

# God's Road Map for Success

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman's sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's wisdom and guidance as a roadmap for success, particularly for mothers and all believers.*

**Duration:** 45:18

**Scripture:** Proverbs 31:10, Jeremiah 6:16, James 1:5

**Topics:** "Faithfulness", "Trust in God"

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## Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the significance of mothers and their reflection of God's heart, highlighting their compassion, love, and understanding. He discusses the importance of staying close to God for success, urging individuals to seek wisdom and direction from the Scriptures. The sermon also addresses the challenges of life, the power of pain, and the necessity of trust and obedience in relationships. Ultimately, Shane encourages everyone to focus on God's faithfulness and to recognize that true strength comes from surrendering to Him.

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## Transcript

I'm taking a detour from Matthew, as you know. It's Mother's Day today, of course. And I would be remiss if I didn't, of course, acknowledge my mom, who's here tonight.

And just thank you so much for the years invested in me and your prayers and your steadfast love is probably the reason this church was even started. So I want to thank you for that. And of course, I would be remiss if I didn't thank my wife as well for being a wonderful mother to my children and our children.

And you know, it's so funny, a lot of people don't realize this, but I know Morgan feels a lot of times that I wish I could just do more. And we remind her, well, you're doing enough with four little kids. I mean, that's a full-time job, which you mothers know.

And she's actually, she does a lot more than people think because she keeps the foundation together. I mean, it's two become one flesh. So I see us both leading this church.

You know, just because she's not seen a lot on the women's ministry or different things doesn't mean it doesn't play a very important role. And I want to thank you for that. It definitely means the world to me.

It helps keep me together. Because a lot of people wouldn't let me get up at four in the morning and spend a lot of time praying and seeking God. And she takes the kids.

And you know, I know you need to study. And just the way that God would put us together, pastor's wife, knows exactly what I need. Because it's not an easy job.

It's not an easy calling. It will tax you. It will burden you.

It will challenge you. And the devil's got his sniper rifle aimed right here every day. I know that.

See, the secret behind success is staying close to the Savior. And staying broken and staying humble. And saying, if it wasn't for the grace of God, there go I. And not walking around thinking something will never happen.

Because it can. If we don't stay close to the Savior. Matt, I'm getting a lot of background or Chris reverb.

I don't know if it's me or not. But we truly see the heart of God in mothers. And I wanted to take a break from Matthew and just acknowledge mothers.

And just thank you for that. Because we do see the heart of God in moms, do we not? The compassion, the love, the understanding, the forgiveness. I've told you before, when my kids get hurt, a lot of times they run right past me.

Mommy, mommy, mommy, mommy. When they're scared, they come and get me. But we see the heart of God in moms.

And we do want to thank you for that. But I didn't want to leave the single people hanging as well. So a lot of this is going to be relevant to singles.

It's going to be relevant to men as well. Because any time you can look to God's word as a roadmap. And that's why I titled this message, God's Roadmap for Mothers.

I'm often reminded of Jeremiah 6.16. This is what the Lord says. Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths.

Ask where the good way is and walk in it that you may find rest for your souls. And in a culture now where, as I said last week or two weeks ago, Americans are snapping by the millions with depression and anxiety. And everybody's looking for that elusive rest for the soul.

God says, it's right here. It's right here in my word. I have laid it out for you.

That's how you find rest for your soul. It doesn't mean we'll just sit at home like we're on an island vacation. But it means that we have rest inside.

Because why does the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, why does that guard some of our hearts? Because we've learned to focus our mind on Him, to trust in Him. That's where that true peace and contentment comes from. So I will tell you tonight, as a living witness by the authority of God's word, if you lack peace, a lot of times it has to do with our spiritual condition.

He told that the prophet wrote of God's peace saying that those who keep their mind on you, their mind on you and they trust you, you will keep that person in perfect peace. Where do we get in trouble? Right here. We start thinking this and thinking that and thinking things that are not godly, things that are not of a biblical perspective.

When we get our minds off of God, we get our minds off of trusting Him, and then anxiety comes in, right? That anxiety, have you felt that anxiety before? It's not fun. The financial crisis, this, this, economy and our jobs, if we would just realize that God holds the universe as it were in the palm of His hands. He created life.

He puts planets in their positions. He told the sea, here's your boundary, no further. And we're gonna worry about these little things in our lives, when a lot of times these things come into our life for a reason, to point us back to Him.

Not to run and get all anxious and fearful. And I'm often reminded that in Jeremiah, if you want rest for your soul, you've gotta, when you stand at the crossroads, you've gotta ask for the ancient paths. Where are the good paths? Where's the old truth? Because there's no new truth.

If it's new, it's not truth. So we have to ask for those paths. And in the heart of many people, rest is elusive.

Well, actually, rest is elusive for many people, and a weary body is usually a sign of a foggy mind. Right? When we get weary, we get foggy spiritually, mentally. And I like what Warren Wiersbe said.

Christians pride themselves on not being worldly, but at the same time, we join the world's rat race and compete with each other. Don't we? We're so good at certain things, but then when it comes to the world's rat race and keeping up and measuring ourselves, and especially moms, on Mother's Day, we measure ourselves. Well, she's got a live and hone nanny, and she doesn't have to do this.

We start to compete. We start to compare with each other. But let me offer hope for everyone in this room tonight.

There is hope in Christ. There is hope. That's what this whole message of Mother's Day is really pointing at, that there is hope in Christ, hope and redemption.

But how often do we hear that? How many ears did that just go through and come out the other side? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I've heard that. I've heard that a million times.

Well, what happens is we get sidetracked with these bumps in the road, don't we? And I was just reading the other day when Paul had a thorn in his flesh. The Bible doesn't tell exactly what it is, but Satan came to buffet him, to challenge him. There was something that Paul wanted removed.

He wanted this removed, and he kept praying for it and praying for it, and God finally came back and said, my grace is sufficient. I'll give you the exact verse here. It's 2 Corinthians.

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. God's power is made perfect in weakness. See, that's something we don't quite understand, and I had a good analogy of it this week with my little Gracie.

She's about four now. She just runs to me, daddy, daddy, and she's light. I don't know what she weighs, 20 pounds, but I just pick her up, and in that weakness, she feels my strength.

I'm carrying her around. I'm holding her high. I'm moving her around.

She's just totally submitted and surrendered to that. This weak, fragile body that I can pull up and put up with one hand. See, in that weakness, that's where you learn the strength of God.

He comes in and He fills those areas. And the contractors will know this. When you put up forms for footings and for foundations, you can just kick those boards down.

They're weak. There's nothing there. But after 10 yards of concrete, and that concrete comes in and pours in there, you take those boards down.

You can't touch anything. Because in that weakness, in that weak moment, those structures, the power came in in that concrete form in the same way with God. If we think of in our weakness, that's when His strength comes out.

See, the more we depend on Him and trust in Him, the more that strength comes out, and we begin to rely on Him, and we know Him as provider. We know Him as sustainer. We know Him as everything.

So that's what Paul was saying there. I will not boast in anything except in my weaknesses. And it's funny there, that word, my power is made perfect in your weakness.

We think of perfect as morality, right? Perfect. Well, actually what it means in the Greek language is being complete and fulfilled. So you could read it this way.

My power is complete and fulfilled in your weakness. Because when you are weak, God is strong. And that's kind of like an oxymoron.

We don't quite understand that because we've been raised in good old America. A proud American. You see that on bumper stickers.

The problem is we were not called to be proud Christians. And that pride comes in, and it doesn't allow God's Spirit to flow through us. And I can tell you too, in moments of weakness, we say, Lord, I don't know how I'm gonna get through this.

I don't know where the next check's coming from. I don't know where I'm going to live. I don't know how the situation's gonna change.

Whatever it is, you fill in the blank. In that moment of weakness, when you give it to God, He gives the best to those who wait on Him. That's where that strength comes from, in waiting on Him.

So the first stop, I'm talking about roadmaps here. Roadmaps for mothers and, of course, fathers. I wanna give you guys just some crystal clear points.

They're not gonna be new, obviously. It's gonna be going back to the old paths, ask for the ancient paths. And that's how we get back on track.

A lot of times, do you realize that you get off track when we get away from God's Word? And all we have to do is pull us back. As many of you know, I'm helping coach Little League right now. My kids are on the teams, and our Saturday mornings are filled with this.

And it's always funny, sometimes you'll see the second baseman, he's over on shortstop, or he's out in left field. So we have to teach him, look where the bases are. There it is.

Position yourself. They're way up, they're almost at the pitching mound, and first base is way back here. No, see, there's first base.

See, you have to have things that you can draw back to to get you back in alignment. So we show them where those bases are. And God's Word is the same way when we get off track, when we get discouraged, when, man, the enemy's coming against me.

And guess what? He's gonna be coming against you every single week. Every single day, he's coming against you. So the best way to do that is to get back on track, the roadmap.

So when you're lost, right, you ask for directions. And as a man, I've never understood that image of men never wanting to pull over and ask for directions. They'll drive for an hour or two.

Ask my wife how long I'll drive when we're lost. About five minutes. I'm the opposite.

As soon as I know I'm not going in the right direction, pull over, I need directions. Why? Because I wanna get there quicker. I don't wanna waste a lot of time driving around.

I'll admit that I'm off track. I need to get back in going the right direction. And that's what we have to ask God tonight.

We have to say, Lord, I want direction. I want to get back on track. And James 1 5 sticks out to me.

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. How often do we forget about that? If any of you lacks wisdom, do any of you lack wisdom tonight? You're wondering, should I date this person? Should I not? Should I move here? Should I not? Should I sell this? Should I not? Should I not? Should I invest here? Should I not? Lord, help me in my marriage. Help me with these issues.

He says, if you ask for wisdom, the Lord will give it to you. If we ask for wisdom, if we truly want it. However, you'll see what I put in the first stop here.

Ask for and obey the directions. Because see, a lot of people ask for the directions. But I'm not gonna blabber the point.

What do I often say? The power is in the application. So we have to ask for and we have to obey the directions. And I wanna finish the rest of this verse that I read earlier.

This is what the Lord says. Stand at the crossroads and look and ask for the ancient paths and where the good way is and walk in it and you will find rest for your souls. That's where I stopped, right? Guess what? The verse keeps going.

But you said, we will not walk in it. Oh, that was such a nice verse five minutes ago. You see how you get the other side of it.

So God's saying, ask for these right paths, ask for the direction. But then he said, but you said you will not walk in it. So that's the first, if you wanna call it signposts for men, for women, whatever your situation, you have to ask for directions.

Say, Lord, show me, give me directions. I wanna seek you. But I want to know more.

And then I'm going to obey the truth you revealed. Because a lot of people ask and they understand, but then it's in that obedience that they don't wanna do it. And that's gonna lead me right to the next point on

this.

The power of pain. And I've recommended two good books I actually just picked up this week. I wanna recommend if you're going through, and this is such a hard topic because you talk about pain.

That could be loss of a loved one. That could be a breakup in a marriage. That could be, you just found out you have cancer and you need to start.

I mean, it's such a broad area. But these books tackle it pretty well. And I wanna just throw it out there.

It's called, Glorious Ruin, How Suffering Sets You Free. And it's Billy Graham's, I think, nephew. I can't pronounce his last name.

But it's Tullian Chachavian, I believe so. It's at the Family Christian Bookstore. It's also How to Handle Adversity by Charles Stanley.

I just wanna throw those out there because they bring this point home. A lot of people are dealing with pain. They don't know what to do with it.

So usually what happens when you don't know how to deal with pain, guess what happens? That root of bitterness comes up. Anger comes up. Anger is often a byproduct of pain.

I don't like what I'm going through and I'm gonna get very angry about it. That's happened to me before. It's a challenge some weeks as it is now.

But God often uses, the reason you might say, what in the world are you talking about, Shane? Ask for and obey the directions. Great, sounds great in theory, doesn't it? In theory, sure, that sounds great. But it's usually not until the furnace of affliction is turned up or the pain.

That's why I called it the power of pain. The pain usually causes us to go back and obey the word of God. Unfortunately, a lot of times we don't wanna do it.

We don't wanna do it on our own. We'll just keep kind of crossing that line and go as far as I can go until I hit that pain barrier and that draws me back to Him. Or it makes you more bitter.

And a lot of you have heard that story. It's been around for years of the old farmer who had a mule that could listen to directions. You know, sit, stand, go over there, all these different, well, I don't know how you'd stand.

Maybe up on his back legs. And one of the people that lived in the town did not believe this farmer. So he went out to the farm and he said, listen, let me see that mule that's supposed to listen and obey.

And he told the mule, sit down. Nothing happened. Turn around, nothing happened.

And the man from town said, I knew it. This mule doesn't do anything. It was just an old wives tale.

And the farmer just smiled a little bit, went over and grabbed a two by four and hit the mule on the head. And he said, sit down. The mule sat down.

Turn around, he turned around. And the farmer just looked at the guy. He just said, oh, he just need a little encouragement.

But isn't that true? Think about that. The two by fours. That's God's use in love, of course.

And it's a funny story, but it's true. I don't know if the story's true, but the principle's true. That's what I've called the hammer of God before.

It comes out sometimes, because we'll just walk this direction until that hammer hits that two by four. Oh, I don't think that's a redirection. And I'm not throwing all issues of pain under that umbrella.

Please don't get me wrong. Absolutely not. But a lot of times, what we're going through, God will use that pain to bring us back and redirect us.

And you guys, you've heard that verse, like we all have, that Paul said, oh, that I may know Him in the power of His resurrection. We love that part, but we don't like the other half. Oh, that I may know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering.

That word fellowship, *koinonia* in the Greek language, it's a coming together. That I may know Him in the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. You see, suffering and power have to have fellowship.

There's no way to know God in the power of His resurrection and pride and arrogance and everything going great. You've got to know Him in the fellowship of His suffering, what He went through. That suffering here draws us.

I don't understand the power of God without the suffering. Why? Because the pride and arrogance and the hammer of God comes in and crushes that. And now I understand the suffering.

Now I'm under tribulation. Now I'm going through things. Now I can understand the power of the cross, the power of Christ, because it's not until, as I said before, the olives are crushed, that that oil comes out.

It's not until you crush the grapes that you can drink the grape juice. So we don't know Him in the power of the resurrection without the fellowship of suffering. They are married, never to be divorced.

So to know God's power, to truly know that, allow the power of pain to change you and challenge you and draw you back to Him. So we must stop and ask for and obey the directions. That has to be the first call to mothers, of course, to men, to anyone in this room.

You have, that is step number one. Ask for and obey the directions. The second thing, trust must characterize your life.

Men or women, trust must characterize your life. You must be a person that somebody can trust. You want to go far in your business, be somebody they can trust.

You want a healthy marriage. I would say that mistrust probably breaks down more marriages than anything else. I don't trust that person anymore.

Of course, that leads to adultery and you fill in the blank. But this trust issue, and where I want to pick up is Proverbs 31. And I said I would speak on this when we ended Proverbs on Mother's Day.

So here we go. Trust must characterize your life. This is a, basically, we have to remember this too.

This isn't necessarily being written to women. This is being written to, the writer of Proverbs is writing to his son, basically saying, who can find a virtuous wife? Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. So in chapter 31 of Proverbs, verse 10.

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her. So he will have no lack of gain.

She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. See, there's security in trust. There's security in trust.

And when that trust is breached, when that trust is damaged, it takes a long time to rebuild. It's been said often that forgiveness is a decision. Right? I can forgive you.

I can forgive you, I can forgive you. But trust is a process. See, the Bible just commands us to forgive.

Not necessarily to trust right away. Even though trust is a characteristic of true love. Love is patient, love is kind.

It doesn't envy, it doesn't boast. It's not rude. When it gets to the end, it says, love always trusts, love always hopes, and love always perseveres.

But this issue of trust is so important that I don't know what your situation is, but if you can begin to build and foster love and trust, do it now. Let your yes be yes. Let your no be no.

Don't be sneaky. Don't be hiding things. Don't be doing this.

Build trust into your marriage. If you're single, build trust now. Because you don't step to the altar and say, I do, and then now you're a person of trust and people that your wife, your spouse can trust you.

And it's good to open up with your spouse sometimes and others and say, listen, I'm struggling in these areas. I need help. And so we find that she is a woman who can be trusted.

And notice how it says, who can find? Who can find a virtuous wife? It almost implies that they're not out there. It's very hard to find. So it's implying searching.

There's a searching on that. And when I used to teach on singles conferences and on dating and different things, this would be a pivotable verse because there's safety there in finding a virtuous wife. Now what else this tells me is where you search is what, or where you, I'm sorry, let me write that.

Where you search is what you find. So when it comes to this issue of dating, where you look is what you find. You're gonna find her at schoolers or church or him.

You fill in the blank. So this quality of virtue, this issue of trust, there's a wife that can trust him. That's a high quality there.

Trust leads to rest to your soul. So that's the second thing we see here. Trust must characterize your life.

And I don't wanna minimize that because it's so vitally important. The third stop, what do we find? The next verse, she is hard working. Yes, women can be hard working.

That's a good thing. She seeks wool and flax and willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ships.

She brings her food from afar. She also rises while it's yet still night and provides food for her household and a portion for her maidservants. She considers a field and buys it.

For her profits, she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good and her lamp does not go out by night.

She stretches out her hands to the distaff and her hands hold the spindle. Now we might say, what in the world is this talking about? Well, back then, that's how you had to work. You had to make your clothing.

You had to do all these things. You had to weave these things. You had to sew.

So in practical application, a couple things I pulled from this. Number one is she does not complain. She works willingly.

She works hard. See, that's a characteristic of a Proverbs 31 woman. She works hard.

She doesn't complain. It's that gentle spirit guiding her decisions. The next thing I want to highlight for sure is, do you know that moms have the hardest jobs? By far.

Not only is the majority of the time spent usually rearing the children along with the father, of course, hopefully, in ideal situations, but her time is also spent not only raising them and nurturing them, but then providing for the house. Getting things ready and the kitchen. And there's no recognition.

There's no paycheck at the end of the week. Is there? There's nothing. That's why I've seen so many moms or women who have a hard time or women who feel beat down because they're just being ran through the mill.

They can't bear it anymore. They're almost at their wits end. How much longer can this last? There's no recognition.

There's nothing. That's why I go back to the first point that His power is made stronger in our weakness. It's through our weakness that His strength comes out.

That's why that is vitally important. And she is not lazy. She rises while it's still yet night out and she prepares for her house.

Now on this note, since even though we're on Mother's Day, I want to say something briefly to men. Men, wives are often a reflection of you. Our wives are often a reflection of us.

So if we have a tendency to be lazy and complaining, guess what's going to happen? You might see those same attributes in her. It's often a reflection of how we are. So before you beat up on them, we've got to look inside of our hearts.

Are we lazy? Are we complaining a lot and critical? Because men can control the spiritual temperature of their homes very easily. If they're being men that can embrace their wives and love them through anything and be there for them and encouraging. That's vitally important.

The fourth stop after that, after we have trust, asking for directions, all these different things. The fourth stop from Proverbs 31 is compassionate and resourceful. She's very compassionate and she's very resourceful.

Verse 20, she extends her hand to the poor. Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household.

Why? Because she's prepared. And for all her household is clothed with scarlet. She makes tapestry for herself.

Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies for the merchants.

Strength and honor are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come. So in a nutshell, this Proverbs 31 woman is compassionate. She's understanding, she's resourceful.

So as a red light, or not as a red light, but well, it could be a red light, but to those who are dating or courting or going to be dating the opposite sex, you have to look for these things. Is that person resourceful? Are they hardworking? And we often tell people, look at how a person treats their mother. Look at how a woman treats her mother and treats her father if you want to see how she's going to treat you.

The flip side is true as well. Watch how he treats his mother. Is there respect there? Because these big red flags that God gives us wisdom for beforehand.

So we see a virtuous wife is compassionate. She's resourceful. Strength and honor are her clothing.

What that means is, she's not worried necessarily as much about what she wears on the outside as who she is on the inside. That's what clothes her strength and honor are her clothing. That's how she gets through things.

The fifth stop, her words carry weight. She opens her mouth with wisdom and on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

She's not lazy at all. She's working hard. She's diligent.

She's keeping her family together. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also.

He praises her. Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all. So we see her words carry weight.

Guess what? The words of the husband carry weight too. Do you know you can build up the other person or you can tear them down? If we're just walking in our home saying you're lazy, you're this, why isn't this done? Why isn't that done? What's going on here? I can't believe this. I can't believe that.

I don't know why I married you. You gave me these stupid kids. All this stuff that comes out of people's mouths.

You can destroy your family. You can destroy your spouse. You can destroy your children by the words you say.

And these are not bullets that are easily retrievable. Once they go and do the damage, there's damage control. You just can't do that and say, oh, I'm sorry.

Forgive me. I'm sorry. I shouldn't do that.

And then you go on the next day, the next day, the next week. And these words, if you can control your tongue, man, that is a sure sign of spirituality as well. If you want to know somebody who's spiritually mature, watch how they control their tongue.

Very simple. James said it's like an unruly devil that tongue is. On one hand, it spews out cursing.

On the other hand, it gives out blessing. The tongue, it's such an evil thing that sets hell on its course. Because out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth is going to speak.

It takes very deep spiritual maturity to say I'm feeling this way, but I'm sure not going to say it. I'm just going to smile and look the other way. As my mom used to always say, as your mom too, if you can't say something nice, don't say anything.

Told you this wasn't rocket science. This is all practical application, but that's how you can begin to rebuild your relationships with this. Begin to build up instead of tear down.

You know what I found? Tearing down just comes naturally. Our flesh, by default, is critical. By default, if you don't do anything, you don't draw closer to God, you don't work on it.

Just by default, your flesh will begin to spew out evil things. It will begin to say mean, wicked things just because that's what's in us. So it takes that filling of the spirit, being broken and humble and seeking God that we're able to control those things.

Nobody's been able to master it yet, but keep trying, please. Because that is powerful, the words we say. And again, I put it here.

Husbands, are you building up or are you tearing down with your words? Myself included. We can either build up our home or we can tear it down just by the words we say. Well, I bring home a paycheck.

Well, that doesn't matter if your words are bringing death. That financial life pales in comparison to building them up spiritually, building them up emotionally. And that's our job as well.

The next stop we're going to talk about. The sixth stop. A proper perspective on life.

Now, this verse has been quoted many times before, but we must repeat it again. Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised. I'm going to read that again.

Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates. See, this woman who fears the Lord, her strength is in God.

Her strength is in God. A woman who fears the Lord understands that church is not a social club. It's a place to come and worship God.

A woman who fears God will help rule her house with the fear of the Lord, instilling that in her children, a love and a respect. A woman who has a fear of the Lord has to walk in integrity because she answers to

God. I want my kids to know that I love God more than them and more than my wife.

What? Absolutely. Because from that relationship comes a better relationship. From that relationship, I can father better.

I can husband better. From that relationship, that's the foundation on which I've built everything else. So we have to get them to know that we love God more than them.

You better hope your spouse loves Jesus Christ more than you, because that's the anchor that keeps everything together. And on that note, I tell people dating all the time, follow wholeheartedly after Christ and see who keeps up. If you're trying to find a spouse, you don't have to find a spouse.

You need to follow hard after God and see who keeps up. The problem is, here's what happens. I'm going to stop following God.

Right? We get too busy with other things. I'm going to stop seeking Him and just see what I find on my own. I wonder what this is.

I wonder what this is. Oh no, I'm not going to follow hard after God. God says follow Me with all your heart.

Follow wholeheartedly after Me. Just see who keeps up. Who can keep up with this race? Are they going to want a devotional time and time going to church and time spent not doing all this other stuff? You have to watch.

If a relationship with someone is pulling you away from God, you better rethink that relationship. That's not a biblical relationship. And we like to excuse it though, don't we? Well, I'm going to win them to the Lord.

Well, I know, Shane. I know, but at some point they'll become a Christian. Nice excuse.

You know why people usually say that? They're looking at lust, not character. Attraction drives most decisions in those types of relationships. I'm attracted to that.

I know it might not be quite biblical, but I'm attracted to that. So I'm going to follow that. And if anybody challenges that, I'm going to make excuses to validate that attraction.

So you always have to look for character first and foremost. Should attraction be there? Well, of course. I'm not saying that.

But it's the inner qualities of a gracious, humble, broken heart that should draw you to the person. I remember I met actually Morgan at Central Christian Church. They had a young adult study.

And I was greatly attracted. And I'm trying to weigh all these things, but I'm watching how she worships week in and week out. Is she bringing a new guy to church? Is she this? Is she there for the wrong reason? Just watching, watching.

How does she worship God? I said, can I keep up with that? So you have to look, even though the attraction's there, you have to look at the inner qualities of that broken heart. A woman hard after God. The Proverbs 31 woman, right? Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing.

Not saying they're not important, but it's a woman who fears the Lord. That's who's going to stick by me in thick and sand. That's who's going to stick by you if you lose a child.

That's who's going to stick by you when the doctor says you've only got about a year left. That's who you want with you. Somebody who fears the Lord because that body is fading.

All the stuff that used to be up here now on me has come down. It's like, man, in my 20s, it's hard now. But we get so focused on looks, don't we? Turn on TV.

Oh, look at all the magazines. I don't even bother looking at them anymore. Just check me out, please.

It's a bunch of garbage. That's all it is. I wonder why our young adults, especially preteens and teens girls, are having all these image problems.

It's because they're feeding on this constantly. That's what I need to look like. That's what I need to do.

That's what I need to... They're feeding on the wrong things. They should be feeding on this. If you had your daughter reading this every day instead of watching 50 Cent on MTV and comparing, what do you think? Charm is deceitful.

Beauty is passing. But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Fear also involves listening and acting. A woman who fears the Lord also acts upon what she knows to be right. And I often hear people say this, and please don't take this wrong.

I almost thought about not even saying it, but the point is important. A lot of people say, and I appreciate it, and a lot of times they're absolutely right, but they'll say, I felt so touched during that service. Okay, that's a good thing.

But God's not as much concerned about how much we're touched as how we act when we leave. So was I touched enough to the degree that now I'm going to change and treat my spouse better and repent of these things? Oh, no, I wasn't. Well, then you had an emotional high.

You felt good. It's like you went to therapy. I repented.

Oh, I feel much better. I'm leaving. I was so touched, but nothing changes.

So it's not just being touched. It's actually going out and acting on what we know to be right. And that's kind of the lead-in to next week because guess what we're talking about in Matthew next week.

John the Baptist comes on the scene saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That's exactly what that word means. That's exactly what it means.

I was walking one direction. I'm walking this way. I'm now turning.

I repent and now I'm walking this direction. That's how you really gauge if somebody's changing. You can't gauge them by, oh, this lip service.

You can't gauge them by I had a feeling. I just felt so this. Are they changing? Because a truly repentant person changes.

That's the word repentance. If it doesn't change, then Paul calls it carnality, lukewarm living. And that's for next week.

So I hope to see you next week for sure. But I want to close this out with this last stop because this is the most important. You've got to focus on his faithfulness.

Now be careful on this point, could be going out in one ear and out the next on this one too. Bah, bah, bah, bah, bah. Yeah, continue.

Yeah, okay, Shane, whatever. I've heard that before. But think about this.

Focus on his faithfulness. A sure sign of drifting. If you know you're drifting from the roadmap that God laid out, a sure sign of it is criticizing and complaining versus being thankful and joyful.

Because if you're truly trusting his faithfulness, there's not a lot to criticize. See criticism, just preaching to myself here, criticism comes from a dissatisfaction, there's a dissatisfaction in us. We're criticizing, we're angry, we're upset.

So that's gonna come out. So a faithfulness, trusting in him. Stop looking through the lens of the culture.

Okay, let me say that to the women right now and the men. Stop looking through the lens of the culture. You know what that means? Well, I'm just such and such.

I just have a couple of kids. I'm a stay-at-home mom. We just beat each other.

Pastors do that. Say, oh, I'm a pastor. Oh, it's just a small church.

I mean, what? It's faithfulness. You're trusting in God's faithfulness. So do not look through the lens of the culture.

I'm just so-and-so. I'm stuck at home. I'm a nobody.

We look at the culture. This is what the... Let me drop a bomb tonight. Hollywood is depressed.

Hollywood is depressed. Moms with nannies that can sleep in and their nannies take care of their kids are depressed. Working women making 100, 200,000 a year are depressed.

It doesn't matter what you're doing. It's all in His faithfulness. It's in God.

That's where our strength comes from. That's our faithfulness. And I just wrote this down this morning, actually Thursday.

When I don't get recognition, I look to Him for worth. When I get discouraged, I look to Him for strength. When I feel anxious, I look to Him for peace.

When I get worried, I look to Him for guidance. And when I'm ready to quit, I look to Him for faithfulness. Faithfulness, He will never let you down.

The Bible says, He will never leave or forsake you. Of all the scriptures, you can look through all the scriptures all the time in history. There is not one time where God left somebody.

Said, sorry, I'm checking out. I'm going on vacation. You're on your own.

He's always there. He's always right there. That's why the Bible says, if you just seek, you will find Him.

If you just reach out, if you cast this burden that is heavy on you, if you just put it on Him, if you take My hand, if you take of My yoke, if you build on My Word, if you obey My Word, if you hearken diligently, if you listen, if you turn, if you conform yourself to this world or to My Word, you will be changed one way or the other. It's always a call back to Him. It's just one step away.

That's faithfulness. It's a God right there saying, I'm just one step away. Faithfulness is just one choice away.

Saying, Lord, I give You everything. I give You my life and my finances, these decisions, this rough plan I'm going through. Lord, You're faithful.

I'm not. And when you come to that realization, it will be very healthy for you. When you realize, as I did, and I continue to try to realize, I do not have the best plan cut out for my life.

I'm trying to pick the easy route. And I make decisions based on this or based on that. Well, God's faithfulness will never let us down.

So no matter what your situation is, single tonight, no kids, married, you're not married, divorced, mother, father, whatever your situation is, the message of the Gospel, the message of God's faithfulness is so strong that it goes out and it divides, or not divides, but it goes out to all aspects of the world, all nationalities, all walks, women, male, female, young, old, whatever it is, whatever it is, God's faithfulness is there. All you have to do is surrender and submit to Him. That's where it comes from.

It's almost like we have this and we're holding it. And God says, listen, give it to me. Like, no, no, no, I'm not giving it to you.

give it to me. Let me take it from here on out. And we give it over to Him.

That's faithful. That's trusting Him. And then we get in a hurry.

We're like, it's not happening quick enough. God, I better take charge. This isn't working like I thought.

And we get anxious. We get frustrated. We take it back again.

Give me this back again. And that's all faithfulness is. It's really just relying on Him on a daily basis, spending time in His Word and giving the whole situation to Him and being faithful.

And that's what a Proverbs 31 woman really is. If you were to boil all this down, it's a woman who fears the Lord, who's faithful. And as a result of it, her godly character comes out.

So you can't talk about godly character without talking about faithfulness and fully surrendered life and a woman who fears the Lord and a man who fears the Lord. They go together. Let me just end on that note.

Lord, I just thank you so much for mothers, Lord, not only for mine, but for every Lord mother that you've given us. Lord, you blessed us with them exceedingly. You showed us what your heart looks like through them.

Their compassion, their love, their understanding. Lord, I pray tonight for the moms that are feeling overwhelmed. Lord, even the dads that are feeling overwhelmed, the young adults.

Lord, begin to just pierce their hearts. Lord, rebuild their hearts tonight. Lord, have them trust you.

All their faithfulness, Lord, given over to you. Not in the stock market, not in the government, not in in Hollywood, Lord, but to look to you and you alone. I pray you begin to bless them, Lord, strengthen them, show them that real ministry, the real mission field is right where they're at.

Lord, that they are in ministry. They are in on the mission field. They're serving those closest to them.

And we thank you again for this opportunity to preach your word in Jesus name. Amen.

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