

# One Thing That Hinders Spiritual Growth

by Shane Idleman

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of a solid foundation and proper leadership in fostering spiritual growth within the church and individual lives.*

**Duration:** 56:37

**Scripture:** Acts 6:5

**Topics:** "Obedience to God", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

Shane Idleman addresses the critical issue of spiritual growth in his sermon, emphasizing that disobedience is the primary hindrance to spiritual maturity. He illustrates how the church, like individuals, often fails to grow due to a lack of foundational obedience and the neglect of God's Word. Idleman encourages believers to actively engage in their faith, highlighting the importance of laying a solid foundation, serving others, and the power of prayer and agreement through the laying on of hands. He warns against the dangers of rebellion and complacency, urging the congregation to seek a deeper relationship with God through obedience and trust. Ultimately, he calls for a renewed commitment to spiritual growth, reminding listeners that true obedience leads to the spread of God's Word and the fulfillment of His purpose.

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## Transcript

What delays spiritual growth? This is absolutely adorable at 5 months, but it is terrible at 25, at 35. When we look like that at 40 years old, there's a problem. And what we're seeing in the church, nationally especially, is the church is not growing spiritually.

We're just not growing spiritually. I'm not talking about this one per se, but most churches. And the reason is a couple different things.

But before we progress in the book of Acts, we need to see why many people are not progressing. Why aren't we growing spiritually? Do you want to know the main delay, the one thing that delays spiritual growth? Are you ready for the answer? Okay, well I'm going to hold you in suspense for just a minute as you open your Bibles to Acts 6, verse 5. Acts 6, verse 5. What just happened last week is the Word of God was spreading, the apostles are preaching and teaching, and you just have this wonderful example. I would love to see that organic church, wouldn't you? The purity of God's Word and the church just growing.

And now, because of that, there's a huge need. Widows are being neglected, and the apostles said, listen, choose seven men from among you that will fill with the Spirit of God, tremendous faith, let them serve the people so we can focus on the Word of God. And we talked about the difference between elders and deacons last week.

We also talked about what is a woman's role in the church? That's huge today. Women pastors, what's your thoughts on that? Women operating in different offices of leadership, what are your thoughts on that? Well, if you missed last week, then you're going to have to go to the website and look at January 8th, 2017. That sermon should come up, defining roles.

And the whole point when we talk about this issue is to understand how God made us. It's really not about superiority or anything, it's complement. The characteristics of a woman, oh my Lord, do men need that? I can't even imagine leading my family without that side of it.

Or vice versa, they complement each other how God designed it. The two shall become one flesh, and they shall serve God and glorify Him. So I talked about that last week.

So that's the setting now. That we need seven men, filled with the Spirit of God, to be deacons, to take on this office of deacon. Six, five.

And the saying, please the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. And they chose six other people after him.

I had a hard time pronouncing their names this week, so I thought I'd just throw that out there. And you guys can go through their names. Prochorus, I'm going to try it.

Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas. And Nicholas a proselyte from Antioch. He was converted in Antioch.

Whom they set before the apostles. So these men were set before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.

And the great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. I will come back to that in a minute, but I just want to pull out a few things before next week we're going to jump into Stephen and persecution. What does persecution look like? Fast facts on persecution.

And we know persecution is coming at some point. And what's that going to look like? That will be next week. So I'm going to stop here for a minute and just pull out a few things.

The first point is God often delays growth until the foundation is established. The growth of the church, although it grew, was going to be stifled for a bit until they chose men, different people, to actually go and serve the body. And it was a good reminder for us that God will often slow down growth until the foundation is established.

And I can tell you as just being with this church from the beginning, that we were not ready for this growth even a few years ago. We just weren't ready with leadership, with service. We couldn't have went anywhere.

So God allowed that foundation to build and build and build and then the growth came. Often also in your own personal lives. I don't necessarily mean that spiritual growth is delayed, but growth.

God giving you responsibility until the foundation is set. Because God's got to work on certain things in our character before he calls us to do certain things. There are baby steps and God will prepare us.

But often in order to carry the weight that he has called us to do, the foundation first must be built. Jesus said, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a man who what? He built his house on a solid foundation. So the church was growing.

They said, here's a need, hold on. And as soon as that need was filled, those responsibilities were given, the leadership was in place, then the word of God multiplied. So it's a good reminder for us, don't get frustrated at the foundation.

Because we all want the finished house, don't we? I mean, if it were up to most of us, we'd tell the contractor, just go start building the walls on that piece of dirt. We're not going to wait for permits. We're not going to wait for footings and concrete.

Let's save a lot of costs. Let's get right to that house. I want to move in there.

But as we all know, how long would that house stand, if at all? It wouldn't. It would just crumble because the foundation anchors it. And I've noticed that God will use things to build your foundation.

You don't just immediately start, because we have these delusions of grandeur, right? God's going to use me. And it's good. It's good to have those things.

But the foundation comes first, and then you're not more apt to fail in certain areas. Now, this is another interesting point, prayed and laid hands on them. Laid hands on them.

And I've seen both extremes. There's, in the church, you don't want to lay hands. That's kind of weird.

I mean, you're transferring power or something. And we just, we kind of just, I don't think so. And then the other side, there's laying hands on everybody.

Brother, you need to receive the Holy Spirit, and it's not going to happen until I lay hands on you. It's laying hands that would transfer certain power. And you have this, you're making the laying on of hands almost magical.

And we don't see that either. Basically, I mean, you have to study this pretty extensively. Hebrews 6. You saw the Old Testament.

A lot of examples in the Old Testament where Jacob, when he was getting ready to die, and Joseph brought his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and he laid his hands on those. And to me, in studying this, what I found, it's a confirmation. I'm agreeing with you.

For example, what if somebody came in for prayer, and I said, hey, you just stay right there. You're close enough. What do you need prayer for? And like the leopards, you know, you just keep, so laying on of hands is kind of me, I'm coming, this is important to me.

I'm agreeing with you. And there's something that happens when we agree, when two come together, the laying on of hands. I would encourage every father to lay hands on your kids, every mother.

There's nothing wrong. When my kids are sleeping, God, I'll pray over her. God, don't let her walk away.

Hold her tight. Hold her to the foundation, Lord. Fill her with your Spirit.

God, sanctify her. Keep her a pure vessel until she's married. God, you've got to guard her, because the wolves do not want to guard her.

And I pray the blood over her, and the boy too. Oh, gosh, you should hear the prayers for the boy. Man.

There's something in that when a father, when a mother, they lay hands. It's agreeing. There's something, the power of touch.

And I don't know if it's true, so I don't, it's, when you preach, it's kind of hard, because you throw things out and think, oh, I hope that statistic was true. I don't remember. But I heard somewhere that an infant, a child can die without touch.

That's powerful. That's very powerful. And usually, I actually just got a text before the service of a marriage in crisis.

They don't go here, they're needing some help. And often when you talk to the people, the touch is gone. The intimacy is gone.

It's, we live in the house, same house. But I don't know you. So there's something to that touch.

So think about that. Touch your spouse more. It's okay.

The honeymoon is not always over. You can do that. Touch your spouse.

Touch your children. Love them. Hug them.

Don't let the world pervert certain things. And we see this here, that they laid on the hands of these people. And in the New Testament, you'll see ordaining or commissioning.

You actually see people being given the gift of the Holy Spirit often on the laying on of hands. And I don't want to get too much in that, but there's something when you agree and when you pray. And often we pray with people in the prayer room.

We'll ask, you know, can I pray with you? Can we lay hands on your shoulder? Can we pray with you and agree with you? There's power in that. But we don't want to make it into some magical formula. Because Jesus even just prayed and people were healed and he wasn't even there.

Remember the man who said, no, don't even come into my house. I'm a man in authority and I have people under me. And when they say, I say, go here, go here, they go here.

Just say the word Jesus. Just pray and they will be healed. But don't overlook this area, laying on of hands.

And there's a lot to that. 1st Timothy 5.2, don't lay hands on any man suddenly. Is that interesting? Don't lay hands on any man suddenly because you're agreeing with them.

Neither be partakers of other men's sin. Now the context here is leadership in the church. And it would be like, hey, I met this guy, you know, I go to the elders.

I met this guy last week. He seems pretty nice. He's older.

He says he reads the Bible a lot. He seems really mature. Let's make him an elder.

Hmm. Well, lay hands on no man suddenly. And then if I did that and then you allow a wolf into the pen, I contribute because I validated his character and not knowing him.

I allowed him to come in and cause harm. So you lay hands on no man suddenly, especially when they're young. I love young people fired up with the Holy Spirit.

And there's a pastor I know that he became a pastor, I think 21, 22 with the youth talking about planning a church someday. And I said, you know what, my only advice is get about 10 years of life experience underneath your belt, and then come back and talk with me. Because you do that 21, 22, you're not prepared for life.

So there's something in laying hands on no man suddenly. Give it time. Test their character.

Because as a church, we are responsible for those who we put in positions of leadership. That's why we do background checks on children's ministry. That's why they have to be attending.

That's why I tell men, if you have an issue with pornography or homosexuality, all these things, you will not help with the children's ministry. And we're about ready to institute lie detector tests, you know. Just kidding.

I'm trying to break up. You guys are like, oh, man, this is going to hurt the sermon. We're not doing that.

We have no concerns. But that's why we put a certain, especially on elders and deacons, we want to know the people. The hospital homes.

When people go to the hospital homes, we want to try to know them. Who are they? What are they going to tell the people? And there's a few people I said, you're not going to go to the hospital homes. You need the hospital homes.

You need spiritual. You need to be filled with the Spirit. You're not mature enough to go and do these things.

What about the prayer team in the next room over? We've talked about before, I want to know who these people are. Have they been coming a while? Do they love the Lord? Are they filled with the Spirit of God? Because the church is in essence saying, hey, you can go to these people for prayer. So that's what the whole laying on of hands, I really turned that one into a lot more than it was supposed to be.

But that's what that is. It's recognizing, it's praying for, it's agreeing with. And when the church does that, we have to be careful that we know who these people are.

And then it says, then the word spread and grew. Then the word spread and grew. Now this is what we desire in our own lives, don't we? We desire for the Word of God to spread and for it to grow in our hearts.

And there's a question I'm going to throw out there that I've been thinking about all week. I've been chewing on it. I've been praying about it.

I've been reading books on it. I usually don't read a whole book on that week. I'll grab a couple and then look at the topics in there.

And I mean, you can go back from J.C. Riles, a good one on holiness, or Andrew Murray on obedience and all these things. And I asked myself this question. Is it possible to fully obey God? Oh, yes and no's, huh? Is it possible to fully obey God? I'm not asking you guys.

Think about it up here. Think about it. I'm glad the 9am service, because I have a trial run for the 11th.

I know, and then I can just get right to the point. Is it possible to fully obey God? Here's a scripture I want you to think about. You can actually read 1 John 2 this week.

It says things like this. I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if you sin, not when, but if you sin, you have an advocate, Jesus Christ, a mediator who will go before you.

We know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments. Is it possible to fully obey God? Here's my thoughts on it. We know that, well if you don't know, there was a movement a while back.

It started with John Wesley formed the Methodist denomination and I think he would roll on his grave to see what they are now, what they're embracing compared to how it was started. Methodists come from the word methodology. They had a certain method about their discipleship program.

He lived at the same time as George Whitefield and George Whitefield noticed that there was a method behind it and the denomination was being built. But something came in called perfectionism. Perfectionism.

And people started to believe that they can live perfectly. They are living perfectly according to God's standards. They've reached a state of perfection.

Now that's not good because that's not possible and I like what R.C. Sproul said, the peril of perfectionism is that it seriously distorts the human mind. Imagine the contortions through which we must put ourselves to delude us into thinking that we have in fact achieved a state of sinlessness. So you have perfectionism but guess what? As with most extremes, what's the other extreme? It's called antinomianism.

It's just a big word that means there's no moral law that's important. Morality doesn't matter. It's not important.

I'm saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It's all about grace. Haven't you heard that? Brother, I live under grace now.

Well, you might want to go back to your wife and stop drinking. Well, I live under grace now brother. I can do this and do that.

No, that's a perversion of the gospel. So if you want my answer, is it possible to fully obey God? Scripture says that we do it. The possibility is there but because of fallen nature, because like Paul, O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death? For with the mind I serve the law of God, meaning I want to, but with the flesh the law of sin.

So I've got a constant battle every single day. Now to win that battle perfectly every day for the rest of your life, please talk to me afterwards if you've mastered that. Just this morning, as soon as the sun comes up and I'm leaving here.

I got here real early and leaving here to go back and get ready. Guess what I want? I want a donut and coffee really bad and I start making excuses. Like oh man, Lord, I've been doing good.

I mean, I'm tired this morning and I can relate to the sermon now. I gave in. I can relate.

And all these thoughts and you're like, what's wrong with that? Well, I try not to eat those things, especially Sundays and fasting. I just bring a green smoothie with who knows what in it. And then afterwards or during the sermon or pride maybe comes in and you want to look how many numbers we have in the church now.

Whoops, I just got prideful. Somebody wants to pray afterwards. I'm too busy.

I just got arrogant or distracted. Everywhere you go there's a constant struggle. So is it possible to fully obey God? The scripture says that we do that.

However, knowing that we can't hit that mark. But here's the problem. The problem isn't that we raise our standard and miss it.

It's that we lower it and we hit it. And is it possible to fully obey God? What would our lives look like if we obeyed Him more? Because I think we can obey Him in certain areas more. And what about if obeying God was a passion, not a pain? I mean, what if it was a joy, not a drudgery, a delight and not a disappointment? Obeying God.

Now, beep, beep, beep, beep. Let me, you know, the warning comes on Pharisee alert. Pharisee alert.

I can hear some people saying now. I mean, I get emails probably monthly now that I'm a moralist and legalistic. What does that mean? Can you send me, well, can you send me one scripture on why we shouldn't obey the Word of God? And of course not.

It's conjecture. It's theory. It's New Age philosophy and all this garbage because they don't want to obey.

And they've been convicted. But there is a Pharisee alert right here. People on the other side are saying, finally, somebody who pushes obedience.

Shane, hit them with the Word of God and hit them hard. Obey, obey, obey, obey, obey. Rah, rah, rah, rah, rah.

That's not healthy either. So you have, I love Christianity. It's got these extremes.

You know, it's this obedience side. It's obedient. No grace.

A person falls. How could you not obey? And they just beat them up with obedience. And then you have the other side that likes to say legalistic and you're a Pharisee and you're a moralist.

You know, you're too much on this and too much on that. And it's just scripture. Even if you quote scripture to somebody.

I've gotten a big thing on Facebook recently with just posting that for most people, it might be a good idea to reconsider your alcohol consumption. Boy, did I stir the hornet's nest. Legalistic.

That's being a Pharisee. The Bible doesn't prohibit it. Well, I have 25 scriptures supporting drunkenness is bad and I'm sick of counseling people and I'm hurt by so many families that are hurt by this.

Have you had to go sit and talk to the dad whose wife just walked out or the kid that wants to commit suicide because of alcoholism in his home? Have you went to the suicide scenes where they have to go get the coroner because of this thing that you're saying legalistic? Now, of course, there are certain freedoms and this isn't a sermon on that, but you have to be careful where you use these terms. And I've noticed those who use these terms don't like to hear what God's word says. That's the bottom line.

Oh, that's legalistic. I don't have to do it. Oh, wow.

Wasn't that nice? I wish I could do that. And just to define this term for you, legalism is a self-righteous attitude that rates spirituality on following rules. In other words, guys, I don't go to the movies.

I don't drink and smoke and hang out with those who do and chew and all those things and I just, God, I'm way up here and you're way down there and God loves me because I follow all these rules. That's legalism. You're legalistic.

However, God says, follow these rules so you can be close to me and have this intimate relationship so I can guard you, so I keep you close to me, so the enemy is not going to steal, kill and destroy because you're obeying what I said. So obedience is a beautiful thing and I got this last week. The reason we don't want to is we want to do our own thing.

At the heart of disobedience is rebellion. God wants what's best for us and says, do this. Just last week, my son wanted to put a whole bunch of butter on the trampoline because it's funner.

And what did I say? Not a chance. Not a chance. And then he wants to climb and play on the roof.

Not a chance. Guess who's mad at me? Yes, the son. That's just mean.

I can't have any fun here. And then I go in the house, I look at, I go, how did, get off the wall. He's got our three-year-old up on the six feet tall wall.

He builds a little ladder so she can get up on the wall. No, three-year-olds can't be on the wall. But see, to him, I'm mean and not having fun, but I said, son, if she falls backwards, she could break her neck and if you're on the roof, you could die.

See, it's a loving father saying, do this and don't do this. Same thing with God. So look at obedience as God wanting to guard.

God's loving enough to tell us the truth. So what delays spiritual growth? Disobedience. I've seen Christians look like that who've been Christians twenty years.

And it's sad. It's sad. You go home and you go, what in the world is going on? You should have got that down the first year.

You don't, you don't, and many times they're not obeying the Word of God. They're staying in that infant state. Listen, the Bible says, listen, ears to hear, follow, observe, heed, carry out, comply, obey.

And then what's in the negative light? Rebel, ignore, disregard, neglect, decline, or deny. That's disobey. 1 Samuel 15.23. I don't know if all of you are familiar with this, but I want to read it.

Rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft. Can you believe that? Now, let me throw out a hope bomb real quick. Shane, this is heavy.

Well, it is and it's supposed to be. Because my motivation is to have you and help you grow spiritually as well as myself. Now the hope is, rebellion is as a sin of witchcraft.

Rebellion, say, Lord, I was rebellious. That's wrong. God help me.

You're in a good spot. It's the person who operates in a continual rebellious attitude where the danger is. It's, they're just rebellious.

They're arrogant. You know, they're a Christian, they say, but they're just rebellious and arrogant. They love to flaunt their liberty.

They love to flaunt their sin. They don't, they're just rebellious. God says, that's as if, as the sin of witchcraft.

And God leads us. Here's the, here's the freeing thing. God leads us primarily through obedience.

Noah, would you build an ark? Abraham, go to a land I will show you. Where's it at, Lord? I'll show you. What am I supposed to do? Go and I'll show you where it's at.

Paul, obedient. God led him through obedience. What about Jesus, Shane? Jesus? Yeah.

He was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. So obedience leads us often in the right direction. God's word says this, I'm going that direction.

God's word says this, I'm going this direction. I'm going, but when it says, God's word says this and I go this way, I have no direction. That's why I often give people the counsel.

It's very easy. Hopefully you can remember this. Stay, pray, and obey.

Stay in God's word. Pray for direction and obey what you know. You can never go, what is God's will for my life? Stay, pray, and obey.

Well, Shane, I got to make a decision on a college. Stay, pray, and obey. When you're staying, praying, and obeying, you'll fill out the applications.

You'll hear the one door open, the one door close. Let God help direct you. Sometimes you worry too much, what am I supposed to do? I mean, when the thought of bringing the church here first came up, I was going to lose my mind.

Like, Lord, is that you or is that the devil? I mean, who's putting this plan together? I mean, who thought of this? And you go back, okay, well, stay, pray, and obey. Stay, pray, and obey. Lord, you'll show us.

Close this door quickly if it's not you, and then God, open this door if it is. And I tell you that, I don't know when it was exactly, but the first time I knew was in January this year. Actually, January, it's been a year now.

When I was first asked to speak here, and I felt God's power in a powerful way. I felt, okay, this feels good. This feels like home.

It wasn't some weird mystical feeling. It was God confirming His will and the encouragement of the people. And I said, okay, Lord, you, because God's not going to go, you stayed in my word, you got your heart right, you meditated, you prayed, you obeyed my principles, and I'm going to just throw you a curveball, and now you're going to go the opposite direction.

You're going to ruin your life. You're going to marry the wrong person. Now, the reason I threw in marry the wrong person in there, that comes up all the time with Christians in their 20s, or even a little younger, maybe 19, 20, that I don't want to marry the wrong person.

I don't want to date the wrong person. And they're all, oh, gosh, I'm so confused. I'm so confused.

Oh, what am I supposed to do? Well, here's what you're supposed to do. Number one, stop having sex, stop living together. That'll be very clear.

Well, but yeah, I don't know. And they're so confused. Oh, well, let's start here.

Was that a little too much for the 9am service? I'll leave that out for the next one. But that's what you have to do. You have to know.

And the reason I'm saying that is so many people want to know God's will, but they don't want to start with the first step in knowing God's will, and that's obeying and getting back on track and knowing what you do, do what you do know. Do what you do know. Yeah, that sounded great.

Let me think that through. It did. Remember the old hymn, trust and obey, written in 1887, when we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way.

That's true. When you're walking in his word, he lights the way. Reminds me of the scripture, your word is a lamp to my feet or light to my feet, a lamp to my path.

Same thing. While we do his goodwill, he abides with us still and with all who trust and obey. Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but then to trust and obey.

And I'm convinced a lot of problems people are having a lot of the issues, a lot of anxiety, a lot of depression, a lot of just emotional struggles are because they're not trusting and obeying. Now I'm not saying this will cure everything, right? Because there's a battle. It's difficult, but many times when we're trusting, and here's why too, when a Christian is trusting and obeying there's tremendous peace.

I can get a letter from the IRS saying you're being audited and have tremendous peace if we're trusting and obeying. I can have emails saying this and trusting and obeying. But when you're not, and even the little things in life, my engine lights on, oh gosh I'm going to freak out.

You know, even the little things when you're not trusting and obeying because you know you're not where you need to be. And there's nothing, I often say there's nothing worse than a Christian who's not trusting and obeying God. They're miserable.

They're miserable. This is a very important topic. As I was reading this, and here's my motivation for you, is to grow and go.

Grow in your faith, go out and spread the word of God. Grow in your faith, go out and spread the word of God. Just like what happened in Acts.

Spiritual immature people will do this. They'll come to church, not month in and month out, year in and year out. They won't grow.

They won't go. Nothing's changing. Isn't this the same discussion we had five years ago? You're still there.

You never went and visited hospital homes. You never got involved in the church. It's all about you and your problems and the same thing.

And the reason I'm being pretty pointed here is I want to wake people up. You don't have to live like that. You can go and grow by obeying.

Obedience is to knowing God's will what muscle training is to the body. Do you know that's how muscles grow? Is they are stretched beyond their capacity. What happens is you do something and it stretches.

It's like I'm not used to this. I'm going to grow. We get into muscle cell receptor sites.

I won't do that right now. But it begins to grow because of the strain. Begins to grow because of the strain.

And 10 pounds turns into 20. 20 turns into 30. 30 turns into 40.

And you begin to, same thing with obedience. You begin to grow. Shane, humble yourself.

I don't want to humble myself. I had to send three emails and apologize to people on that alcohol Facebook post because I went off a little bit. My wife said, you know, you shouldn't have said that.

Okay, who do I start with? You know, and that's humbling, but you grow. And you, because I shouldn't, I should have just let people debate it, but guess who wants to get involved? You know, so that hurt. I had to grow, right? And you have to do, it's going to hurt.

I have to grow. And that's how you grow spiritually is you do the things that are difficult. What about unforgiveness? I'm not, I'm never forgiving that person.

You don't know what they did to me. Oh, I hate that person. Don't leave me hanging again.

Do you ever say that sometimes? There's people I'm pretty mad at, but you've got to release that. You release that. Not here, not here in this church.

That's for sure. Because I would work that out. There's nobody in this church I actually hate or dislike.

I like, love everybody at Westside Christian Fellowship, but those are, what they are outside on Facebook, they're little Facebook trolls. Remember? The guy who called me a false teacher, I'm a wolf in sheep's clothing because I pushed the dietary law of the Old Testament. So I said, could you give me a call and explain that to me? Never heard from him.

Or all these, because that, and that's what gets me frustrated. And that's what I have to work on is allowing those things. Okay, God just, you know, comes with the territory.

It comes with, you know, preaching God's Word, because we want everybody to like us, don't you? Don't you want everybody to like you? I don't know where that comes from. Maybe some of you don't, but most people want everybody to like them. And that's the challenge.

That's why it's so funny when God called me, I was speaking to large groups of people about fitness. And they would actually take surveys. Did the author do his job well? Did he explain everything? Would you come back again? How would you rate the message? And you better have all nice little five stars right there, Joelstein type sermons, in order to, you got that one too, okay, in order to get, that's how you rated it.

But then you come into preaching, you just got to tear that thing up. And you say, God, what did you call me to do? What did you put on my heart early in the morning? I don't care who would offend, right? As a matter of fact, it needs to offend some people. But when I leave, I need to go over there, he'll say, God, did I do what you called me to do? That's what matters.

So it's a whole different element there. Now, we should want people to like us, a good name should be chosen, your attitude and the way you talk to people. But at the end of the day, the Word of God will offend.

Now, this is interesting. This is even in a medical website. Well, I wrote this early in the morning this morning, I better say it.

The hardest group to talk to about this issue of obedience often is seasoned Christians. They've been a Christian a long time, they've got even titles after their name. Or they like to tell me how often they read through the Bible every year.

They like to say how many scriptures they've quoted, they want. And it's, this is the hardest group to get this message to, because they think they got it down. And they get in this little box, minus humility.

They get in this little thing of a seasoned Christian, and I've got it mastered. And we look at them and say, no, you don't. You need to hear this.

A medical website, in order for a cell in the body to grow, and the reason it's interesting, in order for us to grow spiritually, I immediately saw the connection. In order for a cell in your body to grow, three things have to happen. First, you must have food, the cell must have food.

Second, they must be active or they'll become too weak to do their work. Third, they must help the body get rid of waste material. Isn't that interesting? In order for a cell to grow, it must be active, it must get proper nutrition, it must remove the waste out of what is coming in, the bad things, and have new nutrition.

So I want to tie that in briefly. Food for growth is obedience. If you want to grow, which I've been saying last 20 minutes, it requires obedience.

Don't look at obedience as a bad word. You need to read, it's called cognitive behavioral therapy. Change in psychology.

The Word of God says conform, not to the world, but transform by the renewing of your mind. Obedience is a very good thing. Because we get in this mind, right? Obedience is a bad thing.

Obedience, obey, obey, obey. Especially in America, we don't want to obey. We're, you know, gung-ho, and we're independent.

Get this mind, in your mind, that obedience is a good thing. We pray for God to change our situation, but often, He puts us in the situation to change us. Lord, take me out of this situation.

But often He uses that situation to change us. So food for growth is obedience. You have to be active.

The Holy Spirit is the helper, not the doer. The Holy Spirit is not the doer. Have you ever said, God, take this away, and it's not going anywhere.

God, take this away, and it's not going anywhere. Because He's the helper often, not the doer. Now sometimes He sets people free.

Thank God for that. But more often than not, I've seen the opposite. Because it's warfare, it's a battle.

God wants you to obey Him. Anytime there's obedience, there's release. If you're bound by something, if you're taken captive, there's, and obedience takes place.

And I'm talking about doing this in your own strength, and pulling up a lot of willpower. I'm saying submitting, obeying to the work of the Holy Spirit, so He can change you, and change me. So you have to stay active in this area of doing something with the Word of God says.

Here's one perfect thing from Romans. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And you may think you can manage your sin, but it's more powerful than you are.

A person named J. Lee Grady said that. You may think you can manage your sin, but it's more powerful than you are. And then the third point, you need to rid yourself of the waste that is preventing growth.

Colossians 3.8. But now you must also rid yourself of all such things as these. And I'll be honest with you, it's an interesting dichotomy here. With the Word of God relying on the Holy Spirit, it's the power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit changes me, it's the Holy Spirit in me now, that allows me to preach with boldness, it's the Holy Spirit in you that allows, and the Holy Spirit's work, but it tells me to get rid of these things.

Get rid of these things. And I've found that the Holy Spirit comes alongside and helps. God help me in this area of anger, lashing out, slander, whatever it is, lying the tongue.

God help me in this area. I'm going to turn from doing that, but Holy Spirit help me. God's grace comes and empowers.

Sickness in James 5. I'm just going to tie this into obedience because I think it's important. I talked about this Wednesday night and we've got a few minutes. This is a scripture that's not real popular, but sometimes God will use sickness to get our attention, or He'll allow circumstances to get our attention.

James 5. I don't have the verse handy, I just have the chapter, but I believe it's the last portion of James 5. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, so it's something that's maybe bedridden, or the elders have to go to this person, and they have to call for them. And let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick. And the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. And I'm going to move forward.

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, which is disobeys, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. Now there are different opinions on this whole passage. Sometimes sinners, it turns a sinner, you know a Christian is called a saint, but a person sometimes caught in sin, and allows sin to become a lifestyle and they are caught in sin, refers to as a sinner.

They are caught in the sin. So if you turn that person from the error of his way, you will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sin. So sin's connection to illness, cross reference Mark 2, 5, John 9, 1 Corinthians 11, there's a lot of references where sickness can be attributed to sin.

But we are not the type of church that assumes if you're sick, you're in sin. Because if that were the case, we would not be here today. Many of us.

If we're sin, sin sick, sin sick, then that would, everybody would be sick often. Or from time to time for the spiritual people. You just, you just, you from time to time.

But most people would be sick often. But God often uses sickness to get our attention. I've seen him rip a job from somebody.

I've seen, I was just talking to a man yesterday at a memorial service, that he was actually, him and his wife went through like a month or two in the hospital, all these things, and God used it to refocus the whole family back to him. Circumstances, sickness God will often use. But confession and repentance brought restoration and healing.

He will be forgiven, meaning he will be let loose of the chastisement of God. He will be let loose. You can even look in secular headlines.

Is guilt getting the best of you? How emotions cause disease and illness? The physical effects of guilt. Many, even psychologists are recognizing that person who holds on to guilt, it will, it's a toxic to the body. That's why the wonderful message about the gospel is you say you come to Christ and you allow that guilt to go, allow him to carry the guilt.

He died for every single sin on the planet. And I hear people say, but he, not this, oh shame, but not this. He won't understand.

Yes, he will. You've got to come to the cross and give him the guilt and the shame and the regret. And once you're cleansed, it's often the body is even cleansed.

The physical, the physical benefits of forgiveness. We can look at the brain chemistry. And what about studies on anger and heart attacks? Ungodly emotions are very toxic on the body.

And my second motivation is to help that person, to help that wander. Brethren, if anyone wanders from the truth and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the air of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sin. Let me talk about this for a minute and I'll get to the closing point.

To wander is to disobey. Transgressions of the law and the Old Testament. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

But Luke and Matthew also talked about the sheep who wandered. Truth is the path. Here's what wandering is.

Truth is the path that God sets before us. Here's the path. I know what to do, but what am I going to do? I don't want to do that.

This is fun over here. Can I play this, Brent? You know, this wandering over here and I'm over here with this and I'm over here. I'm a father.

That's why I'm not on the worship team. Oh, there we go. I vowed I would never do that.

Look what happened. But that's what wandering is. I'm not supposed to do that.

I'm not. I'm wandering. So what God does, he comes back on this main path, come back on this path.

That's a lot of times what the Word of God is penetrating to bring people back on this path. Jeremiah 6, thus says the Lord, stand in the way and see and ask for the old paths where the good way is and walk in it. Then you will find rest for your soul.

So Jeremiah, God's saying through Jeremiah to the children of Israel, go back to the old paths. Jeremiah, remember the old paths that I sent when Moses delivered the children of Israel and then Joshua took over. You conquered the land.

You had kings like Solomon and David who would follow me and go hard after you. And then I had judges. I would put righteous judges like Samuel and I would deliver through the hand of Samson and go back to those old paths, even though the people were disobeying even in that time.

They're supposed to go back to the old paths, the old paths of righteousness. That's why he said put away for me the sound of your instruments. Get rid of this stuff, but let righteousness run down like a mighty river.

Let the justice of God, the holiness of God run down and change you from the inside out. Go back to that path. That's what he's saying.

Go back to that old path. So if I could sum up James 5 in this area, this sickness he's talking about is caused by wandering from God. It's a pattern of sin and disobedience.

He can use financial difficulties. Do you know how many people come back to the Lord because of financial difficulties? And if you were to keep them rich and wealthy and prosperous, they would have never, never even give God a second look. But he'll orchestrate circumstances.

I told you about my own struggle. He ripped everything out of me. I said, okay, mercy, mercy God, thank you.

But when I'm driving the brand new truck in a brand new house in my 20s and I got it all together, I'll throw God a little prayer real quick. And here's what happens. The deception is so real that I think I'm doing so well that God is blessing me.

He must want me to continue down this destructive path because he's blessing me. That's why people stay in it. Well, God's blessing me.

The devil will bless you too. He'll open tremendous doors. He'll open Apple, computers, Microsoft, all these guys that start in their little garage.

What happened? But they give to charities thinking they're good with God. I gave. That's a deception of it.

So God will rip everything out, including your idols, until you fall on your face and worship him. He'll take the job. He'll take the spouse.

People say, does God cause divorce, Shane? I say, he allows it. It's a result of bad decisions, poor choices, misguided focus, so many different things. But he allows these things.

Read Hebrews. I believe it was Hebrews where God chastises. Hebrews 12.

Read 12. He chastises those he loves. He loves.

Remember, I shared this before many times. My mom, we're out somewhere at the park. She just grabbed a little twig off the tree.

I knew what that meant. Oh, man, I'm running. Just a little twig, right on that little, you know, soft spot.

Chastise to not do that again. I said, okay. See, the flesh has to be brought into submission.

If the flesh, if you do not discipline the flesh, oh God, help us. The prisons, that's why I have a heart for these guys in there. They were allowed to run rampant.

Their parents were gone. The husband was missing 40% or from fatherless homes, or mom's trying to keep it together. They just come home, do whatever they want, whenever they want, and they wonder what happened.

You were allowed to just run like a wild animal. And this is the ramifications. This is the result.

So this sickness is caused by wandering from God. It's a pattern of sin and disobedience. Warnings, convictions, and rebukes have all been ignored.

The hope is that this sickness will take the person back to God. Confession and repentance will take place, thus releasing the person from God's chastisement. The soul is saved.

Now this is interesting. There's debates again on two sides. The soul, I mean, sometimes we think a soul is in hell.

And the eternal part of a person, see your body, soul, spirit, the eternal part is in hell. And theologians have debated this for many years. But the soul in the Greek is psuche.

It's where we get our word psychology. Psuche, the soul. If you look in the Hebrew, it's nephesh.

And God breathed the breath of life into Adam, and he became a living soul, a living nephesh. So it can be body, it can be eternal. Sometimes it's used interchangeably.

But this person, their body was on the road to death because of this sickness. It was a sickness leading to death. So you turn this person back, you saved this person from dying, and the ongoing pattern of sin, the multitude of sin, is covered, concealed, and dealt with.

Obedience matters. All because of obedience. The wanderer came home.

And then we read, then the word of God spread. And I want to remind everybody in this room that power follows obedience. I don't know where you're at.

I don't know where you're at with God. I don't know anything really about most of you spiritually. Some of you I do.

But obedience, once you obey, the power of God flows in. Once you remove certain areas of your life, the power of God flows in. You are reawakened.

You are reestablished. That's what that word RE means. To reduce, to bring back.

Renewal. Reestablish. Reawaken.

This obedience. Lord, I'm going to obey you in these areas. And you are so filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

Then the Bible becomes alive. Then you can't get enough of church. What ministry can I sign up for? You're in Trader Joe's and you see people sensitive.

Are you okay? Do you need prayer? You're at Wal-Mart. And do you need clothing? You're sensitive with the Spirit of God because you're filled with the Spirit of God. That's what a spiritually mature person is.

They are filled with the Spirit of God. And that's why I'm so passionate about this subject. Most people are walking around and they can't sense the Spirit of God if it came up and slapped them in the face.

They say, what was that? Well, I don't know. Because they're not sensitive to the things of God. Shayne, be easy.

I can't be easy. You know, there's a slap in the face sermon. We have to, whoa, what do I, I even, myself, Lord, what are areas I need to work on? Where am I disobeying? I can give you a long list over the last 15 years that he finally chiseled out and still working on some things.

It's a process. But it's just interesting. As that confession takes place, as restoration takes place, there's renewal.

There's a filling of the Holy Spirit. Oswald J. Smith, he was born in the 1800s. He said, I had to be broken.

God knew that I was proud and ambitious, and so he could not use me. He had to bring me down by taking everything away from me. And only when I had been completely surrendered, only when I had been broken, was he able to trust me again and use me for his glory.

And this guy has sermons and books and all different kinds of things after he was broken, not before. Because you can't go out in the power of the Holy Spirit and pride and arrogance. That's not going to work.

So I'm just going to talk to two people and close with this. The wanderer needs to make a choice today. The wanderer needs to make a choice today.

Everything in the Bible is immediate. It doesn't say, you know what, ponder this for the next month. You know, just pray about it and see.

It's now. Now is the day of redemption. Now is the day of repentance.

Now is the day of obedience. Now is the day to renew because there's no second chance. And when I read, well sometimes there is, but there's no guarantee of a second chance, I should have said.

Jeremiah 6.16, again, thus says the Lord, stand in the way and see. Ask for the old paths where the good way is and walk in it. Then you will find rest for your souls.

Wouldn't most of us go, that sounds great. Why don't we do that? Didn't they do that, Shane? Did they do that? No, they didn't do it. Let's keep reading.

But they said, we will not walk in it. Also, I sent watchmen over you saying, listen to the sound of the trumpet. What does that mean? Watchmen would watch for the enemy coming.

They would sound the trumpet so the people would prepare. So God would say, I put watchmen on the wall. What do you think preaching is? What do you think the word of God is sometimes in teaching? It's watchmen saying, listen, there's an enemy can't stand to kill, steal, to destroy.

He's looking for that open door. Close that door. Bring back the old paths.

Get on fire for God again and remove those things. And I can do all that I can do. I can get really loud and it won't matter.

I can take this sermon for two hours and it won't matter to some people because they said, we will not, listen, we will not walk in it. And I wonder how long will you keep wandering? How long will you keep wandering? The grass isn't greener. God is not mocked and the way of the transgressor is hard.

I almost came to tears in Barnes and Noble a few years back. A lot of young adults were reading a book and the title was, I hope they serve beer in hell. No, they won't.

Can you imagine the deception? And hell's fun? The bestsellers are young and are reading that? Folks, we need to be filled with the Spirit of God more than ever before. How are you going to turn that tide? You and you and you and you and you and me go out into the area. People think this is it.

No, this isn't it. This is a pep rally. Have you ever heard of a pep rally? You have a pep rally and then they go play football, but everybody thinks this is the football.

This is just a pep rally to get filled, to rejoice, to encourage each other, iron sharpens iron, to worship God, to be reinforced with the Word of God. And then we go out and make a difference. And then of course the final person is the person who has been obeying God.

They're following God. Now I want to encourage you to continue because you will see the fruit of your labor. Satan taunts, doesn't he? See, nothing is happening.

God doesn't care. Give in. Stop obeying.

Satan will plant those thoughts. I am absolutely convinced. I see this a lot in marriage counseling.

This didn't mean to be the marriage counseling sermon, but it happens a lot. Shane, I've been trying for weeks or I've been trying for months. What they're really saying is I'm about done.

I'm about done. I'm about ready to hit that bar and make a mistake. Let's just be real.

I can't keep doing this. And I want to encourage you. Yes, you can.

Our obedience to God does not hinge on results, because then there's a wrong motive, isn't there? If he doesn't answer me by next month, that's not a relationship. I am true. I am loyal.

I'm obeying you till the day I die. Now I remember hearing a story. You never know if these are true or not.

There was a man in China, not in China. He got something from China here in America, kept digging. He wanted to plant bamboo in his backyard and he would water it and give it sun and all these things and nothing happened.

A year ago by, he just pulled, dug it all up, ordered some more. Nothing. He tried new soil, he went to Home Depot.

They had it back then and got this, you know, mulch and just cultivated it, cared for it, nothing. Dug it all up, ordered some more. He called the guy in China, he said, I'm done.

You guys, this is garbage. He said, what are you doing? He explained, he goes, oh, I know the problem. Chinese bamboo takes four years in the soil, absorbing the nutrients and the water and being fed and being prepared and then it can grow 90 feet within five months in the fifth year.

And I thought, that's exactly with us. God says, the weeping may happen in the evening, joy cometh in the morning. You are hard pressed but you're not crushed.

You're perplexed but you're not in despair. You're persecuted but you're not struck down. You're not destroyed.

I don't care if it's a year or two years. You look at me and you look at me alone. You stay focused on the goal.

It doesn't matter if you don't see results until the day you die. You did what I called you to do. You don't see what's happening underneath the soil.

You don't see that the water I'm bringing in and the nurturing and the growing and the care and the nutrition, you don't see that yet. You just want to see the fruit of that. No, you do what I've called you to do

and allow me to bring the growth in its time.

Because I found too that God wants to test my heart. As soon as I, there's no time frame, Lord, whatever you want to do, okay, now I'll move. But if I start getting a little antsy, those who wait upon the Lord, no, I don't want that scripture right now.

I don't want that scripture right now. I want God is able to do above and beyond all that we ever expect and imagine. Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the good things that God has for him.

I want it next week, Lord. So let me encourage you, guys. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

It's a diligence. It's a diligence that keeps coming like a little stone, a rock. It's that water that hits it year after year.

So do not give up. The enemy will plant those seeds. Give up, disobey, turn from God.

That's his tactic. Do not do it. Stay focused on the goal, not the result yet.

Let God worry about that.

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