

Hope in a Hopeless World

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of seeking God to find hope in a world filled with negativity and despair.

Duration: 1:22:01

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 34:3-4, Psalm 139:23-24, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 40:31, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 11:28, Romans 5:5, Philippians 1:6, 1 Peter 5:7, 2 Peter 1:5-8

Topics: "Faith in God", "Hope"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of finding hope in a seemingly hopeless world, particularly for the youth. He discusses the overwhelming influence of social media and the need for young people to seek God wholeheartedly, using biblical examples of young figures like Josiah and Daniel to illustrate that God can use them despite their age. Shane encourages the youth to be diligent in their faith, to purge negative influences, and to understand that true hope comes from a relationship with God, not from external circumstances. He concludes by urging them to make a personal commitment to Christ, emphasizing that knowing God is essential for true hope.

Transcript

Good evening, everyone. A lot of people here tonight. And as you know, we are getting ready to launch the kids back here at the church, junior high and high school.

Is anyone happy for that or do you like the homes? And in doing so, we also want to meet some of the parents or grandparents and say hello, put a name with a face. So afterwards, we want to just leave a little bit of time for fellowship, get to know some of the newer couples. And if you don't know her, most of you know Pastor Abram, correct? And his wife, Erica, over here in the front.

And Layla, you're here too, all right. So you guys can introduce yourselves to them as well. He's the associate pastor here and works with the kids along with Phil and Carrie.

And it's just a good group of people. So they're up here and Abram's over here and Erica. So make sure to find them afterwards.

And my heart tonight was to speak to the youth, junior high and high school. And they also wrote down a lot of questions. I didn't realize it'd be two pages of questions.

You guys have a lot of questions. And if you have questions about what's going on in our nation as of tonight and with the election yesterday, maybe you can jot that down and hand it to Pastor Abram and we can help you answer those questions as well. But what I wanna do specifically is give kids hope in a hopeless world.

Anyone feeling hopeless out there? You look at the news and you have something today that I didn't have when I was growing up. That is called the media. I had to go out and climb trees and ride bikes.

And when I was 12, I think Atari just came out. Do you know what Atari is? First video games where this little ball bounces and you can knock out bricks. And I was even, my mom said, get off of that thing even back then.

And now it's just crazy. But not to mention Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, all those things that can really engulf us. And we start looking for likes, right? How many people comment on my post? How many people like my post? How many people share my post? And then there's a form of online bullying, right? Where people can make comments that make you feel bad.

I still get that too. I get a lot of online bullying with how many people follow our ministry. But the good outweighs the bad.

So what I wanna do though is meet you one-on-one. My wife and myself will answer some of the questions that came in right afterwards. But I wanna just briefly offer hope in a hopeless world to you guys.

And here's what you need to know. I was not fortunate to be plugged into a church at your age. I was running from God.

And we sometimes think as a teenager or even a junior high, well, God can't use me. I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know really what the Bible says.

I'm still young. But when we look at the scriptures, we see that God used young people. Daniel was young.

The three Hebrew boys were young. Anyone wanna guess how old Mary was when she had Jesus in her 20s? No? We don't know, so I'm not gonna tell you. But I would estimate, yeah, probably 16.

You know, a young girl. And we see also in the life of Josiah, King David. How old was he when he killed Goliath? I'm getting Samson and Delilah confused with David.

Goliath, you know, he was a young boy, could use the sling well. So God will use you, but there is a formula to that. You have to be a willing vessel wanting to be used by God.

And when I was your age, I didn't wanna be used by God. I was running from God. So there's hope in that as well.

If you feel distant tonight, if you feel that you don't know God, we wanna offer that hope. We wanna give you assurance because no matter what's happening in the world, if you are grounded to the anchor and you have that relationship, you will weather the storm successfully because you're grounded to the right source. But if we're trusting in our friends or on social media or on listening to the music today and letting that influence us, right? That can really lead us astray.

I mean, you might wanna not let Lady Gaga invest into you. I don't know, is she still popular? 50 cent? Did I say it right this time? Instead of cents, 50 cent. And I don't know all the popular ones, Billy something that was, you know, but that will influence you.

And when that area of media is in darkness and demonic, that will influence you. It will pull you away from God. And so we have to be very careful what influences us.

But I don't know how many of you remember last week when I spoke about Josiah, King Josiah. Guess what age he was when he became a king? Eight, eight. Now there's no eight year olds I know that should be ruling a kingdom.

But what happened in Israel's history, what they would do in the Old Testament is when a king would die, his next, the next heir, the son would be appointed whether he's eight or not. So they would, he was eight years old, but then priests there would mentor him and guide him and help him make right decisions. But then around 12 years old or so, as he got older, the Bible records something interesting that I wanna share with you.

Here's the difference maker. Here's the key. Here's what I'm trying to get to.

And as I often say, you might not hear me say this, but it will apply tonight. If you don't like what I'm saying, it's because you need to hear what I'm saying. Often, sometimes we don't like that conviction of the Holy Spirit.

But in 2 Chronicles 34, it says, in the eighth year of his reign, so that probably means he was then 16, eight years after his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the Lord. He began to seek the God of his fathers. And that word there, I've shared it before, seek, is there's a responsibility on our part that God is looking for those who will seek him.

If you seek me with some of your heart, you will find me. Does that sound right? No, even the kids know. If you seek me with all of your heart, with all of your strength, but Shane, how can I do that? That seems impossible.

And it is. In my strength, I do not seek God with all my heart. I cannot do it as a pastor.

I will fall short. But if I fall in the right direction, God, I want to seek you with all of my heart, with all of my strength, with all of my mind, with all of my soul. Lord, help me.

And you fall forward and you get back up and you keep pressing in and pressing. God doesn't say, Shane, you're not perfect yet. He says, oh, there's a heart that's seeking me.

And when he seeks me, he will find me. And you'll know the principles and the character of God. You'll know the right way to choose, the right decision to make.

And I know at your age, you're probably wondering, what is God's will? Do you ask that ever? What is God's will for my life? What am I going to be, an astronaut or a policeman? Am I supposed to get married? Am I not? The best way to know God's will is to know his heart, to know his nature, to know how he thinks, and it's revealed to us in his word. But the media gives us opposing views. They say this, God's word says this.

They say this, God's word says this. And that's why there's so many kids now struggling with suicidal thoughts, struggling with depression, because they're gravitating towards the darkness. And the darkness is never fulfilling.

It never fills that gap. It never fills that void. It never gives you peace and contentment.

It is hell bent on destroying you and your soul. That's the truth. The enemy goes about, the Bible says the enemy, the enemy of your soul, the devil goes about as a gentle dove, seeking whom he can land on.

The devil goes about as a roaring lion. The highest figure there the Bible could use, the highest beast, the king of the jungle, right? The beast that will devour it. The devil goes about as a roaring lion, looking for who he can devour.

But the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are seeking him, whose hearts are loyal to him. So here's the thing, both are looking for you who find you. The devil's looking for you and me.

He'd love to take me down. But God is also looking for those whose hearts are loyal to him. And who find you is the one you're seeking after.

So he began to seek the God of his fathers. And then because he was seeking God, he began to purge, purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Ashtaroah and Poles and idols. And what would happen is they gave themselves up over to false gods.

So they would worship gods. They would make these poles and there would be this Ashtaroah goddess or this bell and they would go and they would worship these things. And so he purged, he removed this idolatry from the land.

And that has to happen in your own life as well. As you're seeking God, you begin to purge, remove those things that are pulling you away from him. So sometimes you have to disconnect those relationships that are dragging you down, that are pulling you down.

And when I talk to young adults, teenagers, they say, but Shane, he's a friend. Well, they're not a friend if they're taking you in the wrong direction. If they're pulling you away from God, that's actually a friendship you don't want to be a part of if you're not strong enough to be the difference maker.

Now, the Bible also talks about being equally yoked. And we do use that for marriage, which you wanna be equally yoked, meaning the same beliefs, the same love for the Lord. But I believe that falls into all areas.

It can fall into business partnerships. It can fall into, do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. In other words, you're wanting to go to church, your friend is wanting to pull out the Ouija board.

That's not good. You're wanting to serve God, this one's wanting you to stumble. You're wanting to wait till marriage, this one's wanting you to become sexually active.

This one's wanting you to go to church and spend time with God, or you're wanting to, and this person wants you to hide and tell your parents one thing. Yeah, just tell your mom you're going over to my house. You know what that means? That means get into the dad's whiskey cabinet or do something we shouldn't be doing.

See this constant tension here of who to serve. But if you set your heart to seek God and you begin to purge those things that pull you away, amen, adults? Boy, that's a good word for us too as well. The things that are drawing us away from God.

So this is where it all begins, guys. It all begins right here. How do you spend your time? And who is influencing you? So hope, well, Shane, what does this have to do with hope? Everything to do with hope.

Because hope, well, let me tell you the difference. Do you think hope and happiness are the same thing? Happiness, do your emotions ever go like this? Excited, then down. Excited, then depressed.

Happiness comes from a word happenstance. And it means what's happening to us. So depending on what political party you are, some of your parents are probably not too happy tonight.

And others are, why? Because it's what's happening to them. Or parents are in a good mood or you're in a good mood. You just got a raise at work.

Some money came in, life's going good. Your little brother and sister are not bothering you. There's a special on Fortnite and you can play till three in the morning and all your friends are on it, you're happy.

Things are happening to you. But that falls flat on its face when you go through life. Because you have to have the joy of the Lord knowing God, I trust you no matter what I go through.

I have a relationship with you no matter what happens. My hope is in you and you alone. I'm resting in your sovereignty, not in the election.

I'm resting in what you're going to do with me and trusting in you even if I have to go through hell. As long as I'm anchored to heaven, I can get through this. I have great hope in who you are.

So what you're allowing to influence you either increases that hope for God or decreases it. It pulls you away. And the pull of the media right now is depressing and there's no hope.

And that's why kids are beginning to really waking up to this fact that there is nothing in this life. I am hopeless now. I'm bullied on Facebook or I'm bullied, maybe that's adults, I'm dating myself, right? What's one that you guys use? Instagram, TikTok? TikTok? TikTok, TikTok, TikTok.

Let's make a quick TikTok video real quick. But man, I've just seen some things. There's like, it's like just dark and wicked sometimes.

It's just evil. And those things begin to influence you and then there's no hope because you lose that hope. So how do you spend your time and what influences you? Just like Josiah, he spent his time seeking the Lord.

So if I were you, even though you might not feel like it, even though it might be difficult, the church has times where you can do that. Tell your mom or your dad, I wanna get to early morning worship at 6 a.m. on Wednesday or Sunday. I want to go.

Yes, it's gonna be hard to get up, but I want to go. I want to go to prayer meetings. I wanna seek God.

I wanna put on worship instead of ungodly music. I wanna hang around godly people who influence me instead of those who pull me down. I wanna watch movies that are gonna build me up spiritually, not all

these dark and demonic movies, these horror movies, the witchcraft, the occult.

It will lead to depression and hopelessness because it's evil, it's evil, it's dark. So like Josiah, begin to seek the Lord with all your heart and focus on joy and hope, not on happiness, not on what's happening to you. And then there's a great verse I wanna share with you in 2 Peter 1.5, but let me give you the context.

Peter says, peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God. See, the more you know God, the more peace that follows. The closer you draw to God, the more peace you have.

The more distant you get away from God, the less peace you have. So Peter says, let peace be multiplied to you. You've been given great and precious promises.

See, the more you're in God's word, you realize these great and precious promises. Did you know you've been given promises? If you know who Jesus Christ is, you have the promise of heaven. You have the promise that the Holy Spirit is going to lead you and direct you and encourage you and get you through the hardships.

You have the promises of knowing that God's word will speak to you and direct you. You have the promises of allowing God to lead you and have that relationship with you. Isn't that incredible? To have a relationship with God, to lead you.

So that's the context, and then 2 Peter says this. For this very reason, then, if you want this peace of God, if you want this peace of God, give all diligence. Give all diligence.

Don't worry, I'm gonna break these down. Giving all diligence. Add to your faith, virtue.

Add to virtue, knowledge. Add to knowledge, self-control. Add to self-control, perseverance.

Add to perseverance, godliness. Add to godliness, brotherly kindness. And to brotherly kindness, add to that, love.

I'm already tired just reading it. Shane, that checklist is way above me. I'm not gonna be able to do that.

Well, guess what? It's not a long checklist. They all flow together. You're adding to it.

You're adding to this. And then he says, for these things, if these things are yours and you abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. So you will know God.

You will not be barren or unfruitful. You will bear fruit. For he who lacks these things, if you lack these things, you'll be short-sighted, even blind, like groping around in the dark, double-minded in all your ways, unstable.

Do you ever feel like that? That's how we feel when we're not grounded in God's word. So he says, here's the list. Add diligence to your life.

Diligence. Okay, I'm gonna talk about some unpopular things. Because what we want is three hours in front of the computer screen.

Mom, make me a sandwich. Bring me Doritos. Let me just lay in my room all day.

Don't wanna do anything. We create a society, for a lack of a better word, we become lazy. Diligence is the opposite of that.

The definition is careful and persistent work or effort. So they say, yes, add to your faith, if you know Jesus, add to that diligence. It's going to take work.

Pursuing God takes work. Anything you do in life worth having takes work. So you have to add diligence to your life.

I'm going to work hard and I'm gonna seek God, and though there might not be fruit right then, the fruit comes later. Have you ever planted a seed outside and saw nothing for a while? Did you give up? No, of course not, why? Because you know the seed is growing. Same thing with that diligence.

So okay, I'm gonna be persistent in my pursuit of God. And then to that, I'm going to add virtue. What is virtue? It's a very high moral standard.

Your friends will make fun of you if you hold to a high virtue, to a high moral standard. I don't do things like that because I'm a Christian. I'm set apart for God.

I can't live like that because I want that relationship with God. So to your diligence, you add a high moral standard. And then to that, you add knowledge, which is getting to know God through his word.

So see, it just flows like a river flows. I'm diligent. I'm seeking God.

I have high morals. I'm learning and growing in my faith. And then add to that self-control.

Did you know you can't say no? You can say no, except for me with chocolates in the house. I do not have good self-control, especially if it's cold and dark and you can dip it in peanut butter. I'm already setting myself up for failure tonight.

But there is self-control. See, a Christian doesn't have to live a defeated life. I mean, I always give in, I always blow it.

I always give into this. I just can't. You can say no by the power of the Holy Spirit.

You can say no to things. So as you're growing your faith, you're seeking God, you're applying self-discipline, you have a high moral standard, you're being filled with the peace of God, it begins to abound in your life because what you're filled with comes out, the joy of the Lord. And then he said, add perseverance.

You're gonna need that these days. Perseverance, keep going despite setbacks. You keep going despite setbacks.

Parents too, amen? You might need this part more than the kids. You keep going despite setbacks. In other words, if I'm trying to get to that door and I keep getting knocked down, no matter what happens, I'm getting to that door, the narrow road that leads to salvation following Christ.

Persevering. And you need to know this today. If you lived in China and you were a Christian, this would be a little bit different.

You'd understand what could happen. But in America, there could be a time, especially in your age, where as you stand up for your faith, more persecution could come. Christianity is not a feel-good, it's not a feel-good, I don't call it religion because to me it's not a religion, it's a relationship with God.

But it's not a feel-good type of thing. It's not like your best life now and you're gonna make a lot of money and Jesus is your homeboy, can I still use that term? I'm dating myself again. All right, so Jesus is, he's your best friend, he's just gonna get me through life, he's gonna give me what I want.

It's not about that, it's dying to self. It's carrying your cross. But as you do these things, there is joy unspeakable because you're right where you need to be.

But I think we need to develop perseverance. Despite setbacks, you will finish. And something that has really shifted, I've seen this in the last probably 10 or 20 years, is keeping our word, persevering.

Even when, hey, I said it, I'll do it. A man's word used to mean a lot. Today it's like, I don't care.

I know I said it, but. And part of perseverance is keeping your word. And I'm going to finish this, I'm gonna finish my homework, even when I don't feel like I committed to it.

I'm gonna do the chores, I'm gonna do these things, I'm gonna persevere. And when you have all these things, then he says, add godliness. This is a little bit different than virtue because virtue is a very high moral standard.

Think of Jesus Christ. And we're to pursue that. But godliness is everyday decisions.

It's a good response. He's a godly person. They make good choices.

And it can, of course, be linked to virtue. And so you can see how this all pictures now. Peter's saying if you want peace, if you want it to be multiplied, you want to know God, add diligence to your life.

Get up tomorrow morning and read the word of God even if you're tired. Set aside some time for prayer. Yes, your flesh doesn't like it.

You've gotta tell your flesh, come on, you're going with me to prayer. I'm not going with you. I'm not staying in the bed if I don't have to.

I'm gonna be diligent. I'm gonna have a high moral standard. I'm gonna want to know God.

And you begin to apply these things. And then he says, as obedient children, now that you're obedient children, not conforming yourself to the former lusts means you don't go back to what you used to go back to. What God pulled you from and delivered you from, you don't go back to that former lust, meaning that former sin.

Go back to the old lifestyle. That's why the Bible talks about the old man and the new man. The old man is who we were when we did not know Jesus Christ.

And then the new man is this new relationship we have now in God. But guess what the old man keeps doing? Shane, come back. No, come back.

No, I don't want to come back. Leave me alone. Come back.

I don't want to come back. And so he said, do not go back to those old ways. Keep that path going as obedient children.

But be holy because he who called you is holy. Because it is written, be holy for I am the Lord. One good thing about holiness, what that means is you're going to look different.

So you don't want to watch the same movies that your friends watch. You don't want to get high like they want to. You don't want to do these things because you look different.

You're labeled. You're a child of God, a son or daughter of God. You're holy.

You're different. And from that, guess what? Holiness leads to hope. When I'm holy, when I'm set apart, when I'm doing God's will, I'm filled with hope.

When I'm out of God's will, I'm filled with depression. And then Philippians 1.6, being confident of this, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it out to completion until the day of Jesus Christ. You need to know this.

If Jesus Christ has begun a good work in you, a real genuine work by the Spirit, you're a true believer in Jesus Christ, that work will be completed. It's not up to you. Obedience isn't submission, but God will complete the work that he began in you.

And that gets you through a lot because, Lord, I'm not doing good now. I've made some bad decisions. This isn't working out.

I can't see the end result here. I'm struggling with depression. I don't know.

It feels like I've blown it. I don't know if I can get back on track. God is going to complete that work that he began in you as long as we obey and we get back on the right track.

And I love Romans 5.5. And hope does not put us to shame. In other words, if you hope in God, you will never be put to shame because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. And when you have the Holy Spirit, when you're full of the Holy Spirit, guess what flows out? Hope.

Hope in a hopeless world. So all these things, they go together. Getting back into God's word, giving your life again to God, seeking God with all your heart, putting away the old thing, the old sin, being holy, being set apart.

Yes, it's difficult, but at least I have peace. Yes, it's challenging, but at least I have peace. Yes, it's a battle, but at least I have hope because I know the direction I'm going.

And God can get you through. And then before we do the Q&A, I just wanna, there's a little catchphrase out there that's really, really important. And I just wanna ask just for a minute of your time, if you guys are looking at your phones, don't for a minute, okay? Don't text, you don't need to look at things.

This is important. If you know Christ, you know hope. And I'm spelling it this way.

Know God, know hope. If you know Him, if you have the relationship. But guess what the other one is? If you don't know God, if there's no God, there's no hope.

And I'll shoot you guys straight tonight. A lot of kids come to youth group. They come to church because their parents made them.

Or they go to Christian school. Or they do a devotional with their parents. Or they might have worship music on.

But they've never themselves repented of their sin and asked Jesus Christ to save them. Jesus, I need to know you. I need to know you.

I need to have a relationship with you. And from that will flow the hope. And I've seen so many people, they think that just being a Christian, you ask them, well, I'm a good person.

That doesn't matter. I go to church, I'm here tonight. That doesn't matter.

Well, my parents are Christians. Can I just go into heaven with them? All the things I said, I own a Bible. I study the Bible.

I read the Bible sometimes. But do you know Jesus Christ? Do you truly have that relationship with Him? If you were to die, do you know, yes, I will be with God. I know Jesus.

If not, think about that tonight. I want you to make that decision. Make that decision.

We'll just pray in just a minute. Just make that decision and say, I've been playing games with God. I've been sitting in youth groups smirking and making fun and poking fun and thinking I'm Mr. Tough Guy.

But you need to come to repentance tonight because there is no guarantee of even tomorrow. Where our nation is going, where the world is going, Christ is going to be your only anchor. There's not gonna be anyone else to trust in, not our parents, not our stock market, and you don't know what that is yet, but not in your retirement, you don't know what that is yet, but not in your money.

There's gonna be nothing else to trust in except in Christ and Christ alone. Do you truly know Him? Because it involves this, I'm repenting of my sin. I'm a sinner before God.

I'm repenting of that. Lord, I need Jesus Christ. I need to know God.

I need to know Jesus, really know Him. Because Jesus said, many will come to me in that day and say, we did all these things in your name. And He says to them, can you imagine Jesus telling you this? Depart from me, I don't know you.

Whoa. Now He knows who they are, right? Of course. But He doesn't know them and He doesn't have a relationship with them.

They never repented of their sin and embraced Him as their Lord and their Savior. And say, God, I need to be saved because of your Son. Save me tonight.

That's what salvation is. Guys, I don't know of anything more important than this. We're not playing games.

We're talking about the souls of men and women. So I'm just gonna do a closing prayer tonight. And if you need to do that, God knows your heart.

It's not in saying perfect words. It's not in saying a perfect prayer. It's God sees your heart.

So Lord, as I close out this message tonight for these kids, I pray, Holy Spirit, you would show them. Show them if they don't have a relationship with you. Show them if they're just playing games.

Show them if they're just trusting in the wrong things and just in being a good person. Show them they need you. And I pray that deep repentance happens tonight.

If that's you, you just say, Lord, I'm repenting tonight. I'm giving my life to you tonight. I'm seeking you with all of my heart.

No more games, no more playing around. I need to know who you are. I'm committing my life to you tonight.

And God will hear that prayer. In Jesus' name, amen, amen. And if you did that, I would love to meet you afterwards.

Pastor Abram would love to meet you as well. Let us know you did that. We'd love to baptize you at some point.

It's the most important decision you can make. So now we're gonna just move this over and get right to a lot of the questions that you've been asking about God and having a relationship with him. The first one, I think one of the most popular ones was how did you get through a task you did not feel like doing? Anyone relate to that one? Here's what is important you have to remember, that when we do things, and I have to do tasks I don't wanna do all the time, especially as you get older, that increases, is you're doing it unto the Lord.

So even from cleaning the house, I try to impress on my kids, taking out the trash, chore charts. Thank God for the chore charts my mom gave me because it gave me more discipline. So if you're doing it unto the Lord, and what you have to remember is you wanna do the best job possible.

My dad taught me at a young age that you want to over-deliver and under-promise. Over-deliver means you do more than it's expected and you under-promise. In other words, you don't build all this up and then don't do very much.

You do more than what's expected, you wanna do things well, and you wanna do it unto the Lord would be my short answer to that. Any comments on that one? Or are you waiting for the next one? Okay. You can start with this one.

Why did you turn to Christ? And for you, is it a gray glory altar call? Oh, check your phones. Um, I did because I just came to a moment of realizing that life was pointless without him, that I couldn't do, turn this way a little bit. Life is hard.

I mean, it just is. If you haven't figured that out yet, you will at some point. And I was just tired of trying to do it on my own.

And I came to the end of myself and realized that I needed a savior and he was gracious to be right there when I needed it. You can add to that if you want. I don't want you to feel rushed.

I don't feel rushed. Why did I turn to Jesus? My situation's different. God basically spanked me.

I was 29 years old and was very prideful and making a lot of money. And God just began to remove everything out of my life that I trusted in. And the long, the short version is, the prodigal son came home.

I was eating with the pigs, not literally. If you know what that means, you should read the prodigal son story. But just depression, despair, confusion, life's not working out, and just finally cried out to God.

And that's when everything really shifted for me. I think I knew him at 12 years old, but then I really drifted from him in my 20s. And so he, I believe that verse I read, he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

So sometimes he might use health issues to draw you back. Sometimes he might use difficulty. So if you're struggling with depression and fear and anxiety, don't take it to the enemy and don't try to hide from God.

Actually take it to the Lord and let that drive you more deeper with the relationship with him that you might have. Number three, how can someone not be anxious? Is it okay to be anxious as a Christian? You want me to open, you close it or? Yeah, let's do that. Okay.

How can someone not be anxious? Well, anxiety is, they know, is a, it's a reaction often, right? Because you're anxious about something. What's going on in our nation right now is creating a lot of anxiety for people. Other things.

So it's a uncertainty. It's really, it's based in fear. Fear and uncertainty.

So I'm anxious about something happening. And how can a person not be anxious? What everything I just said tonight really would help because the word of God calms you down and it makes you, the peace of God's word. And you start, read the Psalms.

Read the book of Psalms. Start just reading that a little bit every night. And I will talk about this because I think it's important.

It's where I was kind of have some expertise when I was younger is in the area of nutrition. So if you guys are eating tons of Doritos and monster drinks and energy drinks, that those things actually will really increase anxiety and stress levels because of caffeine. It's a central nervous stimulant.

It's a drug. So if you're taking those things and you're feeling really anxious and throughout the day and can't sleep, you really look at your diet because that can play a huge role on sleep and anxiety and things like that. So that's my two cents, not my 50 cents.

Cent. Just on a practical level, I'll share an experience quickly. I've had five babies and there's something called postpartum depression.

I don't know if you younger ones have heard of it. I didn't get it until the last baby. And after I had her, I spiraled kind of downward in that area and was very anxious, very depressed for a few months.

And really one thing, I feel like if you're in that spot, not of course from having a baby, but if you're in that spot talking to someone, kind of don't keep that to yourself because I think that's a trick of the enemy is to get us to think it's just me. I'm the only one struggling with this. No one would understand.

I'm in sin or just all these different things that the enemies can try and tell us to keep us to keep quiet. And so I would really encourage you if you are struggling with anxiety, depression, any of that tonight, just to find someone that you can trust. You can go to the youth leaders.

You can go to Pastor Abram, myself, Pastor Shane, anything, prayer team, and just bring it to light and let someone help walk you through it. Yeah, because we have a prayer team after the services on Sunday. You can go next door and have them pray with you.

And I probably should mention too, we believe in the spiritual as well. So there's physical things we talked about. You can have chemical imbalances, of course, where with anxiety and fear and depression, but there's also demonic attacks that I believe that can come upon a person and really give them that anxiety and that fear and that demonic type of oppression.

And those things have to be prayed through. You have to pray through those. You have to fast sometimes and really seek God during that dark hour and let God really restore that area in your life.

How do you stay hungry and cry out to God? I think I probably don't have to talk too much about this because I just preached for 20 minutes on it, but you have to remember this. Whatever you eat, you'll want more of, right? Whatever you're feeding, most of you don't want more broccoli, right? But did you know when you get off of sugar processed foods and all you do is eat God given healthy food, you begin to crave that? Your palate changes, you actually begin to crave what you're feeding on. So what I do is I read books at night on prayer.

If you wanna read books by E.M. Bounds on prayer or read the Bible or listen to worship music. So you're feeding on the things of God and that in turn creates a hunger for more of God. It's how you build that appetite up.

So how do you stay hungry and cry out to God? Same, basically. Okay, no new tricks? No new tricks, same old thing. How do you stay hungry and cry out to God? I think that question probably came from somebody who might be kind of dry spiritually, but I wanna just encourage you to just start and say, God, I'm dry.

I'm not hungry for you. I need help in this area. That's repentance and it's crying out to God.

And then you have to do those things even when you don't feel like it. Okay, I'm gonna read Psalm 1 today in a quiet area. Lord, help me.

And then you begin to read God's word and that hunger begins to increase. What if the parents, what about the parents are getting fed at church, but the teen isn't? What about the parents are getting fed at the church, but the teen isn't? Let me talk about that one first. Sometimes you have to ask the hard questions.

If I'm a cook and nine of my children are growing, but one isn't, it might not be the cook. It has to be the person. So sometimes you have to look at why am I not being fed? And it is the church's responsibility to feed people.

So that can be valid. But if your parents are getting fed, but you're not, maybe sometimes the messages could be, not applicable to you. It's not relatable to you.

And that's why we do offer youth for some of the kids. And then the next part of that question was, and is it okay for the teen to go to a different church? So, I mean, you can chime in, but on this, I would say, here's the thing, there's not like rules. Like, no, you can only come to this church.

Or if you're there, you can only go to that church. What a healthy church is, where the family comes, the kids come, and the family grows together. It's a united body.

So you're doing things together, you're growing together, fellowshiping together, youth group together. It's part of that. Now, if you're really getting fed at a youth group somewhere, like really getting fed, not liking the Xbox and all that that they do, but you benefit and there's something there, you're growing spiritually, and you really feel God is having you go there for that reason, then I wouldn't have a problem with them.

You know, they drop you off somewhere on a Tuesday, and then, you know, that's where you get fed at. So there's nothing like against that, it's just you have to wonder why you're going there. Is there a person there you're attracted to? Or do you like that they don't preach hard and you're not convicted? Those are not good reasons.

So you have to look at why you would want to do that. So do you have any thoughts on that, on the first part too? Yeah, I agree with that answer. The only thing I think I would add to it is be proactive to get plugged in and serve, because sometimes we get in such the mindset of, I'm just gonna go and I just need to be fed, fed, fed, everything needs to be geared towards me, I need to, you know, I need to walk away with having taken in everything, and there's not really an outlet for that, and a lot of times we are fed by serving.

Not always, because that can go to the far extreme to where you're always serving, serving, serving, and never being fed, and that's super dangerous as well. But for this particular person who's asking that, about how, if the parents are getting fed and I'm not, I would ask, you know, are you plugged in, are you serving? We have plenty of areas that teens serve here. We have a whole junior volunteer program for teens from children's ministry, nursery, ushering, sound and media, pretty much everything.

And so I think it's a good way to just jump in and get to know the family, you know, the church family, and get to know other teens. And then two, I would say pray. Like he said, if you're not being fed and maybe your parents are, then I would say you look at the church, because this could have come from someone at our church, or this could have come from someone, because I know we have kids that come to youth groups, this could have come from someone from a different church.

So I would say the first thing is to talk to your parents about it. Ask them, be open, be real with them, be honest with them, and then it's really an opportunity to trust your parents. Because sometimes, you know, they know a little thing or two.

They're a little older and have made some mistakes and have learned and grown, and God is putting them in a place for a particular reason. So it's an opportunity to trust their leadership. Yeah, I think the main question would be, why am I not getting fed? You know, what are you looking for? Ulterior motives, and just really take that to God and let him show you.

And if there's someone here, feel free to come and talk to us. You know, Pastor Abram, Shane, myself, we're willing and able and ready to help you out in that area. I desire to fast.

How do I know how long? And how can I handle someone saying that we don't need to do it, even if that is my parents? Hmm, gotta be careful on this one. I would direct you, we have copies. I wrote a book about this.

It's called Feasting and Fasting. So we have free copies you can take with you. It will answer the questions about how long, things like that.

But the quick answer is to seek God and to let him really speak to you, like, hey, no, I need to do this for a week. I need to do this for the day. I need to break this addiction.

I need to, you know, and God will show you how long to do that. And just so you know, people don't, you don't really, you don't die of fasting and starve yourself in a couple days. I mean, most of us, like, I could go probably 40, 50 days, 40 or 50 days, not even eating anything because of the stored, mainly, you know, fat tissue, but also, you know, it'll burn muscle if you go too far.

But that's a whole different thing. But, so how long? Take it to the Lord. Start with baby steps, maybe miss breakfast or lunch and kind of, you know, work yourself into it.

The reason fasting is so powerful is because you're starving the flesh. The flesh that wants more, wants Panda Express, Carl's Jr., Sweet Frog, all these things. And you're saying, no, I want to hear from God.

And anytime you make that exchange, you begin to be filled with the Spirit more because you want more of God. You're more hungry for God than you are of food. And you're starving those fleshly appetites for a season.

And people have went long times before. There's people in this church, I know a person who's went 40 days, water only. And so, you know, it can be done if God has got your heart on that.

But I would say respect your parents in that if they're not wanting you to do that. You know, or talk to them. If you say, man, I feel that God is really directing me to do this and leading me, I want to do it.

Can I at least, can I have your support for, you know, a day or two or, and so that's how you would handle with parents. But the other question is someone, you know, how do I handle someone saying we don't need to do it Here's a tip about fasting. Don't tell very many people.

Tell just who needs to know. Because you'll, oh, you don't need to do that. You're going to starve.

You're going to die. Most people don't understand fasting. So they're not, not parents.

I'm not talking about your parents. I'm talking about just people in general. You don't want to go to school and say, guess what? I'm going to fast.

What? You're crazy. And so you want to be selective with who you tell. Just real quick too on the parent thing.

If your parent is absolutely against it and says, no, I'm not going to allow you to skip a meal. You can fast other things. It's really giving.

I mean, it is typically in the Bible, you know, fasting from food, but you can, if that's your heart and you are under your parents' authority and they refuse to allow that, you can give up something else for the Lord.

And I think he would see that as just as acceptable because it is your heart offering to him. So you can give up junk food, sugar, caffeine, you know, whatever, video games, just do really clean eating, different things like that, where you're still honoring your parents, but you're still honoring what you feel like the Lord has called you to.

Yeah, you can do a partial fast. Number seven, why is purity so important to Jesus? And if you know you're going to marry someone, why does it matter to wait for marriage? Well, let me just briefly touch base on that. Purity is important because the Bible says when a husband leaves his parents and the husband and wife are joined together and they form a family, the two shall become one flesh.

So purity is so important to Jesus because God created it that the husband and wife come together and that's the union. So if you go giving yourself to this person and this person and this person and this person, you miss that bond of intimacy that is designed just for the married couple only. Now, many people have, are not, you know, they've messed up, let's just say that, and I believe God can still redeem that.

God can still bless those who want to get back on track. A lot of us here in this room, these adults, did not have a stellar perfect teenage years either and God had got us through it, but it's always God's best to wait for that because then you don't have these, it's just pain, it's painful, so you're avoiding a lot of pain by waiting for the right person. But then it says, the question is, well, why, you know, if you're gonna get married anyway, why does it matter? Here's the thing, with marriage, you never know if it's God's will until the day you say, I do.

So I tell people wanting, considering marriage, don't assume that it's God's will for sure. Go in that direction, pray for it, ask for clarity. You don't really know, you're putting that relationship on the altar.

Lord, is this your will? Show us, but when you step to the platform and say, I take this person to be my wife or husband, once you say, I do, now that commitment has been sealed. So that would be the short answer. You don't know for certain.

You know how many people that thought, oh, we're made for each other and this is great and then it doesn't end up like they thought and then it's awkward and then it's painful and then there could be an unwanted pregnancy and there's so many things. So God's trying to spare us the pain of giving ourselves over too early or to the wrong person and it's just not best to rush ahead because then what happens is you have two people both wanting to do the right thing and by the way, if you're dating someone who doesn't care about your purity, they're not gonna care about it once you get married either. Those kind of guys turn out to be sneaky.

So make sure they're, or girls too, sorry. So make sure they're concerned. Maybe they're not perfect, they struggle, right? But they're concerned about honoring God and when those two people decide to break that commitment before marriage, then it fractures the relationship.

Then it damages the relationship. Now there's not as much trust. Now they think they're outside of God's will.

Now it comes in depression, anxiety, is this even right? What did we do? We made a mistake. So it's always best to wait for God's perfect timing. I'll add a few things to that as well.

When I read the question, why is purity so important to Jesus? One thing that crossed my mind is because you're so important to Jesus and he created this, he designed it. He knows it's good, but he gave it a context and that context is inside of marriage between one man and one woman and for us, when we kind of push against that, well, why, why, why, why can't I, why can't I? We're trying to live as close to the edge as possible. We're questioning, we're basically essentially saying, I know better than you.

My way would be better than your way. My design would be better than your design. So I feel like for me, ultimately, it really boils down to, do you believe the Bible is God's word? If you really, truly believe the Bible is God's word, you take it literally, then you don't get a pick and choose.

You don't get to pick the scriptures that you like and question the ones that you don't like and you don't get to say, well, I'm gonna do this over here because I like it, but this one, eh, I think I have a better way because if the Bible is true, and it is, then we have to listen to all of it and he has given us that, I don't know if you call it a mandate or he's given us that wisdom for a reason and there's just so much that, I mean, you've heard the horror stories, I'm sure, of you've got friends who have messed up in that area, they're heartbroken, they are struggling to move on, all these different things, and then you take that into a marriage, that can be really difficult. Well, hold on, let me just look at my notes real quick because I had a couple of things that I really wanted to say. While you're reading that, I can say something too.

A person who is promiscuous usually, beforehand is usually promiscuous during marriage and it can end in divorce and adultery. So it's something you wanna harness now at an early age because it can really grow and if a person's bouncing around, this person, this person, this person, then they get married, why are they just gonna stay loyal to that one person? It becomes a very hard struggle. Yeah, they create a habit.

Yeah, and the Bible doesn't say, if you're almost married, go ahead. There's no path there, unfortunately. But a couple of things.

I learned this a while back and it has stuck with me. Really, intimacy, and there's younger kids, siblings in here, so I'm gonna pick my words wisely, but you teenagers, you know what I'm talking about and the one who asked this specifically, whoever that was, or I think there was multiple people who sent this question in. So you know what I'm talking about, but intimacy is really the one thing that separates marriage from every other relationship.

With your parents, with your siblings, with your coworkers, with your whoever, you laugh together, you cry together, you go to dinner together, you watch movies together, you, I don't know, go to church together. All these things you do with all your other relationships, intimacy is the one thing that sets marriage apart. So why not wait to make it special for that one person that you're gonna marry? I know it's hard and we wanna rush and we have feelings and all these things that are gonna come and go.

I get it, I understand, but if you can think like guys, if you can think that whoever the Lord's gonna give to you is a precious treasure, that is a gift to you, and you can protect her purity in that way, man up. Seriously, I mean, that's, sorry if that's harsh, but honestly, that's your job. It's her job as well.

I'm gonna get to the girl in a minute, but you be the man, you be the spiritual leader, you do everything Shane was talking about. You're seeking the Lord, you're honoring him, you're in his word, you're doing all these things. It's not how far can I get from what he's called me to, it's how close can I get to him, and then it's a joy and a pleasure to honor him in certain ways.

And then to know what's coming, like you have something to look forward to. Go ahead and look forward to it. It's true.

It's fine, look forward to it. And then I know you're probably like, she's going way too long. For the girls, I would just really, it's okay.

I won't answer anything else. This one, I just really have on my heart. For the girls, I would just really encourage modesty.

These guys have a really hard battle in this day and age with everything that is just thrown at them, and girls too. I mean, girls struggle with impurity and impure thoughts and all that stuff too, but I think we can really, and then a lot of girls, well, it's his problem. I can dress how I want and then he doesn't have to look.

Guess what? He does look, and God calls us to not cause our brothers to stumble. So really, we could step it up in that area if you're being convicted of that. And then on the last thing, I sound like you on Sundays.

Oh yeah, what is it? But wait, there's more. There's more. Another thing I was thinking of is, what did they ask if, oh, if you know you're gonna marry someone, you know that person, I will tell you a funny story.

I was engaged before I met Shane. Shh, don't tell him. And- I didn't know that.

You know- No, I didn't. We were gonna be married. So had we said, yeah, we're gonna be married, let's just go for it, then I would've carried that into my marriage with Shane.

There would've been memories, there would've been all these things that just aren't worth it. And so I'm thankful by God's grace we did not go that route. But yeah, like he said, you just don't know.

But God does redeem, because our pasts were not good. We didn't know the Lord in our teenage years really good. So we came to the marriage as broken people with pasts that weren't good.

But God redeemed that as we began to seek him together. And we said, even though my past is scarred with this, we're gonna do the right thing. And God, I believe, honored that for sure.

So you can always get back on track. Don't get so far deep down, like maybe somebody might think they're pregnant now. Maybe somebody might be doing things now.

God calls you back to him, and he can rebuild your life if you turn it back over to him again. So- We actually, and- Oh, go ahead. Really last thing? I promise.

Okay, because I just, something you said made me think of two practical ways to make sure, say you wanna stay pure, but you're just really struggling. You've got a girlfriend, you've got a boyfriend, and you're just like really struggling. So don't give yourself an opportunity.

Stay in groups. Don't be alone. We stopped kissing, I think, six months before we got married, because it, I mean, we would like, you know, give a little peck or something, but there was no more, like, kissing, kissing, because we did not wanna mess up in that area.

Yeah, that was funny. People laughed at us. I'm like, well, I'll just wait six months.

Because I, yeah, because we wanted to honor God. We're just on fire for him. We don't want anything.

We were so worried about making the wrong decision that we wanted to stay in his will. Number eight, how can I recognize pride if we don't see it in our own life? And can you share a deliverance of pride in your life? Let's talk about the first one. How can you recognize pride in your life? Well, here's what's hard about pride.

It's hard to see. That's why they call it blind spots. So you don't see the pride often.

However, if you go to God's word, as you're reading the Bible, say, Lord, am I prideful? Show me these things. I believe God can help show us what those things are. But often, part two of this, can you share a deliverance of pride in your own life? God usually has to spank you.

And so it's usually with loving confrontation, loving conviction. You know, that people could say, hey, you're not being very teachable. You're not being very loving.

You seem very prideful about this. And you allow people to speak into our lives constructive criticism. And that will, so can I share one example? I've got dozens of examples where, you know, because pride can raise up in you, especially in your home.

And maybe your parents could point it out. And no, I don't see it. It's not mine.

And usually, you know, there's an issue if you're defending it. You know, no, but this, but that, you don't know, you don't know. But she did this, she did that.

And pride wants to defend itself. So if you wanna say, you know, am I prideful in this area? And that word means filled with pride, self-exaltation, promoting self, selfishness. It's about self.

And if you go to others, they can help point it out. Or God might show you through a difficult situation, a humbling situation. You learn from it and you grow from it.

In a marriage, it can creep in as well. Pride can creep in and the spouses become prideful and focus on themselves and not teachable. And it's a very deadly thing in the area of marriage, for sure.

But yeah, God can deliver you of it. I know if I share a specific situation, probably just loving confrontation, you know, that you receive from people and you go home and you really pray about it and realize that you were prideful in that area. Self-defense is a form of pride, defending self.

You know, not open for, yeah, but, yeah, but this, yeah, but that. And so you wanna be open, be open to constructive criticism from someone who loves you and cares about you, not from people who don't. You can be open to that.

So do you wanna chime in on that? That's a kind of easy one. And number nine, what is the difference and Morgan, I'll let you handle all of this. What is the difference to be baptized of the Holy Spirit or in the Holy Spirit? No kidding, I'll do it if you want.

Oh, I'm like, you really want me to? I can't. So this is probably coming from someone who has experience in this or went to a Pentecostal church. There is a lot of confusion about this.

People say you need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. What they're saying is you need to experience the Holy Spirit. You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In other words, you need an encounter with God that rocks your world because you're just carnal. You have no desire for God. You're going through the motions.

And when the Holy Spirit, they say, baptizes you in the Holy Spirit, then there's this joy, there's this love for God, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But biblically speaking, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is you're baptized into the body of Christ when you believe in Jesus. It says in the Bible, it only uses it once.

You're baptized in the Holy Spirit. But then there are subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit, meaning it says, and Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. And Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.

And Jesus came out of the wilderness filled with the Holy Spirit. So there's this endowment of power. There's this spiritual gifts come out.

There's this passion for God. The teenager who's filled with the Spirit of God wants to come to morning worship. They want to go to church.

They want more of God. They want more of the Bible. Kids who are not filled with the Spirit don't want anything to do really with God.

They're quenching and grieving the Spirit through sin. So that is the difference between someone receiving a mighty filling of the Holy Spirit. And if you want to use the word baptized in the Spirit, that's okay.

It's basically something comes upon a believer, the power of the Holy Spirit. And how that worked in my life, I was a Christian, but I was rejecting God, kind of rejecting God, yeah, whatever. And then God called me back to Him.

I surrendered everything to Him and then received this just completely filled with the Holy Spirit. So that's why I often say from up here, it's not that you need more of the Holy Spirit. It's that He needs more of you.

It's not like you get a little bit of the Holy Spirit. Okay, next week, a little bit more. Next week, a little bit more.

And then maybe next year, God will just pour on you. It's you submitting to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. And the more you submit, the more filled you are.

And actually a byproduct of being filled with the Spirit is joy and love and hope in a hopeless world and compassion and self-control and love. All the fruit of the Spirit comes out when you have this encounter with the Holy Spirit, if that makes sense. Let's see here.

How do we know for sure that we are going to heaven? Or more specifically, how do we know for sure we are guaranteed that we are going to heaven? So I'll chime in and then you can add to it. The guarantee comes from two things. The guarantee comes from God's word.

And people say, well, that's just, how do you know you can't trust that? You know, it's just a Bible, it's just a book. And so the guarantee comes from God's word, but knowing God's word is true, studying it, looking at the accuracy, and that guarantee, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit is given to you as a guarantee until

the day of redemption. You are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

So you have the Bible as the guarantee, saying that, but also you have now the Holy Spirit within you. When you repent of your sin and believe, the Holy Spirit comes and resides in you. As a result, that Holy Spirit is crying, Abba, Father.

In other words, there's a relationship with the Father. So you have the internal witness, they say, of the Holy Spirit. And then you live it out, you see the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life.

So you have the fruit that lines up with God's word, you're filled with the Spirit, you sense that you're a child of God, and then you have the written word as confirmation of that guarantee. No? I agree. Okay.

Number 11, what does that verse mean when the Lord says, many will come to me, oh, I answered this in the sermon, saying, Yeah. Oh, yeah, many will come. Didn't I teach, pray, et cetera, in your name, and he will say, depart from me, I never knew you.

But it doesn't say, I didn't teach and pray in your name, it says, many will come to me in that day and say, we did, we cast out demons in your name, we prophesied in your name, we did these things in your name. And then Jesus will say, but I don't know you. Yeah, I like the analogy you always give.

You know, it'd be like one of you saying, throw out someone that you guys look up to. Someone, throw out a name. Singer, actor.

I wanna hear some from a kid, any kid. Sports figure. LeBron James.

No kids look up to any sports figures or anything. Well, that's good, we shouldn't really look. No, they do, they're just being quiet.

Okay, Mike Trout, who likes baseball. Tom Brady, there we go. Tom Brady.

Okay, so you are going to a Tom Brady game and the game's over and you have a chance to go up to Tom Brady and you're like, Tom, I've read all your stats. I know all your, you know, I know your favorite color. I know this, I know that.

Tom Brady's gonna look at you and go, sorry, I don't know you. And it's the same kind of, you usually use that analogy. Yeah, you know all about Tom Brady, but he doesn't know you.

Right, so you can, like he said earlier, you go to church, your parents are Christians, this, that. If you haven't embraced Christ and repented of your sin, accepted him as your personal savior and are spending time in his word getting to know him, then that's where that verse comes from. Yeah, so what does it mean that the Lord will say, many will come to me on that day? Because Jesus is saying, listen, you can do ministry, you can go through the motions, you can do things in Jesus' name, but do you truly have a relationship with me? Have you repented of your sin and believed in me and I am your Lord and savior? Because many will say to me in that day, well, we thought we were, we went to church, we did these things.

And then your other question, how do we know God and how does he know us? And that's what I talked about in the sermon. So I think I pretty much answered that one because God does want that relationship with us. And you know if you don't have one because there's probably conviction.

You probably don't like what I'm saying when I talk about those things. You probably don't like youth group. You'd rather go home and watch things you shouldn't be watching.

And there's a disconnect from the things of God. So you want to make sure you have that relationship with him. Number 12, how can you control your thoughts? I have heard you can't control what comes into your mind that even though the thought is bad or could be a sin, it's not unless you act upon it.

Well, that's true, but you don't want to also keep putting things in your mind. Even though you don't act on it, you don't want to keep putting images in, you know, on certain things. But let me just answer this real quick before you do.

How can you control your thoughts? The Bible is pretty clear on this one too. It talks about your thoughts. Paul says, be not conformed to this world by your thinking, be not conformed to this world, but be transformed, your thoughts, by the renewing of your mind.

So to some degree, we can't control the thoughts that come into our mind, but to some degree, we can. We can control, I mean, my thought life compared to in my 20s is night and day because you're feeding on the things of God. You're not being conformed to the world.

You're transforming your thoughts through worship, through the word, and that transformed word, transformed thoughts are actually changing you. So you can, I believe, control or actually change your thoughts. And if a thought comes in, you don't have to entertain it.

That's maybe what you're talking about. So if a thought comes into sin, if you begin to entertain it and think about it, it will come to fruition. It will grow legs and walk around.

And lead you in a not good direction. Yeah, so I would add to that. Anytime the Bible tells us to do something, it's implying that we can by God's grace.

So when it says to take our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ, that's assuming that we can and we will listen to God's word and do that. So when the thought comes in, yes, it may be coming from some funky place. You didn't put it there.

It's not your fault that the thought came in. And the Bible also says that our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked. Our thoughts can go to some deep places, amen? And it can be hard to dig out of those deep places, especially if you allow it to spiral down.

And so I would say the first thought that comes in, whether it's a lustful thought, whether it's an anxiety thought, whether it's depression, whether it's suicide, I mean, whatever the thought is for you, the second that thought comes in, you take it captive and you give it to the Lord. It's almost like you're gonna take it, you're gonna drag it, put it in the prison. It's gonna stay there.

You're not gonna give it room to grow and fester. Because sometimes, like sometimes in my mind, I'll go on for like 10 minutes, making up this whole story. And then 10 minutes later, I'm like, oh wait, that wasn't even real.

What am I doing? And so it can happen easily. And so I think it's just that initial thought that comes in, you say, Lord, I'm not even gonna entertain that. I'm giving this to you.

And then you just hopefully can move on from there. I can't control your thoughts because I start getting mad sometimes at my house if I watch Chip and Joanne. You guys know what that is, home improvement? Yes, discontentment can set in real quick.

Look at that, I want a new kitchen. I want a new this. I want a new, and then you see my thoughts or go and look at the brand new Corvette coming out for \$80,000 that I can never afford.

You know, your thoughts or look at this, you know, you just, where your mind's going, you'll think about those things. The next pair of sneakers coming out for 150 bucks. And you see, so you can't control your thoughts a lot of what you feed on, what you can.

That's why your social media is very important. You wanna limit it. You wanna be very careful.

These we might be able to get through, go through pretty quick. What is your favorite color? What kind of struggle did you have as a teen? And what was your favorite sport as a kid? Pink. Mine's blue and then baseball was my favorite sport.

To watch ice skating. Oh, ice skating. And then what kind of struggle did you have as a teen? Probably every single one as you.

Same. I wasn't a Christian when I was a teenager. And so I went to a public school, hung out with not a lot of great friends.

And so you can imagine probably, there was a lot of struggles. Mine was overeating. I ate a lot.

I started drinking at a young age through family brokenness and a broken home. Mainly on my dad's side. And then struggle with dating.

You try to find identity in dating people and all that. How many blessings are in the Bible? Google it. A lot.

A lot. Did you fight with your siblings? Yes. And how did you handle that? Not good.

How many siblings do you have? A brother and a younger brother and a younger sister, 15 years younger. Older sister, two older brothers. And how did you, well, here's what you have to understand with families, with siblings, that we're in such close proximity that you will, you know, you'll have issues.

But a lot of it comes from pride, right? Selfishness. Don't take my Xbox. Don't play with the computer.

It's my Fortnite. It's my, I'm being too transparent here. But it's about me and me and me.

So the more you're in God's word, the more you're just worshiping him, the more it's about others, you can eliminate half of your squabbles. Because they're often over selfishness and not getting out of the way. It's my turn on the TV.

It's my turn to do this. And you can really prevent that if you humble yourself. Let's throw out a sibling challenge for them for next week.

And then I want to hear the testimonies next week of how it went. So all of you have siblings, brothers, sisters, this week, try your very best, but actually we can't do it without the Lord. So pray and then try your very best to put them first in every area.

Die to yourself, honor them, honor the Lord, put them first. How can I serve you? How can I help you? How can, put them at the head of everything. I know it's so hard.

One week, and then next week I want to hear from pretty much everyone how it went. Because I guarantee it's going to be a better week. Because if you're doing that and your sibling's doing that, guess what? All the needs are going to get met.

And it's going to be a great thing. And mom and dad are going to be over the roof and then you'll probably maybe get a little surprise or something. I'm not talking to my kids at all.

Peaceful house. Okay, we'll go quickly through this one. My favorite book of the Bible, probably Isaiah or Jeremiah.

Mine changes. Right now I'd say Psalm. Okay, well in the New Testament, yeah.

Well, gosh, there's a lot. Isaiah, Jeremiah, as far as prophetic voices speaking to the nation. The Psalms, for sure, for comfort, Proverbs for wisdom and direction.

And in the New Testament, I read through the Gospels every four months. Just keep reading through the Gospels every four months. Do you have a favorite band? Kim Walker Smith, probably.

Who's coming here Sunday? I have a hard time picking. I like a lot. A favorite band, yeah, I'd be like, I like some of the harder stuff too, like Cutlass, if they're still around, or Third Day, I'm dating myself here, but.

How did, when did we get old? And favorite movie, favorite movie, is it as a Christian or not as a Christian? I mean, back when I was younger, it was probably Tombstone. You know, the cowboy movie with Val Kilmer and all that. But recently, it's probably The Passion of the Christ.

That one's really, man, just, yeah, it was just to see Jesus in his life. What about you? I don't really, it's hard for me to pick one. What did you do during your free time in high school? Boy, you guys, probably not good things.

I feel like we grew up in a different world than you're growing up in. I feel like if I was in high school now, it would just be so different than what I did. I don't even know, what did I do in my free time? You could find those who are like-minded Christians and maybe, you know, just get with that group and share that time together.

How can I lose a complaining spirit? That one, I can't speak to. Stop complaining. Stop complaining.

Well, being thankful. It just makes it sound so simple. No, yeah, that's what I was gonna say, being thankful.

And that's hard, that can be hard. But if you, you know, and some days you might have a hard time finding something that you're even thankful for. So I would recommend at least start somewhere.

Start with one thing. Be thankful for your pillow, so you don't have to sleep on a bed with no pillow. Be thankful for that.

And just add to that list, maybe write it down if that helps you to see it, read it, speak it out loud. Really, the thing that's gonna kill a complaining spirit is thankfulness, so. Yeah, well, complaining too is because we

get comfortable.

So we're complaining this isn't working, complaining about this. When, if you look at the Old Testament, grumbling and complaining were not good, because you're actually grumbling, complaining against God. And so for me, it's being thankful for what we do have, the church, the friendships, the fellowship, the health that you still have, the money that is coming in, the house over your head, the running water.

Do you know running water and cold water and hot water is like a, like you're living like kings and queens compared to most of the world? They don't have a water tank that heats their water. They don't have a refrigerator that keeps everything cold and an ice machine, let alone a big TV. And I mean, we are so blessed that if you just focus, okay, Lord, thank you, I still have my health.

Thank you, I still have a family that I can look to. So you have to focus on, the enemy will focus on the things you don't have and you'll become disgruntled. God wants you to focus on the things you do have.

How long have I been pastoring? 10 years, this church, we started this church 10 years ago, but about 10 years before that, I would travel and I would speak. So I would speak at men's events and churches and conferences, and then God called us to plant the church about 10 years ago. What are you doing during COVID? I'm doing everything that I did, could do before it.

What we did with COVID is the first couple months, we backed off and we said, okay, is this something that's gonna kill one out of 10 Americans and we wanna be careful. And so, but then you start to realize that it's being used as a political weapon. You start to see that the numbers are way off.

You start to see that they're altering their numbers and skewing the numbers. And now there's a political agenda behind it. And you start to put all the pieces of the puzzle together.

And then now we can say, okay, well, we need to act a little bit differently to this than what the media is creating. Trust me, there's an agenda behind it. There's a reason our governor is saying, you know, have Thanksgiving outside.

Only three family members or whatever. Clean the bathroom. Every time somebody needs to clean the bathroom, stay six feet apart.

I mean, it's just getting, it's getting beyond ridiculous. And you look at the numbers, you study what it is and doctors are divided. They're divided on the masks.

They're divided on social distancing. There's something called herd immunity where you allow the virus to run its course and then you build up a strong resistance towards it. There's a lot of good information on that.

So we're not letting COVID really change too much. Initially we backed off like everyone else, but then we realized. Early on, if you want practical things, we started walking more together outside, taking the dog for walks, family board games.

Yeah. What did we do? Those things. Yeah.

Yeah. This might be a good time to let everyone know I'm ahead of Levy in code names. What's that game called? Code names.

And the rematch is coming up soon. And I beat Pastor Abram and Horst. Do you want to know a funny story too? So Shane sent out a thing.

Wow, he's just calling you guys out. He sent out an email. That's prideful.

I'm being prideful. There we go. There's an example for you.

You're going to get schooled in both of those. I have a feeling. But he sent out an email to our staff members because we have a staff meeting coming up.

And he's like, okay, we'll pray and go over things at first. And then I want to do a team building thing with a game called code names. And I'm like, I don't know if that's going to be team building or dividing, but either way, it's going to be fun.

It is stressful. But board game, because you have to focus on getting off the media and off the, kids now are on their things. You've got the headsets on.

They're just three, four hours a day. I'm just really disconnected. So you have to be really, really, I don't know what to write, intentional on seeking God in these areas and putting him first.

But you guys can do it. You can get through it. We're not talking about being perfect.

We're talking about submitting to God every day and saying, Lord, I need help in this area. Be open, be transparent and say, God, I need help. I am lost.

That's humility. I can't get through this. I need your strength.

I need your wisdom here. And you're crying out to God. You're seeking, you're praying.

It's a lifestyle focused on pleasing him. Even when you fall, you get back up. Even when you're bruised, you keep fighting the fight and you stay in that battle.

We just want to tell you guys too, how proud we are of you. When COVID shut down everything, it took a few weeks. I don't really remember how long until we said, okay, we got to start meeting.

We got to start getting the teams together. So we started in homes, rotating homes and it started out small and you guys showed up, started bringing friends and then look at around the room tonight. And so we're just proud of you guys for sticking with it, sticking through it and wanting to learn more and be involved and plugged in to the work.

Amen. So I think what we'll do is, Brant, do you want to just come up and maybe lead us like in a final song of just, you know, nothing, you know, major, but yeah, final song of the night. We'll stand up, worship and then Brant can release us, pray and then maybe just say hello to somebody you don't know.

Talk to Pastor Abram. I'm going to be available too. I'll be up front.

Morgan will be up front. Pastor Abram, Phil and Carrie will be up front if you guys want. And if you guys need prayer, you know, you're really going through something.

You know, I've talked to young adults that they're cutting. They're cutting themselves pretty hard or burning themselves. They'll burn themselves because just the pain and what they're dealing with is hard

and they don't know where to turn.

They're struggling with suicide. Like who's putting these thoughts in my mind to take my life and I don't know. And so we want to be available after, you know, even maybe, you know, if it's a quiet song, Brant, you know, we can be available up front for prayer or even afterwards.

And we just want to be available for you guys and also make sure you say hello to maybe someone you don't know. So let me just end in prayer. God, as we go into this final song, I pray that kids are built up and they are encouraged.

They leave here with hope. Lord, there's a light at the end of the tunnel. There is a glimmer of hope on the horizon.

And we do pray for the chaos, Lord, in our nation right now. That You would ease that. That You would bring victory to, Lord, who You want to lead our nation in the next four years.

Lord, You bring the victory. You make it clear as day. And Lord, we pray You expose the unfruitful works of darkness, Lord, this week as we're praying and we're fasting.

In Jesus' name, amen. I just want to add to that, Lord. I just pray for these kids, too, Lord God, that You would raise up just this next generation, Lord God, that You would call worship leaders out of this place, Lord God, that You would call pastors, that You would call moms and all areas of life, Lord God, that You would have Your hand on these kids, Lord God, that we would hear reports years from now, Lord God, of them coming back saying, hey, we're your youth group and here's what God's doing in my life, Lord God.

Would You just bless each one of them, Lord God? Use them for Your glory. Help them to surrender, Lord. For those who are maybe struggling to get to that point, Lord God, show them Your goodness and Your love and Your mercy, Lord God, and Your grace, Your forgiveness.

We just pray that You would just do a mighty work among this group of kids. In Jesus' name, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31784.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/hope-in-a-hopeless-world/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net