribes, he'd go to the people and they knew. They could tell that, yes, there's a spirit world out there.

And hopefully, when you're good here, the spirit world, you'll be able to hunt and fish and ride horses and enjoy and have festivals all the time. That was their idea of heaven. Where does that come from? Because eternity is written on our hearts.

Judgment is written. We know that a day of reckoning, we know it. It's in our DNA.

So we avoid it. And God says, no, bring it back. Remind people.

I mean, Peter said, this is amazing verse. Peter said that judgment is going to start in the house of God. And he said if it starts here, woe be to the man who rejects God.

So judgment is going to start in the house of God. The refining fire of God is going to go through and look at our character, look at our lives, look at what we did. Did we do it for the right reasons? When the fire comes, is it hay and stubble that is burned or is your work solid as gold? You did it with the right heart.

The judgment is starting in the house of God. I believe it also starts here and this is where the wheat and the tare are separated. The sheep and the goat.

Is there really sheep and goats? No, see, allegorical, you're a sheep. The world is a goat, often. So judgment is going to come and bring these things to our lives.

2 Peter 3.9, the Lord is not slack. I mean, the Lord is not lazy. He's not slow to act concerning His promise.

He is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. That's the will of the Lord. The will of the Lord is that none should perish.

I just read an interesting article. It said two-thirds of Americans say they are sinners, but only a minority depend on Jesus. You see, this is God's will.

This is God's will to depend upon, to hope and to trust. That's God's will for your life. So I'm gonna end on these two points.

Do you know Him? Are you truly trusting in Him? Have you repented? Have you believed? Are you aware that there's a judgment to come and you are knowing you're going to stand before God? And you can say, yes, I'm a little nervous. There's fear in there, there's trepidation, who wants to die, right? God has also given us that. I believe that God has put that in us so we don't all just go kill ourselves.

There's a little, hey, I wanna see my kids grow up. I wanna do more for the kingdom of God. That's healthy.

But when I stand before God, I'm ready because of what Christ has done. I'm banking on that. But there's some in this room who are not ready, possibly.

Many who will be listening later who are not ready. The judgment to come. We're not even guaranteed next week.

We're not guaranteed getting home. There is a judgment coming where you will stand before a righteous, holy God, and you'll have to give an account for your actions. You will not say, well, my spouse said, well, here's what Pastor Shane said.

Come on, Mom and Dad, can you come with me? No, you'll have to stand before God and be judged based on what you've done. But we don't trust in our works. I did this, I did this, I did this.

We trust in Christ's finished work on the cross. And if you're not trusting on that this morning, I would encourage you to do so. During worship, pray and say, God, that's what I need.

I need that righteousness. Because that's what you're really doing. You're taking on Jesus's righteousness.

It's called imputed righteousness. We take on the righteousness of Christ. It's amazing.

That should transform your worship. That should transform the way you read the Bible. That should transform how you treat people.

Because you're taking on the righteousness of Christ when you leave here, if you know Him.

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