

# Men: Don't Stand Down - Stand Firm

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman challenges men to stand firm in their faith, take responsibility, and strengthen themselves in the Lord amidst societal pressures.*

**Duration:** 49:47

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 16:13

**Topics:** "Sound Doctrine", "Spiritual Leadership"

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## Description

Shane Idleman delivers a powerful sermon urging men to stand firm in their faith and take responsibility for their spiritual health and that of their families. He emphasizes the importance of sound doctrine, the need for men to be courageous and mature, and the necessity of prayer in overcoming distractions and challenges. Drawing from personal experiences, Idleman encourages men to rise above societal pressures and to act like godly men, reminding them that God delights in their steps and will uphold them even when they fall. He calls for a return to biblical principles and a commitment to leading by example in a culture that often undermines these values.

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## Transcript

I'm going to talk to you about an important message that God put on my heart. I say that a lot because every week is an important message. So, men, I'm kind of known, even before I started this church, for being kind of hard on guys.

But there's a reason for that, because sometimes we need that hard right hook. We need to be encouraged. And I know when I came back to the Lord in 1999, it was from a hard message from a man, and it just cut me right to the heart.

And if all I was doing is being encouraged and motivated, I would really never be challenged. And that's where we change, is when we're challenged. So, this message, though, this morning will be both encouraging and challenging.

And actually, I gave this message, the same message I told Pastor Abraham, I'm going to give this message again here, because I gave it at Rob McCoy's church at their men's breakfast. But I changed a lot of things around. And the response was actually overwhelming from the guys and many of the people watching it on YouTube.

The title of that one was, Please Act Like Men. Please act like men. And it was a little bit a rebuke, which we need from time.

You know what, that's how I came back to the Lord, from a strong rebuke. It wasn't a nice, encouraging, you know, go for it message. I was on my couch, hungover.

I know you can't relate, but that was 1990s, late 1990s. And a sermon came on, and it just brought me to tears. And it called me out.

Because if we don't call Him out in love, the Holy Spirit calls you out if you're following God for any length of time. And it called me out. And it talked about the enemy has got you bound.

And it was a story of Samson. And it drew me back to the Lord. And so don't always mock those TV preachers.

I would even say His name, but you guys might judge me for it. So, no. Let me tell you the encouragement.

Let me tell you the encouragement. The encouragement is to fall forward. And let's look at Psalm 37.

I think this is going to help a lot of people. It's been a big one in my life. The steps of a good man.

So if you know the Lord, you are considered a good man. We're not considered good by something in our hearts, and we're so good. And isn't there so much good in us? There's actually not.

There's a lot of wickedness. Who can know the heart of the deceitful and desperately wicked? But the steps of a good man. It means a godly man.

A man who loves the Lord. God will actually order your steps. Did you know that? God began to order my steps that day in 1999 on that couch hung over when I cried out to God.

And He gave my love for country music was over. My love for God's Word was now beginning. And this love for worship.

And God began to now, okay, now that you're mine, let me order your steps. Not that I wasn't His. Not that I wasn't learning things.

But I was in a state of rebellion. Let me do what I want to do. Okay, prodigal son, go spend all your stuff on riotous living, the King James would say.

Ungodly living. But then once you commit or recommit, and you might have to recommit quite often, amen? Guys, it's okay. Your steps are then ordered by the Lord.

And God will actually delight in your way. I know that's hard to believe because we have an Old Testament version of God and a New Testament version of God. It's the same God.

He delights in the prosperity of His people. He delights in the ways of His people. He delights in those that love Him and want to honor Him.

There's a delight in that and that should strengthen us. And I wish it ended right there sometimes, but I'm glad it doesn't. Though He fall.

Though He fall. Anybody fallen before God? And maybe I should define it. I don't know if I was able to define that word in time.

But it's to lose status. For example, if I'm up here and I fall and I lose status, or you lose status at work, or maybe in your home, it's to be cast down. It's to fall flat on your face.

It's to lose your footing. I mean, have you ever lost your footing? Proverbs talks about a man, just like a bird who wanders from her nest, so is a man who wanders from God or wanders from the right path. And the encouragement here, though He fall.

Now, it could involve sin, of course, and here's my challenge. I never want to encourage people to sin, but I never want to neglect giving them the grace and mercy to get back up. Because there's so many people that just Bible-thumping, finger-pointing, how could you? How dare you? And I think God made me stumble so much that how dare I say that? How dare I say that? I mean, God should have wiped me out dozens of times? No.

Hundreds? Probably well over thousands of times, if we're to be honest. And so, the steps of a good man, they're ordered by the Lord. He delights in them.

And though He falls, whether into sin, whether it's into transgression, whether it's into status, or whatever that fall is, look at this. Just read it for yourself. He shall not be utterly cast down.

And I loved it. Maybe sometimes just teach on this verse, because when you look up these words, especially in the Hebrew language, it's so poetic. It's so rich.

And sometimes I ask myself, why didn't they use this word? Why didn't they say that? But I'm not a translator, and they know better. But you're not going to be utterly forsaken. And that word utterly is to put extra emphasis on what is happening.

You're not going to be forsaken and cast down. God is not going to turn His back on you. For the Lord will uphold you.

Actually, He will grab you with His right hand. It's not an accident there. He said we think of the right hand, but uphold Him with His right hand of strength, you could say.

So even though you fall, and I know I'm talking to a wide audience this morning. Men who are walking with the Lord on fire for God. Those who are kind of caught in the middle.

Those who have left their first love. Those who maybe don't even know the Lord. And though He falls, falls into sin, falls into this addiction, falls into this thing, if you turn to God, He will pull you back up and put you back up on the right foundation.

Yes, you might have consequences. Yes, there might be some depression you'll struggle through. Yes, there might be some challenges because of the consequences, but now you know that you're redeemed and walking back in God's will.

Isn't that wonderful to know that He actually pulls you back up, get back up, let me put you back up here. And so that's the encouragement. And I'm always encouraged at the story of the prodigal son.

He was welcomed back to the Father. And guys, in these times, there's so many different directions I want to go, but you really have to learn to strengthen yourself in the Lord. Strengthen yourself on the Lord.

And some of the pressure I feel, I know Pastor Abram will agree, is that so many people are relying on us to strengthen them. And they look to us and people will let you down. Did you know people let you down? And for some reason, I don't know, God's been just dealing with me on a certain subject this week, and just looking and remembering all the people who used to come to this church and actually so many that have left.

I mean, it's kind of mind-boggling. You begin to go, Lord, is it I? But then you realize a lot of it is they don't want to hear what you had to say. Bottom line.

They don't want to hear what you had to say. Or they view you as a person that never gets an attitude, never gets upset. You should resemble Jesus.

Yeah, I should, but I'm a work in progress just like you. I was happy digging ditches. I was happy not preaching.

I don't want to speak in front of people. God said, no, here's what you're going to do. And so we're all a work under construction.

You ever seen those shirts? Still under construction. And so that's why you have to learn to strengthen yourself in the Lord. Yes, people will let you down, but Christ will never let you down.

And you learn to, okay, I don't feel it right now. I'm not very motivated right now. The church has let me down.

Let me tell you, the church will let you down. It's a group of people. They will let you down, but Christ will never let you down.

And that's why I always try to point people to the cross. Point people to Jesus. And I even tell them, we get compliments a lot, and you've sure done a great job with your kids.

God has done a great job with kids. There shouldn't be one ounce of... I mean, obviously, we steward and we train. We do the best that we can.

But me and my wife would both tell you, if we could do it over again, boy, here's the lessons we've learned. I'd probably trade in and get a flip phone. For one, right? Did you know that's the number one thing the problem kids have right now with their parents in this age is they're on their phone too much and they interrupt their conversations and they're always looking at their phone and devices.

That's one thing we're actually working on right now. Me and my wife got into an argument last week on who's worse at this. You know? And so, actually, that was my gift today for Father's Day.

What are we doing after the second service? We're turning our phones off. And we'll tell them Monday morning. So, well, don't clap.

I don't know how challenging it's going to be. But even for young kids, your kids are maybe older, even out of the house, of course. But this is something... Actually, in my daughter's letter I shared, she wrote something that may remind me of this.

She actually maybe said this, that you are the father that God has chosen for your kids. Let that sink in. You are the father that God chose for your children.

If that doesn't make you really think things through, I don't know what will. Because sometimes we just say, oh, it's a coincidence or this. But God gave us exactly this dynamic, exactly this role for our lives.

And He knew the children to give us. Correct? We want a certain amount of boys or girls, and God gives you the exact amount. It's perfect.

Thank God for that. I can tell you a funny story, I think, right? All right. Well, before we had any kids, I thought maybe we'll have four or five boys.

Right? Hunting, fishing, chukar, quail, pheasant, duck hunting, 12-gauge, you know, manly things, camping. And then the first one is Aubrey. Oh, a girl.

Okay. And then, like after the first month, I said all I want is girls. I just want girls.

And then of course, we had my son, and now I want boys again. And girl. And it's like God just knows, another girl, another girl, another girl.

And so, but I just feel so blessed because they just keep you so soft. I mean, I can just say the wrong thing and my daughters start crying. Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no.

And it's just, Daddy, Daddy. And then my son, and we can do guy things and just loving having the variety. And God knows.

God knows what's best. And even those who are listening online, I know there's here, maybe God hasn't opened that door yet. And it can get frustrating with parenting.

Maybe some have been given the gift of singleness. I've talked to those people before. In all things, we have to just trust in God, even in the difficult situations.

Those who are barren right now, and maybe they're waiting on God, or they've never been able to experience that. Listen, when you get to heaven, you're not going to have all these regrets at all. God is using these things in our lives.

Romans 8.28, that all things work together for the good, for those who love God. And so with this verse, what I call the security of the believer. Doesn't mean we go and sin.

Doesn't mean we do things. But it does mean there's security knowing that God has got my back. Aren't you so thankful for that? Can you imagine if it was some distant God? A distant God that was just not involved? Shane, I hope you get this together, because I'll see you in eternity, but not right now.

And then we're left to ourselves. But this is a God who has us, the security of the believer. And I just want to throw it out there, even especially with men, do you have the security? Is God truly your Father? Father God.

Do you have this relationship? Do you know with certainty? There's no question mark here. I mean, I think maybe it's just my passion for this area, because I talk to so many people about this, and they say, you know, Shane, I'm a good person. That's your hope? That's what you're banking on? Compared to who?

Can you imagine, would you like all your thoughts, everything you've ever done flashed on a screen before others? How good would you really think you were at that point? And so the enemy sometimes will have us, and I lived there in my twenties, have us live in this bubble of, well, I'm a good person.

You've got to break that bubble, shatter that glass, and say, Lord, I don't know You. I need to repent. I need to repent and truly know You.

So now I want to give you a little bit of the application from that sermon I was talking about. Don't stand down. Stand firm.

1 Corinthians. I'm going to use the Amplified Bible, and I'm just going to focus on this verse. Men, be on guard.

Actually, women, guess what? You can apply this too. Be on guard. But this is specifically a call to men.

And I love Paul here. He said, act like men. So be on guard.

Stand firm in your faith, which means stand firm in God, respecting His precepts and keeping your doctrines sound. Act like mature men and be courageous. Be strong.

Why is that a command? Because we have the tendency to do everything but that. And I think we all can agree that's really the problem with our nation right now. Did you know America leads all other countries in the world for fatherless homes? We've reached that wonderful milestone.

You plus God equal the majority. Never forget that. I know I've said that before, but you have to remember that.

You plus God equal the majority. And so, as men, we say, what can I do in this godless culture? Do you ever say that? Do you ever get frustrated? Anybody in the school districts? The medical profession? Business? I can't say anything. I can't do anything.

I can't make a difference. That's what I want to encourage you this morning in this text. You plus God is the majority.

Now, it's not going to look like it. You might not see fruit. Remember my story.

I was actually really digging ditches. Coming home to my wife. No ministry.

Nothing. No speaking. Nothing.

And I just committed my thoughts to the Lord. I committed my works to the Lord, and He established my thoughts. He established my ways.

And He called me to do this. And so, God can take a nobody. Nobody can give Him a loud voice for righteousness and what is true and what is right.

And I get frustrated. Where's the difference? I'm preaching my heart out, and California's going to hell in a handbasket. Nancy Pelosi attends a drag queen event and says this is the hope of America.

This is really America. What? Have you lost your mind? Yeah, okay. But again, we should be able to speak the truth and know that we are making a difference.

See, here's the thing. Even if you don't see it, even as excited as I am about Roe v. Wade, do you know that the states are going to... the liberal states are going to crunch even more and make the ungodly legislation even more deadly? I mean, it's exciting on that hand, but now it's California and New York. They're going to start infanticide at 30 days maybe at some point.

Who knows? And we know with AB 223 and different things, there's so much. Are we even making a difference? And many of you don't know, but we had the privilege this morning, Mike Garcia emailed me, our representative in Washington, D.C. He was at our 630 prayer meeting. We prayed over him at 745 this morning.

There's over 100 people here. And I just encourage him that you plus God is the majority. You think you've got a hard job, go to a place where they don't even care about godly legislation.

They woe be to those who call good evil and evil good. They crossed that line a long time ago. Your voice doesn't even matter.

You're not going to pass any legislation. Who cares if you vote? Nothing's going to change. And still, get up and make that drive.

Praise God. But he's more in Washington. Scott Wilk is in Sacramento.

More of a local. You have different state and federal representatives. And things could shift in 2022 with the election.

But again, our hope is not in that. And sometimes, we must be reading different Bibles. We must be living in a different spot because they get upset about the issue of leadership and godly legislation and thinking it doesn't matter.

And I know it's not our hope, but shouldn't we protect those who have no voice? Shouldn't we come against perversion in our schools? I don't know. Just stick to the Gospel. Well, the Gospel affects everything.

If I love the Gospel and Jesus has changed my heart, I should say it's not okay to let the transgender group read to kindergartners. Why is that? Why is that? Well, hold on. I'm going to get in trouble here.

We have to keep our videos on YouTube and Facebook, right? No, I'm kidding. But why is if a man maybe says some things sexually to a woman in the workplace, it's sexual harassment. Why isn't that sexual harassment? That's what I want to know.

Six, seven, eight-year-olds looking how to do strip moves and listen to a transgender. We have lost our mind. That is calling good evil and evil good no matter how you slice it, dice it, or cut it.

That is wrong. And so, we need to say something. Now, things might get worse before they get better.

They might not get better. But I will not go down with this ship without saying something. And here's why this is so important.

The next generation, did you know there's competing worldviews? And that's why there's a big problem right now. All they hear is the media screaming about sin. Screaming that God's Word's not true.

And they're getting influenced. So you have to have an ulterior voice that says, no, that's not true. But Shane, I have no voice.

I don't have that much of an audience or this. But that's okay. You plus God.

God magnifies your voice and gets your voice out there to counteract all of these things. We don't even know now. People hear this message.

100,000 people will hear this message next week on radio. Where does that come from? You plus God is the majority. And just being faithful, God says, I want to get My Word out there.

I want to elevate My Word. Making a difference. But I better get into the sermon.

We're running out of time here. You guys always do this to me. So, number one, be on guard.

Be on guard. Here's the thing about guarding, men. Protection doesn't just let something in.

It also doesn't let something out. When you're guarding your family, when you're guarding your own spiritual health, you must guard yourself first. You don't let the wrong things in and you don't let the right things out.

So when Paul said be on guard, he's not talking about physically guarding something necessarily, although I believe that is the role of the man. That's why I believe 2nd Amendment. I believe that you can protect those from those who want to do violence against others.

And so, on that note that this is a spiritual battle, we must guard ourselves first spiritually. And I see so many men, and I've been there, we want to guard our family. We want to get them into a good church.

But we forget that our spiritual health is what is first and foremost. Because from that comes everything else. Comes the guarding of our family.

And distractions are what is distracting us. Distractions are distracting us. Here's the big thing when it comes to this verse.

Be on guard. The image is of, you can picture somebody guarding something. A guard, whatever it is.

Of the unknown soldier. Have you seen those guards before? Or Fort Knox. Or they're guarding.

And what happens? What takes away a guard from his position? What was that noise? What was that noise? What is that? And they pull you away. Could be a Delilah. Could be too busy.

Could be too much media. Could be too much distractions. Too much sport.

Whatever it is, there's a distraction that pulls me away from my position of guarding. And that's what's happening to men. Most men, we aren't just bad guys.

We want the best. We want to be godly husbands. We desire it.

Lord, we pray for it. But we get away from our position of guarding by distractions. We can no longer guard because we're distracted.

And that's this whole meaning. Matthew 26, I've talked about this a lot. Watch.

Isn't it interesting? He says watch and pray. Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation because we can be praying and we can stop watching and be distracted. But it's this whole position of watching and praying.

Women too as well. And then the next point, stand firm in the faith. Stand firm in the faith.

What does that mean? Respecting God's precepts and keeping your doctrines sound according to the Amplified Bible. Has anyone heard the phrase sound doctrine? That's where it comes from. Sound doctrine right now I would say is up there at the top of the list of priorities in the church.

You are seeing churches right now ones who do not embrace sound doctrine and those who do. The big political divide in our country with churches are those who embrace sound doctrine and those who don't. Now let's break it down for just a minute.

Sound meaning integrity. Meaning it is secure. It is right.

It is absolute. And doctrine is your knowledge or our thought process about God. And I'm pretty sure God wants us to think the right things about Him.

Correct? So, I just saw your daughter's here today. It's such a blessing to see her come in. Finally out of the hospital.

A couple of months. We prayed for you guys. So good.

I hope it's okay to interrupt the sermon for that because that made my morning when I saw her coming in. Sound doctrine. To know who God is.

How do we know who God is? Thank God for the Word of God. I want to throw out this question. Why aren't more of you buried in the Word of God? Because that's how you do it.

You know God's character. Can you imagine if we didn't have that? Well, I think God is this. Well, I think God is that.

Well, I feel this way. Well, I don't feel that way. It would be a mess.

And that's actually right now the big problem in our country too. I feel versus what God says. Big difference.

I feel versus what God says. So the only way to really stand on guard and to act like a man is to have sound doctrine. But Shane, I don't know if I believe it.

You know what? That's an okay spot to be if you take it to the Lord. If you say, Lord, I want to trust You. I want to know that this is really Your Word.

Would You show me? I remember there was a greater preacher than Billy Graham. His name was Charles Templeton. He was going to be the next Billy Graham.

But he got caught up in what we would call liberal theology. You ever watch that movie American Gospel? Part 2? I think it's the one on Christ alone. It's whatever part 2 is.

I keep forgetting the subject. What is it? Christ Crucified. Thank you.

We watched it last night. When our intellect gets in the way, I don't believe in a God that would send people to hell. Now, I would say, I don't quite understand the concept.

You know, you've lived here for 70 years, and now you spend eternity separated from God. But I'm not going to go to hell over a mystery. I'm not going to reject God over a mystery.

That's actually pride. It comes across as humility, but it's false humility. That's pride.

I don't believe this about God. And that's why that whole thing shows both sides. These people drift from sound doctrine.

And that would concern me. Where do you stop? Because they would say, well, Paul really wasn't talking about that. I don't believe the Bible in that area.

This area I do. That area I don't. Why believe any of it? And so they don't have a solid relationship with God.

And this is what many times we would call a false teacher, a false prophet, apostasy. They have drifted from sound doctrine. Now, a lot of people are being called false prophets that are not false prophets.

You just don't like... they're just kind of weak and maybe they're motivational speakers. That's not false prophets. False prophets are coming in destructively and taking people away from the Word of God.

They're teachers and they're drawing people to themselves and away from the Word of God. So really to act like a man, you have to have sound doctrine. You have to have right understanding about God.

So you need to bear your face in God's Word. But Shane, I have doubts. Okay, take those doubts to the Lord.

I can honestly say this as God is my witness. I don't doubt God's Word in the sense of, I don't know, I don't think that. I have questions.

Like, I don't understand this. I spent a half hour one day thinking about the Trinity and I got a headache. Hear, O Israel, your God is One.

But I reveal Myself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three Persons of the Godhead. Yet I am One. Okay, help here.

Why would a loving God send people to hell? But you have to remember, love is not just one attribute. And He doesn't have a portion of love, a portion of truth. He is all of His attributes.

So He is fully love, but He's fully just. Why couldn't God just save everyone? Good question. Good question.

Ask Him when you get there. But I'm not going to have now me doubt God's Word, because the bottom line is, in order to give someone the chance to love Him, He can't put a gun to their head or make them do it. Then they become a puppet.

Then it's mechanical. True love is given the ability to accept or reject. And then the consequences of rejection, see, here's what people don't understand about, hell, this is a whole other rabbit trail.

I didn't even go on the first service. But it's not this mean, vengeful, God, ha, ha, ha, go punish in hell. It's you, they are rejecting God.

And you can't live with the holy, righteous God and communion with Him and fellowship with Him. Only the shed blood of Jesus Christ paid that price. It bridged that gap.

It's called penal substitution. He paid the penalty. He took the place of you.

He substituted you. So now because of that, I can stand before God. Without that, I would be separated eternally away from God in this place where I wanted to go because I don't want there to be a God.

I reject God. So that's what it is. God doesn't make people or throw them there.

Well, I don't want to get into the whole election debate, but God didn't create hell. He created hell for the devils and His angels. And then people either decide to follow God, to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, or they reject God.

And that is where people go who reject Him. So based on the Bible's definition of all that, I understand it. I have questions.

Oh boy, but I'm not God. Who am I when you look at the scope of the universe? And I'm going to sit down here, and you'll find these guys without sound doctrine, they're usually hooked to some type of medication because they're depressed or confused. They lead people astray.

There's no passion in their lives. There's no powerful sermons being preached. It's all like what's dialogue? Let's debate.

Let's discuss. I don't know. What do you think? And nobody changes.

And without sound doctrine, folks, we are lost. That's the absolute truth of God's Word. So maybe let me encourage some of you.

If you're young at all, if you're watching, that's easy for you. You're a pastor. And oh, back to my Chuck Templeton story.

Sorry, you guys got me off track. So he was to be the next Billy Graham, but he got caught up in liberal theology. And I read these people sometimes that question the Bible and they're arguing.

To me, I think they're very weak, very immature. I don't know how people buy into it, honestly, because it's man's opinion. So anyway, he started to believe it.

And he started to tell Billy, Billy, you can't really believe that stuff. How do we know it was written by man? Don't you know the Council of Nicaea? And it was really put together by men who wanted to manipulate and control power. Why did they only choose these books and all kinds of stuff? All of that has answers to it.

Very solid answers. And he started to question God and wrestle with God. And almost walked away.

You can read it in his biography. But he found a tree stump over by Lake Arrowhead. And he put his Bible down.

And he said, God, I'm so confused. I don't want to drift. I don't know.

I'm from this day forward, I am going to have faith in You that this is Your inspired, inerrant Word. And from that day forward, he never wavered. And that is when we started to hear the name of Billy Graham more so.

And so see, it's okay to like, Lord, I have these challenges, but what are doubts? I tell young adults, Shane, I don't know what to believe. How do I know that's really God? Take it to Him. You think He's going to genuinely turn away a genuine seeker? Genuinely turn away? You think He's going to turn away a genuine seeker? You try speaking for an hour and not messing up.

Man, that's a whole other topic. But if you can get that into your kids, sound doctrine, and you don't push it down their throat. I never push Scripture down their throat.

I tell them, here's what it says. Here's why. What do you think? Let them have their own views.

You know it's okay to let them have their own views? Say, okay, okay. Have your own views. Have your thoughts.

Here's what the Bible says. And you can't force it. And you lead by example.

You lead by example. And do you know why people run back to the Word of God? Because after they get in their 20s, they find out they can't figure out anything. So it begins with belief.

You have to believe this is your written Word. And I often challenge people, nine times out of ten, those who come against God's Word have never even read it for themselves. Have never even studied the scientific accuracy of the Bible.

I could preach a whole sermon on the scientific. We hear a lot about science. Don't question the science.

No, science questions science. That's really science. The scientific proof in the Bible.

What about the historic proof? You can go and see where Jesus walked. You can find coins from the Roman Empire. Did you know as of today, nothing in the Book of Romans can be found anywhere.

No kingdoms, no tools, no archaeological discovery, nothing. Absolutely nothing. It's almost as if it's a myth.

Now hold on, people are going to say that's arrogant. No, it's not. It's truthful.

Trust me, I'm not being arrogant. Why is telling the truth arrogant? Can somebody please tell me why telling the truth is arrogant? Because that's how they want to get out of it. That's the truth.

There's no historical evidence. The Bible has historical evidence, scientific evidence, prophetic evidence. Prophetic evidence.

One thing that always amazes me, I remember reading it, and I won't know exactly because it's been so long, about the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This really helped with me. There was a little shepherd boy, he threw a rock into a cave, and I think it's QURAN, if I pronounce that correctly, Q-U-R-A-N.

Qumran, thank you. Get that and the Quran mixed up. But he heard this noise, and he went and he looked, and here's these scrolls.

I don't know how many years old. Same person, do you know how many years old? A thousand years old were those scrolls? Wait, see, if they just found them, no, they were older. They predated Jesus.

And it's the same book of Isaiah that we read today from before Jesus on scrolls. And you look at the prophetic accuracy of the Bible, of the fulfillment of Jesus, and all these things from Cyrus and Daniel to the building of the temple, and re-temple, and the walls, and Nehemiah, and when the Messiah would come, and Messiah would be cut off and what Jesus said, and the prophetic accuracy, the scientific accuracy, the archaeological accuracy. Prophetic, I mean, there's just so much to it.

What about the truth accuracy? I asked an atheist. I keep asking him, show me one area where the Bible is wrong scientifically, prophetically, archaeologically, discovery. I mean, where is it wrong? Now, there's things you might not quite understand, but it's truth.

That's why we say times change, truth does not. So when you have this area of sound doctrine though, you have to make sure you have a lot of humility. A lot of humility.

And then it says act like, not just men, act like mature men. Act like mature men. And men, let me just give you a secret here to maturity.

It is directly related to obedience to the Word of God. Do you want to grow spiritually, men, women, young adults? You want to grow and be mature? A mature Christian is just a by-product who's been applying God's Word. Not perfectly.

They've been hit. They've fallen like the steps of a good man. They have fallen, they've got back up, but they've matured.

They begin to obey the Word of God and they don't get distracted and they begin to fall forward. And now they're a mature believer. I don't want to beat this one up, but it's so important.

How we don't mature is we don't grow. Meaning, we don't allow constructive criticism to mature us. We're hurt by people and we don't want to change and we blame them and a brood of bitterness comes in and we never grow spiritually.

Anyone ever been there? Isn't it tough? I mean, I hate to be too transparent, but I would have left this church a hundred times. Do you know that? I can't. Why would you leave? Because people hurt me.

They upset me. I don't want to talk to them anymore. I've got a brood of bitterness.

I hurt more people than anyone else and they hurt me more than anyone else. It's a two-edged sword here. It's the way it works.

But because you own it, you know what? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that. How can I grow? How can I improve? And I don't want to.

I want to leave. I want to go find a church and nobody knows me. I want to church hop.

Is that what we want to do? Again, I'm just trying to help, but there's probably not a Sunday go by that there's sometimes somebody I don't want to see. Can you relate? Anyone relate? Come on. Don't leave me hanging.

Like, oh, gosh. Oh, just had a fallout. Oh, they just didn't like what I said.

I just upset their husband. I said that wrong. It's like, but you grow.

You stand firm. You own it. You apologize when needed, when warranted.

You grow. How can I change? How can I soften my tone? How can I be more gentle? And it hurts and those things hurt and you change and you mature. That's how you grow.

And so you'll see a lot of times, and that church hopping is a joke, but we laugh at it, but it's true. You meet those people that they're bouncing, bouncing, bouncing, bouncing, bouncing. You come to find out they're holding in a lot of root of bitterness or they're not going to church because the church hurt.

I can see some of my good friends in here. We've known you for years and we've hurt each other. Amen? Want me to name names? No? Myself and Abram.

Phil and Carrie. Yvette. Levy.

Joe. Where are you guys at? Ron. And we've hurt each other.

Like tears. Like you just, man. But what do we do? Well, I'm leaving.

No, the relationship comes back stronger and better than it's ever been. But here's the tip though. You don't go into the meeting going, Joseph, I see you.

I see a lot of people. No, but I'm just being honest. That's how we grow and learn.

Because I've hurt people and they've hurt me. And we don't run from it. We say, how can I help? What have I done? I apologize for that.

I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have done that. And because I'm bold and kind of hard in your face, and that's who I am.

So it's hard to tame a wild horse. You know, I love that those people are so soft-spoken and quiet. They don't upset anybody.

They don't like conflict. You wouldn't even know they're here. Ah, man.

I get jealous sometimes. But you know, we come in and I can keep looking around. Over the years.

But guess what? All of them have matured in leaps and bounds because we are family. We're not going to argue an eternity. These are silly things.

We say, you know what? I need to work on this. I need to grow. How can I grow? And we grow.

And that's how they're very mature. Very mature. I can name all the names I just named.

Phil, Carrie, Yvette. I mean, I've seen you guys in my eyes have matured so much. And it's an encouragement to me.

And your own spouse? Do you ever go with your spouse? Think me and Morgan get along all the time? No. We had a heated debate last week who was on their phone more. I said, well, at least mine, I'm on for work.

You guys are on for social stuff. Dad, you got to lead the way. I don't want to lead the way.

And my wife was so gracious. So gentle. You're just convicted.

But did we mature spiritually? Because you own it. You say, yeah, and I still haven't owned it yet. I'm still like, it's a 50-50 here.

I'm still not conceding yet. But isn't this not the most important? There's a good book out there, The Bait of Satan. I think Rick and Lori, are you guys here? You recommended it? You did a study on it? Yeah, that's a good book.

Peacemaker. Peacemaker. Lori, you too.

I mean, you guys have matured. I mean, I look up to you guys. Because of everything we do.

Those who can stay with you, that's your family. That's who you can count on. It's a stronger relationship.

But that's how Satan actually works in the church. I believe his biggest weapon is the spirit of offense. I know people, they're actually not here today because they're offended.

Not at me, praise God. But at other people. The spirit of offense.

And I've been really searching my heart this week because I run into people, I see people, they're offended. They're offended at me. They're like, Lord, what happened? Lord, they don't want to talk and reconcile and mature.

And they'll never mature. They'll stay stuck at that spiritual age. Many people, they've been a Christian 25 years.

It's still like they've been a Christian six months. That's how you grow spiritually. Boy, that was a rabbit trail if I've ever seen one.

I have no notes here. But isn't that true? I didn't, listen, and hear me right. I don't come here to be your friend.

I come here to help and to restore and renew marriages and revitalize relationships with the Lord. And that hurts sometimes. That breaks hearts.

And I haven't handled things perfectly all the time. I get upset just like you. Do you like when people come and they just decide to tell you what you need to work on? I'm working on it.

Now I've learned over the years... Okay, can we talk? Okay, I know it's going to be maybe something negative. But that's how we grow. Now, I should throw this in here.

There's a difference between constructive criticism. And again, this is all just coming to me. So, I don't know.

A critical heart. Big difference. I don't listen to the critical heart.

Oh, Shane, you're just arrogant. No, I don't listen to the critical heart. I listen to the constructive criticism who will shoot you straight.

Who will tell you the truth because they love you. They have no skin in the game. They're not biased.

And that's what you need to be careful of. Don't let the critical heart stop you and slow you down. Because there's always going to be criticism.

I mean, I get it 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Maybe not me personally, but on media, Facebook, this, this, Twitter, all the people just criticizing, criticizing, criticizing. But the encouragement is a thousand times greater.

And that's what you have to work on. Be brave. It's inner confidence.

He said be brave, be strong. Brave is inner confidence. And being strong is acting on that confidence.

Men, right now, we need you to be brave. Get off social media. Get off whatever's distracting you and get in the Word of God.

We need to ask, where are the Joshua's who said, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord? Praise God. You think Joshua wasn't worried? Where are the Joshua's? As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. The Isaiah's and the Jeremiah's who stood up for God's Word.

The David who confronted Goliath. Nehemiah, who with one hand, they built the wall, with the other hand, they kept off the enemy. Elijah, he confronted, he condemned wickedness.

Ezekiel, it says the Spirit of the Lord fell upon him and he would begin to do great exploits for God. The three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace. They said we will not bow to you, O King Nebuchadnezzar.

And they would not concede to evil. We need men, again, to stand up. And you won't do that without... This is why I wish I could get into the ending here that is so powerful.

You've got to become men of prayer. We often hear the power of the praying mom. When are we going to hear the power of the praying dad? That's what I want to hear.

I want to hear the power of the praying dad. Nine times out of 10, nine times out of 10, you'll hear testimonies. Oh, thank God, the prayers of my mom.

Thank God, the prayers of my grandmother. But when are you going to start to hear, thank God for the prayers of my dad. I don't want to go down on my watch with my kids watching me go down with the vessel and not being loyal to the Lord and not praying and not seeking the heart of God.

Matthew Henry said, apostasy begins at the closet door. And what he meant was when you don't pray, you fall away. When you don't pray, you fall away.

Closing verse, 2 Chronicles, But you be strong, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded. Men, you need to remember that. You, I don't care if you have no education, you don't know the Bible very well, you've messed up.

He says, but you be strong, do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded. I truly believe, call me simple-minded, call me narrow-minded, call me immature, but I truly believe that God will reward your work when you commit your works to Him. You might not see all the fruit.

You might have to struggle, but at the end of the day, you can say, the Lord sees what I'm doing. He sees my prayer closet. Even though my children aren't serving God, my children have rejected God, God still sees my tears, staining my Bible.

Even though they're rejecting me, even though the world is hell-bent on rejecting Him, even though Disney has gone berserk, even though Hollywood has drifted so far, even though Washington, but He sees my tears. He will reward my prayers because I trust in the Word of God that says my work will be rewarded. He will strengthen those who follow Him.

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