

How to Make Right Choices

by Shane Idleman

To make right choices, align your decisions with God's Word, seek godly counsel, and regularly ask if God is guiding you.

Duration: 56:05

Scripture: Proverbs 11:3, Isaiah 59:1-2, Romans 14:21, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Philippians 4:7, 1 Timothy 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 John 2:15

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Godly Decision"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of making right choices as Christians, highlighting the internal conflict between wanting to please God and the flesh's desires. It discusses the need for repentance, aligning choices with God's Word, seeking godly counsel, and evaluating motives. The sermon also stresses the significance of waiting on God, sanctification, and glorifying God in all decisions, ultimately calling for surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit for spiritual progress.

Transcript

On this topic of how to make the right choice, we have the hardest time making decisions. Have you ever noticed that? Christians should actually have the easiest time making decisions, but we have the hardest time making decisions. It's the most challenging for us sometimes because what happens is we want to please God so much, and we want to know God's will, but on the other side, there's this little mean guy in here called the flesh who wants to discourage and pull me away from God, and so our choices are never free from this conflict.

So, we're going to talk about how to make right choices, but before I get into it, I want to remind you that our loving Father, who's a good, good Father, wants us to get back on course. So, no matter if you've fallen off course, if you're saying, Shane, I'm so lost, I'm so far away, God can't use me now. Yes, He can.

Just like a compass. When I'm walking, I take a compass sometimes, hiking, and if I need to go north and I'm going south, what do I need to do? Keep walking south? Turn around. Actually, that's the word repentance in the Bible.

It's to change your mind and change direction. So, it doesn't matter if you've drifted. It doesn't matter if you don't even know God.

What matters is where you leave here this morning. Where is your heart? Are you back on track saying, Lord, I'm back, heading north, heading in the right direction. Thank God for the compass, which is, we all know.

So you knew I couldn't talk about making right choices without this, right? That would be like trying to drive your car without the engine in it. It might look nice, but you're not going anywhere. So the first point, and I actually grabbed these from Hope for the Heart.

I came across a handout. I think we handed it out this morning. If not, I know we did a few weeks ago.

On eight tests for making wise decisions. And I googled it a little bit. I wanted to make sure I gave the right person credit.

So the eight tests come from Hope for the Heart, but I also threw in a couple of my own tests. And I've taken out an excerpt from a book I wrote many years ago, What Works for Young Adults. And I think you've got the handout, one per family.

I'm going to read from that a little bit too. So it's kind of bringing all this together on how to make right choices. So the first test, if you're about ready to make a choice, especially young adults, you need to listen up.

Turn off your phone. I'm giving you permission to turn off your phone. And stop texting or acting like you're taking notes because you're not.

We know that the whole thing is there. Well, I need my Bible on phone. No, you don't.

Not this morning. I'm going to read every Scripture for you. So the Scriptural test.

And the reason I'm so adamant about this is I see so many people destroy their lives because of wrong decisions and wrong choices. If they would have just got back on track. And if you take away a few nuggets from this morning, I hope this is one of them.

You will either experience the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. So yes, discipline is hard. It's challenging.

It's difficult to live inside of God's will. But you're either going to experience that pain or the pain of regret. That's how we go through life.

The pain of discipline or the pain of regret. Paul says to discipline our body. Bring it under subjection to make no provision for the flesh.

To let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Therefore have the mind of Christ. In all these things, cast away, put on.

All these things, it's hard. It's discipline. Ask anybody who competed in the Olympics if they had any discipline.

Their whole life was about discipline. So you either experience that pain of discipline or the pain of regret when it comes to following God's path. Is there any way, Susie or Josh, you can turn the lights on a little bit? It seems a little dark, but maybe it's just me.

If not, that's okay. So the first test is this test. And you always have to start here.

And this is where many people get sidetracked. The scriptural test. Does your choice line up with the Word of God? 2 Timothy 3.16 All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God.

All Scripture, not some. All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, which is truth, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. So that pretty much sums up everything.

And some of you might be going, what do those words mean? Isn't reproof and correction the same thing? Well, no, it's not. I could take a whole sermon just with that Scripture. But let's talk about the four things.

The Word of God is profitable. It means you will never go wrong. And anytime you invest, you will always go right.

It's profitable for doctrine. If you need to know what truth is, you can look to the Word of God. You don't have to wonder in relativism.

Everything's relative to the situation. What's true for you might not be true for me. So that's why you can murder.

That's why you can just, the party life style. And it's convicting for you, Shane, but not for me. It's called relativism.

That's where the church shifts from postmodern, premodern, all these things. Now we're living in an age called postmodern or relative. So truth is relative to your situation.

Now how ridiculous is that? Is two plus two still four? Would you like to jump off the balcony and see how it feels? Gravity. I mean, truth is truth. It's not relative.

Why they're changing truth is what they're saying is I want to make it relevant to my lifestyle. You can keep gravity. You can keep two plus two is four.

Hey, I'll let you keep quantum physics. You can keep this and this truth, but when it comes to moral truth, that's what they're changing. So what's wrong for you, Shane, might not be wrong for me, and that's a lie.

So when you make a choice, the Word of God is profitable for truth, for doctrine. And it's also profitable for reproof. Now today we probably wouldn't use the word reproof.

We would say for absolute proof. If you need to prove something, it goes along with truth. The Word of God is absolute proof of something, of God's nature, of His character.

You can look to it. What about for correction? What is correction? Well, if something's not straight, how do you correct it? You correct it by the Word of God. The Word of God is meant to correct because He knows we walk like this.

So the Word of God comes in and it corrects. It straightens. And that's why many times you'll see a lot of churches get away from the correction aspect and they'll just embrace the love aspect.

I just talked to a person last night about a lot of churches, even in our valley, he was very discouraged because they're not talking about abortion, they're not talking about gay marriage, they're not talking about

anything that upsets people. They don't want to talk about abortion because there might be people who have had an abortion. They don't want to talk about gay marriage because there might be people struggling with that.

So let's just avoid that altogether. But the Word of God comes in and it corrects. So the person who's had an abortion, let me show you where the encouragement is.

And all sins have been washed away by the blood of Christ. Bring those tears to the cross. And for that person who might be considering that or for a nation who is endorsing that, that's wrong.

You need to repent. See, it brings correction. It brings truth.

So the person struggling with same-sex attraction, the Word of God says, it doesn't matter how you were born, it just means get back to God. Repent and say, Lord, this is not right. Help me.

Help me. See how it corrects. So when we avoid the correction aspect, you just lost a lot of the power of the Word of God because the power of the Word of God comes in the application in the correction.

Woe be to the person who thinks they have everything down and they don't need the correction of God. This book will humble a person who's been a Christian 40 years. How? It'll correct their attitude.

It'll keep them broken before the Lord. It'll keep them thinking not so highly of themselves. So the Word of God is good for correction, good for doctrine, good for absolute proof, and also for instruction in righteousness.

That basically means how to live. And that's another part that people don't want to hear. Here's what the Bible says how to live.

I don't want to hear that. I just want to live however I want. Well, if you're going to make choices then, your choices have to line up with Scripture.

So if you're not in the Word, the Word won't be in you. So how are you going to make right choices if you don't even know what this says? It's impossible. So that's the first test.

Is my choice going to line up with what's already been revealed in God's Word? But the Bible often runs opposite to the culture and our flesh. That's why it's difficult. The culture will say, buy bigger, buy more.

God's Word says, no, be wide stewards. Don't get caught up in the things of the world. What's the world say? They are attractive.

Go for it. You look at every show right now on TV focused on young adults. It's all about attraction.

I'm attracted to that person. Oh, go for it. Go for it.

You're attracted. That's a very bad reason to just go for it. Are they Robert's 31 woman? Do they have a gracious heart? Do they love the Lord? So there's nothing wrong with attraction.

God gave us attraction. But what happens is that attraction becomes the focus. Are they a Christian or not? I don't know.

I don't care. I'm attracted to them. But that's the message a culture sends.

As long as there's an attraction. Any relationship that's built on attraction alone falls quickly. Do you know the divorce rate in Hollywood? Enough said, right? I mean, that's because it's all built on attraction, name, status, how far I will get in my career.

Let me make sure I'm not going to mislead anybody here. It's okay to be attracted to the person you're dating or courting or going to marry. It's a good thing.

Not a bad thing. God-given. But don't make that decision based on attraction alone.

Actually, you should be making the decision on the Word of God and let attraction follow you and not let it lead because you're letting feelings. And I hear it all the time. I just heard it from a relative of mine a couple months ago.

But I love them. We're just soulmates. They'll become a Christian someday through my influence.

Well, you just went against Scripture. Because the Bible says don't be unequally yoked. Don't even consider it.

That's not an option. There's not plan B. People say, well, but God worked through my marriage. Okay, yeah, God works through those things.

But don't suddenly discount Scripture because you like the person. That's a whole other sermon too for young adults. But get the book, right? This book.

It'll walk you through it. This opportunity will bring in more money. People say often.

I counsel people sometimes. But Shane, this will be more money for my family. Okay, but will it hurt your relationship with Christ? Will it take you away from your wife and your kids? Yeah, but it's more money.

No, no, no, no, no. Never make a decision on that alone. Ever.

Ever. I would never say, because that's the number one tool of the enemy. Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life.

Let me dangle that carrot. And the road of history is paved with men and women making mistakes in this area because they follow the almighty dollar instead of almighty God. And He will provide when He's the focus.

So you see how all this is designed to knock us off course, right? Why, Shane, are you saying we shouldn't make more money and pray about it? No, God can open that door. But seek ye first. Where did I read that last week? The newspaper? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you? Was that on CNN? I heard that.

Where was it? We know. Right, so seek Him first. And He adds these things to you, to your life.

And I've just seen a lot of people make mistakes in that area. So the scriptural test. Doesn't line up with scripture.

That's probably the longest point because it's one of the most important. Number two, the secrecy test. Are you hiding the decision from others? Mainly believers, right? I think it's okay to hide some decisions from unbelievers.

You know, like I'm fasting. I'm seeking the Lord more. Why are you doing that? Why are you doing that? I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about if there's decisions you're making that you kind of have to do it in secret so nobody knows, there might be a red flag there. Proverbs 11.3, the integrity of the upright will guide them. What Proverbs is saying here, that integrity will guide you.

Let me back up a little. Okay, I'm walking. I don't know what decision to make.

Well, integrity will guide me. The main thing about making biblical decisions is you're making a decision against yourself quite often. You're making a decision against the flesh.

You're taking the lower road, not the higher road. You're taking the road of humility, not self-exaltation. So you let integrity guide you.

I don't know how to make this decision. What does integrity say? What does God's Word say? But the perversity, which is the twisting and the manipulating of the unfaithful, will destroy them. Now, another thing.

Seeking godly counsel would fall under here. When you're seeking godly counsel, when you want somebody to tell you the truth, listen, I'm having a difficulty here speaking to my life. Please paint the right picture.

Don't paint this facade that you want them to think so they'll give you the answer you want to hear and you hide about six other things because you don't want to bring that up. This happens in premarital counseling sometimes. They'll paint this picture and picture wonderful, wonderful things and wonderful things.

Oh, okay, well based on what you told me, it sounds pretty good. And then weeks come by like, well, what about this? He struggles with that? He's got an addiction there and he's thinking about Christianity. He's not a Christian yet.

So you don't get the paint. You've done that before, right? Don't you paint the picture you want people to believe in? And that really will detour us from God wanting what's best by not having things in secret and bringing it to the light. Well, this would even follow underneath spouses.

If you're wanting to make a choice and you're going to try to keep it a secret from your spouse, should I go spend \$100 at the mall? I'll use a charge card that I pay off where she won't know before it comes to secrecy. These are no-brainers. But we need to be reminded, don't we? You know the old saying, you're preaching to the choir.

And you know what I like to say? The choir needs a little preaching too. Not the worship team, right? Just in general. I don't want you to think I'm picking them apart.

But just in general, we all need to be reminded of God's truth. The survey test. How will others view the decision? How will others view it? 1 Timothy, let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believer in word and in conduct and love and spirit and faith and purity.

And if we had time, we could break down those to be an example in conduct. How I conduct myself. How I treat people.

It's a survey test. How will others view my attitude? Because they watch your attitude, don't they? Well, you didn't get upset when you should have at work. You didn't cuss when the hammer came down.

And they're watching you in conduct, in love. How do you love the fellow believers? In spirit, in faith, in purity. To be an example in purity.

Now, I think it's time to take a little rabbit trail. I didn't talk about this last night. But on this issue of the purity test, the survey test, how will others view you? This mainly applies to women and what you wear.

Modesty and what type of message are you sending and what do you accentuate and this and this and this. What is this? Because you know the choice, should I wear this outfit? Right? Guys don't make that choice. But women, should I wear this outfit? Should I wear this? Well, what will others say? What would Jesus say? If you ever have questions, if you're going with Jesus to the park, would you wear that? And that's getting bigger and bigger and bigger as our culture gets more and more, I should say, further away from God.

And you see more of this in modesty. And the reason is, a lot of people are starving for attention. The attention they're not getting.

So they want to get that attention that they were never given. But if you take that, you give it to God, you'll get more attention spending time in His Word than you ever dreamed possible. And you won't need to do those things.

So the survey test. The next is the spiritual test. The spiritual test.

This is a biggie. Who is influencing you? Who is influencing you? 1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

I should clarify this for those who might not know. The word world here is cosmos. So, because people say, well, don't love the world.

You don't love your house and your car and you don't, anything. The world's cosmos is the world's mindset. So if I love the world's mindset, the world, the way the world thinks, you know, happy to be married for tomorrow we die, that whole thing, and just party in this whole world mindset.

If I love these things in the world and I want the things in the world to indulge here and indulge there and overspend here and this and just indulging in the things in the world, I can't have the love of the Father in me. I can't then pop out of that. Now I have the love of the Father.

Now I'm ready to worship. You can't. They're fighting against each other.

For example, women, you can't love Peter at work and Mike at home. That's an example of a stick, right? Same thing with men. You can't love Sarah at work and Christy at home.

But that's the same analogy he's using. But I'm married to this person at home. I love them.

Then when I get to work the other half of my day, I love this person. How foolish is that? That's ridiculous. That's impossible.

You can't love both. God's saying the same thing. You cannot love the world and God at the same time.

Where do your affections lie? A decision has to be made, and it goes back to what I said earlier. The pain of discipline or the pain of regret. The flesh says, I love the world.

I love the world. But the Spirit within says, I love God, and I've got to make decisions that will foster that relationship. It's just like the natural.

I just said at work. Do you make provision to cheat on your spouse? Do you spend time with somebody you shouldn't? Same thing in our relationship with God. It's the love of the world in us.

Now, all of us are going to struggle with this. I hate to burst your bubble. Somebody says, I never struggle with that.

Sure you do. We all struggle with the love of the world coming in and pulling us away. God says, just get back.

Make choices where God is influencing you. So regularly ask, is God truly guiding me? Truly guiding me? The spiritual test is, who's influencing me? Is the world influencing me? So you can put your decision under the microscope of the world. Is the world guiding my decision? Or is God guiding my decision? It's really not difficult.

The reason choices are challenging is because we still love and gravitate to this side. I talked to a person who's struggling with alcohol and he's addicted and stuff and he's struggling. Should I go to the payer? And I'm like, well, Pat Benatar in a shock top booth right there is probably not a good idea.

I mean, these are no brainers. Come on. Why is there such a challenge? Because the flesh.

Right? Right? Tracy Atkins. You guys know what I'm talking about, right? I hope so. What's he talking about? The fair.

Of course you can go. But look, is this decision going to pull you back in away from God? Shane, this is radical. Yeah, absolutely right.

That's radical. That's radical. When he says, pick up your cross, deny yourself, and follow me, that's radical.

Where does this impression come in? That you can love the world and look just like the world and bring Christian ease and smiles and see we look just the same. No, we don't. You Christian will not look the same because there's a different spirit guiding them.

There's a different influence. So we need to wake up. You're not going to please everybody.

You're not going to look just like all your friends on Facebook. You're not going to look like the world. Actually, there's a clear distinction.

There better be. A true follower of Jesus Christ is clearly different. And I'll recommend that book again, The Heavenly Man, that I recommend, Persecution in China.

It's about this one man's story being tortured in Chinese prison. I think I got another box sent to me. And it made me feel like, I'm a Christian? Look at this place.

He's getting beat up and feces thrown on him and batons and starved to death and rats and infestation and beaten and mocked and ridiculed. Taken through the streets with a loudspeaker. This is a person against our government.

Throw things at him. Let's stone him. Let's kill him.

Living in that for weeks and months and months and months. Not denying the Lord Jesus Christ. Holding tight.

Yet we come in and we think, we think we've given up all. I've given up all because I can't do this anymore. Look at this big sacrifice.

But just a wake up call. You will not look like the world. There's a difference.

There should be a difference there. Now I know other people are not far along in the journey. Shane, I'm just trying to understand this thing.

That's fine. I'm not beating you up. But I am encouraging you that you won't be able to maintain friendship with the world and the love of God.

The Bible says that the human mind, the carnal mind, is at enmity with God. Now if you study that word, it's not just an enemy because an enemy can be reconciled. The Puritans would talk about this often.

It's an enmity. It's actually at war with God. It hates God.

There's something in me that hates God. That alarms me. Whatever I feed though becomes my master, Paul says in Romans.

Whatever you feed the most, whatever you choose to obey becomes your master. And we have to get off this, we won't look like the world and look like Christ. They just look opposite.

That's why Jesus said the world first hated me. It's going to hate you. So that begs the question, if nobody hates you, and I tell pastors, if people go to your church and you never offend, you never upset, if the world loves your church, you might want to look at how you're doing church.

Because Jesus said the world will hate us. Not because we're jerks, but because we love God so much so that that light blinds their eyes and they say, I hate you. Get out of my way.

Get out of here. That's what they hate. But they shouldn't hate our attitude.

We should love them. But they hate what you stand for and what I stand for. And the reason this comes to play on this area of choices is we make choices to save face.

My opinion, right? What are they going to think about me? They're going to think I'm a this. And we make choices based on how the world is going to perceive us. So the spiritual test is very important.

Who is influencing you? Who is influencing you? Well, Shane, how do I know? Well, afterwards, we don't have time. Maybe some other time. Show me your history on your internet.

Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Show me your Facebook post. Show me your YouTube videos.

Show me what you did. Can I see your record? Can you print out your record on Netflix? And voodoo? And all those things? Why? Did I just make my case? You see, it's very easy. It's very easy to know who's influencing us.

Look at how you spend your time and how you spend your money. It doesn't lie. Because we worship.

We all have a heart of worship to something. So if you wonder if the world's filling you, what does your history show? What does your mindset show? That's what's influencing you. That's why you will not have an easy time making godly choices.

Because if I'm filled with this, if I'm filled with the world, and it's time to make a choice, how am I going to make that choice? Based on what I'm filled with. What comes out? When a vessel is struck, what is inside spills out. So if I'm watching all these things that I shouldn't, and I'm making all these choices that I shouldn't, and all these things have got a grip on my life, now when something comes up, an opportunity to do evil or to sin, where's my strength going to come from? From saying no and walking away.

Willpower. No, no, no, no. You're not as strong with your willpower as you think.

Willpower will be overcome by fleshly power. Because the Bible says, finally brethren, whatever things are true and honest and noble, when people have moral failure, when they cheat on their spouse, you think it just happened that day, they woke up, filled with the Spirit of God, great time of prayer and worship, and I don't know what happened tonight. How did that happen? And it happened weeks and months ago.

By the first open door. And then the second open door. And the third open door.

And then finally, that's how... See, that's what the enemy does. He walks you down one step at a time. One wrong choice at a time.

One bad decision at a time. Until you get to the bottom and you say, how did I get down here? How did this happen? It started way back there weeks ago and months ago. That's how important this is, folks.

It's making that right decision even when it's challenging. Because I know, I'm just like you, what I fill my mind with all the time, all the time, is what's going to dictate how I live. It's also going to dictate how I preach.

Do you think I can just be all in the world, all week long, and come up here and say, God, descend upon this pulpit, give me anointing, pierce the hearts, after all this world's coming in? No. Not at all. The sermon will probably sound like this.

Let's turn to John. God is love, and I just love God. Let me tell you a story I heard last week.

And after this, we're going to go paint neighborhoods. And just cheerily, guys, you go. Your head, not the tail.

Just go, man. Go team. We just love each other.

And next week we'll do this. And that's what it would be. Why? Because there's no spirit of God pregnant with the word of God.

That's what preaching is. It's theology coming from a man who is on fire for God. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones said that in his book Preachers and Preaching.

He said that's all preaching is. It's theology on fire with the word of God. And you can't get that.

That's why I'm worried. I have to fast. I have to pray.

I have to spend time with God because I don't want to see what it looks like just letting it go to the other side. I've seen the other side, and it's ugly. I've been so close to hell, my clothes still smell like smoke.

I mean, if I would have died in some of those situations, oh God, if it wasn't for the grace of God. So when you sing and I sing, how great is our God, how great is our God. He saved me 10 times over, and he saved you too.

We need to start acting like it. We need to start, what, who's bored in worship? I'm tired of people being bored in worship. This is a mighty praise and worship service.

My God, help us. God, help us. It's okay to get worked up.

Jesus did, and it breaks my heart when we should be the powerful people of worship, broken before the Lord, annoying God's presence, flowing in tears of joy and lives being touched, healings, deliverance, people being set free, coming out of here, God, I feel so full. I feel so full of you. But instead, we're bored to death, and nothing changes.

Nothing changes. The same problem today is the same problem tomorrow. Do you ever want to go, do you ever say, God, when's this going to change? Worship me.

Worship me. Get on your face before me. Worship me.

And I know this isn't popular. We might lose five, six people after this type of sermon, but I don't care. I didn't come here to start a social club.

We came here to be a powerful worship service that glorifies Christ. We look to his truth. We become men and women of prayer.

Where did that go? You read books 100 years ago, you'd be embarrassed. Embarrassed is what the church has become. Bible study in the morning.

Two hour prayer and worship service. Worship at night. It was powerful moves of God because when revival comes, you can't keep people away from church.

It's every night, every night, every night, worshipping God. Why? Because they're filled with the Spirit of God. That's who's influencing them.

I can tell who's influencing you by the way you worship. By how much time you spend in prayer. By how much time you spend in the Word of God.

And I believe God is wanting to correct us in this area. Myself included. I could be sitting right there.

Right there going, oh Lord, help me become more of a worshiper. Oh, absolutely. See, it's a very good thing to say, God, I don't worship you enough.

I don't pray enough. I'm not in your Word enough. Because the person who says, I'm in it enough.

I got this down. You're in trouble. The more legalistic a person becomes, the more they're susceptible to failure because they guard and guide with rules and regulations.

So just be careful. I would encourage you, more than anything, to allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. And I'm not afraid.

See, in some circles, they don't talk about this kind of stuff. Well, Jesus said, when you go, when I go, the Comforter will come. He will lead you into all truth.

He will ignite a heart of worship. He is an ever present help. The Holy Spirit directed Paul.

He directed Peter. He filled Jesus Christ after His baptism so He was ready for ministry. This ever present help in a time of need is something we neglect because we don't want to talk about Him because of some weird guy on TV.

And I'm not going to let them rob us of the Holy Spirit's power and anointing. He comes in this place, the presence of God. You wouldn't get out of here without a Kleenex or two.

Because He's convicting and He's drawing. I like what Leonard Ravenhill said. We need to close down every church in America for one Sunday and stop listening to man so we can sit and listen and hear the groans of the Spirit which we in our lush pews have forgotten.

I don't even know where I was. Guys, I believe that's what God's wanting for all churches. We've got it down.

We've got church down. We know when to come. We know where to sit.

We know when to leave. We know how many songs. We just got it down.

There's nothing wrong with having a plan. I believe God blesses a plan. I'm not one of those guys who say, I don't know what I'm going to preach on.

I'll find out Sunday morning. I mean, I've got a stew on it. I've got to resonate.

I've got to read books. I've got to sing worship songs and just get my heart in what He's trying to tell. So there's nothing wrong with planning.

God will bless a planned person. But I've got to get through this. I'm only halfway done.

The motives test. The motives test. I added this one.

This is not from the handout. What is your motive? We're going to get a little honest right here. It's going to hurt.

It's okay. It's time to step on toes again as if the last segment didn't. This will as well.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself. If you're pursuing or making choices solely to impress others or financial gain, you are on the wrong path. Well, Shane, how do I evaluate motives? Glad you asked.

Here's how. Would you go on a missions trip, visit the sick, go to the hospital homes, give money, or help the homeless, even if no one knew? Because that's how you evaluate motives. Would you sing on the praise and worship team if you had to sing from that back room and not the center stage? Oh, no, I wouldn't do that.

Well, then, where's your heart? Who are you singing for? Would you be in leadership if you were not recognized and applauded for your efforts? Would I still do this if I was not applauded and recognized for my efforts? Now, I get enough negative feedback to offset the positive feedback, but it's a question we have to ask. We have to ask often, would I still do these things if no one knew, if only God knew? So if you're going to make a choice, a fairly big choice or significant choice because you're trying to impress others or trying to impress your dad, who you've been trying to impress for 30 years, you might be on the wrong path. I mean, either the Scripture is right or it's wrong.

And we all know it's right. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, we might esteem each other better than himself. Can you imagine if we just came to church esteeming others better than ourselves? Basically, that means treating others better than we treat ourselves.

Not pulling them down, not complaining, not being bitter, not being resentful, but truly esteeming others, building them up, building them up. And it happens to me a lot because I know all the pastors in all these churches in the valley. And guess when I get a disgruntled person coming here? Guess what they like to do? Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Well, you might want to sit down and talk with them. I'm trying not to get caught up because that's the trick of the enemy. That's to come in here and begin to talk and do all these different things.

So check your motives before you make a decision. Number six, the stumbling test. The stumbling test.

Will it cause me or another person to stumble? If you're going to make a choice and it's going to cause somebody to stumble, is it a good choice? Romans 14, 21, it is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. It's like you're, oh, what was that? Somebody just put a rock in my path. That's what stumbling, you're putting, you're doing, your choice is going to make people stumble.

We know what that means, right? Somebody's going to look at your choice and although, this comes up too, I guess I just thought of this, I don't know why, but in the modesty issue, back, fast forward 20 minutes ago, how women dress sometimes and they say, I often hear people, well, that's a guy's fault. That's not my fault, it's a guy's fault. Well, it's both.

The guy has to take his thoughts captive and get his mind off of that, but you also have to not present it in such a way that it makes it lustful. You see, it works together there. Now, you know, I'm getting a little personal, but this is how it works.

We've got to be honest if there's a change to occur. So the stumbling test is the same thing. If you're putting a stumbling block out there and people are going to stumble because of it, that's not a good choice, is it? When I was at the fair the other day, it was 100 degrees out and Shock Top has a big booth there with the 16-ounce cold beer.

How would that look just walking around the fair? Don't I have liberty? How would that look? Come on, let's be honest, that would not be good. That would not, I would get a lot of phone calls the next day. Why,

what's it doing? It's causing people who have a problem with that, others who don't, okay, but a lot of people have a problem with that.

They would stumble because of that choice. And you see how that, so we have to be careful. How will it make other people stumble? I didn't tell the story last night.

I thought about it, prayed about it this morning. I'm going to tell you the story today on this issue because it's ironic. Somebody got upset because I got a new truck two years ago.

Now, what they didn't know is I just paid off my old truck. Some of you know this story. And for a month, God was convicting me to sell my truck.

There was a homeless couple. They're living in a car with their child. They start coming to our church.

It's like, sell your truck, get them something. I'm like, this isn't God. That must be me, right? It's my good nature.

So for a month, I ignored it. I just paid it off. I've been looking forward to this for five years.

I'm not selling my truck. I'm paid off. You know, if you've ever been there, you know.

Just hold on to that. So a month goes by. I hear that their car breaks down on 90th Street West.

I'm like, Lord, this is tough. But really, is it? Why is it tough? Because the flesh is a little miser. He just wants to not do anything God wants to do.

So I said, fine. I talked to the elders. They said, well, that's a pretty big thing.

You might want to sell it. I think it was worth like \$10,000 and keep some for a down payment on yours. So the church was able to get him a used Chevy truck and get them an apartment for a few months out of that.

So what I'm doing, I'm waiting. I never buy new, by the way. The way you drive off the lot, you're in debt.

It's not going to happen. So I'm looking for trucks, Bakerfield, Fresno, San Diego, for a month. I went a whole month without a car.

And I found it at a certain price. They had like 30,000 miles on it, the Dodge trucks did, at all certain price, 30,000 miles. Okay, well that's, and I called the dealership, and I told them, no, no, no.

We don't have any new vehicles like that. That price, good luck, thank you. All right, well, fasting, praying, what do you want to do? I just want to make a wise decision.

The guy calls me back, says, we have one. It's last year's model, but it's no miles on it, no bells and whistles, there's no backup camera, there's no, doesn't even have a CD player. You know, just a basic truck.

We'll give it to you for that price if you can get in here this week. So Kelly Blue Booked it, looked it up. I'm driving off the lot with four or \$5,000 equity.

I'm like, well, Lord, why would I, you know, wow, that's, I guess I would call that an open door. I don't know about you, but I call that an open door. I'm not going over budget.

It's exactly what I was looking for, newer. So I go and get it, the person has a problem with it. Now, do I spend time and tell people the back story to all this? But he was upset because I got a truck at that payment.

Now, I'm not going to go buy a brand new truck at full price. I just don't do those things. But because God opened these doors and now tons of equity, same payment, but I had to stumble through this.

The stumbling test, is somebody going to stumble? Are they going to stumble on this? So I talked to the elders. Nobody had a problem with it. Selling the truck, getting this home with family.

So on one hand, we don't want people to stumble, but on the other hand, some people might not agree with your decision. So you can't, you have to say, God, is it God honoring? Is everything we just talked about? But the stumbling test really has more to do with sin. Is somebody going to, are you putting boulders in their path? And then the next point, number seven, the sin test.

The sin test, this is mine too, if you haven't caught that yet. Isaiah 59, 1-2, Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is it heavy that it cannot hear, but your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear. See, we can't ignore this point.

As much as we want to, sin will sometimes, often besetting sin that we just want to continue in. We continue in. God says, remove it.

No, continue, continue. God says, I can't even hear your prayers right now. I'm only going to hear the prayer of repentance.

I can't stop. You've got this separation here, this sin, this iniquity that you're holding on to. I know about this, God, but I'm praying for this, praying for this.

God says, no, first deal with that. Deal with this. Your sins, your iniquities have hidden my face so I cannot hear from you because that sin is blocking that.

Where do we ever stop mentioning this in the church? That sin can block the heart of God in your life. You will not hear clearly if you're actively engaging in sin. Sin means to miss the mark.

How are you going to shoot a bullseye with a crooked arrow? They say, but Shane, we all sin. Yes, but there's a big difference between saying, God, I need help in this area. I'm repenting.

I'm making steps. There's accountability. I'm not going back there again.

I'm trusting in you. I'm following you. God, help me.

Guide me, please, Lord, in this decision. You counter the pain of discipline. Versus the person says, well, I was born this way.

I don't care. It's my one little vice. And they just continue in it, knowing God wants to deal with them in that area.

And God says, on this point, this probably happens more than any other thing in the area of pre-marriage counseling, too. People want to know, is it God's will for this relationship? Is it God's will, Shane? Is it God's will? I have to know. I have to know.

Well, before we get to is this God's will, you have to stop sleeping together. And you might want to move out. Well, we can't do that.

It's not financially possible. Well, you're asking God's will in this matter, but you're denying his will in this matter. See, once you do this, then you'll be able to hear clearly.

I'd rather go live with my mom and be in the will of God than get hurt financially and stay in sin. But this happens more than people realize. They'll stay in this.

We can't do that, Shane. That would mean moving out. That would mean, what does repentance look like? Yes, it looks just like that.

Repentance looks like a change of mind that leads to a change of action so you live differently. But people will cry, like, I want to know God's will for this relationship. But they don't want to discontinue this.

Do you see how, is it just me? Or does that seem like, well, let's start with step one. You can't jump to step ten. And then what usually happens, once they get out of that relationship, if they do, if they don't, they stay in it.

They're not blessed with God. The marriage is in turmoil within six months. But often when they break away and they say, Lord, we're just going to commit this to you.

There's tremendous peace. And they get married because of repentance. And God has restored that broken relationship.

And they get married with tremendous peace. Because if you can't commit to purity now, and you go into the marriage with mistrust and all these things, how is he going to remain loyal to you now if he can't follow God's word in this area? You look for those things. So the sin test.

Is there something preventing God from hearing my prayers? Serenity test. Do I have peace while waiting on God? So before you make a decision, do you have peace? It doesn't mean do you have peace right now. Because this type of peace will be consistent over days and over weeks.

Because many people make bad decisions. I had peace. No, you're in a hurry.

You saw an opportunity. You're in a hurry. That's not peace.

Peace is waiting on God. One benefit of waiting on God, those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, renew their peace, renew their vitality because they're waiting on God. So if I'm going to make a major decision, like, for example, coming to Leona Valley, you think I made that decision in one day? One week? One month? No.

Waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, begin to fill our hearts and confirm many things. You wait on those things.

Because my emotions went from no way to yes, it sounds good, no way, sounds good. Lord, what are you doing here? Wait on me. Wait on me.

Get your heart back and just waiting on me. What happens, I'm probably more guilty than anybody in this room, is I want to know the answer now. I'm not a good waiter.

I want to know, okay, what are we doing? What are we doing next week? What are we doing next month? But that rushing ahead can get us ahead of God's will. So God says, wait on me. If you say, God, I don't know how to make this decision.

Should I take this job? Should I go to this college? Should I move? Should I sell my house? Lord, I don't know. Will you please show me? He's not going to go, no, too bad. You didn't pray just right.

He says, absolutely, just wait on me and I'll show you. You'll be amazed at what doors he closes. You'll be amazed at what doors he closes.

Lord, should I take this other job and leave this job? I don't know. Lord, please show me. Then a week comes by.

They say, we're downsizing. You have a week left. Whoa.

Well, God, that's called an open and closed door. Should I move? I've talked to people. My cousin now who pastors, you can talk to him, Nenack, from Grace Chapel when they brought over there.

I think it's a separate church now. Nenack. He was considering getting a full time in the ministry.

Had a big construction business in town here. That's what my background was too. And he's like, Lord, should I sell it? I don't know what to do.

I don't know. And this is a foolish decision if you're not in it. And who gets a phone call out of the blue a couple weeks later for somebody who wanted to buy his construction company? Right before the market went.

Now, is that just coincidence? That's waiting on God. He could have put it for sale, maybe found somebody real quick and got a low offer and it fell through. But when you wait on God and you get a call like that, I've had those things go through too.

We're waiting on God. You'll get that phone call. You'll get that email.

Something will come up where God will bless that waiting and he'll show you. So make sure you have peace. And I tell people this.

Me and Morgan sometimes try to meet with couples sometimes. Our time isn't as free as it used to be. But I'd say half the people we met with ended up not getting married.

And half did. Because we would ask those hard questions. Do you have peace? Do you have peace? Do you see yourself living with this person for the rest of your life even if they end up in a wheelchair? And people would think about, like, I don't have peace.

I'm rushed. This doesn't feel good. I can't go, oh, that's no problem.

It's just pre-wedding jitters. That's not pre-wedding jitters. There should be peace.

Yes, you're scared about a decision. I make decisions all the time where I'm a little bit scared. But there's peace there.

For example, did I know 100% that God called us to plant this church in 2010? No. Did I have 90% chance? No. 80? Maybe.

I was 70%, 80% sure he wanted us to do that. But never 100%. That's why it's called faith because you step out.

That's why it's called faith. If I saw the steps, it would be no big deal. But if you take those steps away, you're stepping on faith.

That's why it's called faith. It's resting in that. Number nine, sanctification test.

I'll just go through these quickly because we already know this is what we've been talking about. Will your choice help you in your walk with God? Will it help your walk or will it hurt your walk? Will it help your walk or will it hurt your walk? And I only bring up the fair in Las Vegas and things like that because people ask me, like, I don't know if I should go to Las Vegas. Well, you've just been off alcohol for three weeks.

It's probably not a good idea. Will it draw you closer to Christ? You just got off crystal meth or cocaine a month ago, and you're going back in the same environment that drew you into it. This is a no-brainer.

Will it draw you back to the world or closer to Christ? Now you see why we have such difficult time making choices because the flesh won't let up. The choice actually many times is very easy. We know what to do.

Most of the time right off the bat we just don't want to do it. I could have just said that 40 minutes ago and been done with the sermon. We know what to do.

We just don't want to do it. The final thing, I have to throw this in here. Of course you know I'm praying through all of this with choices.

You're praying. It's a heart of worship. But the supreme test, does it glorify God? Does it glorify God? In this area, you will have to make decisions against yourself quite often.

To glorify God, you have to humble yourself. To glorify God, you don't need to get the last word in. You don't need to be right.

You don't need to take them to court often. These decisions, does it glorify God? Are people going to look at it? You know what glorify means? Glory is God's renown, His name, His majesty. Does it, will it represent God in the right light? Or will it tarnish that area? And it's hard because Christians struggle often in this area.

So let me close with this statement. Spiritual progress is possible. Spiritual perfection is not on this side of the cross.

So I want you and me to use this time to just realign ourselves with the compass. I don't know of anybody in this room who got all 10 of these right. We all need to be on high alert.

Moral failure in the church is epidemic. I mean, two pastors I looked up to last year, a year and a half ago, one of them I've got to take off my book now, gave me an endorsement because of this. And another one that I looked up to was big in the homeschool movement, and he fell.

And it's like all these people, it dramatically affects it. They actually, it was a stumbling block in my life. Not to go and sin, but it hurt.

It hurt when I heard about these things. It was a stumbling to my faith like, oh, God, these people I look up to. These things are real.

Stumbling blocks are real. Does a decision glorify Christ? Are we tarnishing the name of Christ? But the good thing is many of you, all of us probably in here have not got all these areas right. So the compass has been off course.

It's time to get it back on. We sing about the Holy Spirit. Why don't we ask the Holy Spirit to say, God, come in and cleanse me and change my heart, change my nature, change my mind.

God, get me back on track. Holy Spirit, you are welcome here. You are welcome in this place to lead me and to direct me and guide me.

Do you know the Holy Spirit is not an it? Are you aware of that? The Holy Spirit is not an it. It's not a force. It's not Star Wars.

The Holy Spirit is a person who you can quench and you can grieve the Holy Spirit of God. It's what separates Christians from other things. The triune nature of God, the trinity.

God is one, yet he reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We know that the Holy Spirit is a person and he comes and he will comfort. He actually comes and he will comfort you.

Jesus said, I will give you the comforter. Many people know that. The paracletus.

And then there's another Greek preposition. The Holy Spirit will come and be in, E-N, will be in you. But then there's another Greek preposition, epi, E-P-I.

The Holy Spirit's overwhelming presence being filled. When Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit, when Paul being filled with the Holy Spirit, that was that epi, that third element, the Holy Spirit coming in and overflowing. That's why you see a person who, yes, they're saved, but they're just as dead as a cemetery.

And somebody who's on fire for God, what's the difference? The Holy Spirit. You'll see somebody just cussing out their spouse, but they're still going to church. You see another person who wants to cuss out their spouse, but they'll just act in love, they'll take a drive, whatever.

What's the difference? The Holy Spirit. You see a person who can't overcome their addictions, the other person can. What's the difference? The Holy Spirit.

People just love worship, others don't. What's the difference? The Holy Spirit. People get into the Word of God and they can't put it down.

They're making notes, they've worn out a couple of highlighters, they journal. Other people are like, I don't even know where to start. It's just so boring.

What's the difference? The Holy Spirit. You see how important this is? That's why I want to get into the book of Acts, secret be told, is to see how the Holy Spirit worked in the church in those early years. So I would encourage you, surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus Christ himself needed the Holy Spirit, who do we think we are that we can continue to reject or quench or grieve his work? When you are doing the work of God, that is the Holy Spirit working through you. I'm not as naive and stupid as some people think to think that Shane is just, man, he's on fire for God, he just touches my life and I get e-mails. I'm like, oh, my Lord, Shane Eidelman would let you down.

He would not do anything. It's the Holy Spirit working through an earthen vessel. Paul says we have this earthen vessel that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

We are hard-pressed on every side but not crushed. I am perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken. I am struck down but I am not destroyed because the power of the Holy Spirit is working in my life and your life.

Just take time and worship. We're not in a hurry. We don't know.

We don't have things to do necessarily. And you can stay seated. You can stand.

I would encourage you to meet us in the prayer room. And we're going to pray specifically for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. We're just going to pray for surrenders, what it is.

But Shane, are you saying I don't have the Holy Spirit? No, you have the Holy Spirit but does he have all of you? That's the difference. As believers, we have the Holy Spirit but does he have all of you? Does he have all of me? No, he does not have all of me. That would be perfection.

But I'm going to die trying. I'm going to die trying to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God. Not about rules, right? It's about relationship.

Just as God, fill me with your Spirit. God, fill me with your Spirit. I want to know you in the power of your resurrection.

I want to know you in the fellowship of your suffering. Don't you want the Word of God to come alive? If this is the inspired, inerrant Word of God, this is God's Word. Wouldn't we treasure it above all gold and silver? Above 401Ks? Don't get your information from Oprah and CNN and Fox News.

Get it from the Word of God. That's the only truth that will not fail. So why is it so dead? Why is it so boring? Why is it so hard to go to church? Why do I feel I have handcuffs on when I'm worshipping? It's because the power of the Holy Spirit is being quenched and grieved.

That's why. It's time to release that. I'm not talking about acting weird.

I'm just talking about being surrendered. That was a disciple in the New Testament. Surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Now we say, carry your cross, follow me, die to self. We have no clue what that really means. We have no clue what that really means.

But I would just ask you to seek your heart. If you don't like what I'm saying, it's probably because you need to hear what I'm saying. That God is drawing us to that deeper relationship.

I don't know about you, but I want a deeper walk with Him.

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