

Proverbs 15- God's Will & Our Words

by Shane Idleman

God's will is revealed through His word, and we must use gentle speech, wisdom, and obedience to understand and follow His teachings.

Duration: 54:11

Scripture: 2 Kings 17:33, Proverbs 15, Philippians 4:8

Topics: "Gods Will", "Christian Wisdom"

Description

This sermon from Proverbs 15 emphasizes the importance of our words and the need to align them with God's will. It highlights the impact of our speech on others, the significance of knowing God's will, and the role of wisdom in our lives. The sermon also stresses the need for humility, seeking godly counsel, and the faithfulness of God in guiding us through challenges.

Transcript

Turn your Bibles to Proverbs 15. We went about 15 minutes over on worship, but I'm glad we did. It's about time.

And I just hope this complements what's already taking place in the hearts of many of you tonight. Proverbs 15. If you have your Bibles, turn there.

I'm going to be starting in chapter 15, verse 1. I have a whole list of announcements and different things, but I will have to try to get those at the end. And as you'll see in your notes there, we're talking about God's will in our words. And what Proverbs 15 is about, a lot of it is about what we say.

And it also talks about knowing God's will. So I thought I'd try to attempt to tie those together tonight. And this is one of those themes.

Our words. This is going to apply to everybody in this room. A lot of times we'll say, well, that doesn't really apply to me.

I'm not convicted about that. I don't struggle in that area. Right? You ever heard that? I've said that before.

It doesn't really apply to me. I've got that down. But this area, what comes out is pertinent to all of us in this room.

Because let's remember Proverbs 18, I believe it is, that we're going to learn in a few weeks that life and death are in the power of the tongue. We can either build up or we can tear down. And Proverbs 15 is going to touch on this, but it's also going to touch on knowing God's will.

So if you have questions about God's will tonight, I hope I can answer some of those. So with that said, let's begin. And for those of you who are new here, what we're doing, we're spending some time in Proverbs.

We're going through it chapter by chapter by chapter. And once I get through Proverbs, God willing, I'm going to start in Matthew. And I'm ready as it is.

I've got my first eight, nine sermons already done. I'm reading systematic theology on the historical Jesus. I'm getting books from historians that teach New Testament theology and just trying to bring in all these things, not above our head, but how it can relate to our culture.

And because people are asking, who is this Jesus even today? And I'm going to do a whole study through the book of Matthew. There's no time set on it. And I'm hoping to start that as soon as possible.

So I want to race through Proverbs. But at the same time, I want to take time and I want to look at what God's word has to say, because I would say of all the books of the Bible, Proverbs is probably one of my most favorite and my highly cherished because of all the nuggets of truth. And if you can just obey these Proverbs, boy, you'll make life much easier and much simpler and you'll understand God's will.

Because a lot of times we want to know, God, what is your will? What is your will? And He says right here. So no, I don't want that. I want, just tell me, just show me.

Give me something. I don't want this. I know all about that.

I can quote Scripture, but often that's how He directs us. Not as much through inner voices as wise teaching, as J.I. Packard would say. He teaches us through His word.

Now, I'm not against the leadings of the Holy Spirit, but they often, they have to line up with His word. So we have to know what that compass is. The problem is if we don't have this as our compass, we can be led astray, like children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

And we're tossed here and then we're tossed there, but we have, because we have no anchor. So that's one advantage to studying Proverbs. So Proverbs, verse one, chapter 15.

I'm reading from the English Standard Version. I'm really starting to like that version, but I'll also use the New King James Version. And interestingly, they come from different manuscripts.

But more on that later as we get into Matthew. Verse one, a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Now, let me read that from the New King James.

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Now, that's pretty simple. What he's saying there is this is twofold.

Our words can extinguish and they can prevent what I call verbal forest fires. When somebody's popping off and they're just going, our words can either, what I like to say, throw fuel on that fire. And I tell people that sometimes.

You're just throwing fuel on the fire. Do you realize that? You were supposed to put water on the fire. So what he's saying here is if you give somebody a gentle answer, you can turn away wrath.

And one of the best people I ever saw, I'll have to send him this message because I mentioned him. Some of you know Burl Patterson. He's lived in this valley a long time, went to high school with my dad, and he was in real estate, still in real estate.

But that guy, I could see people, they would chew him out on the phone yelling and this. And he'd say, oh, I understand. Well, let's sit.

Never once, never once had I ever seen him get upset. And he would calm those people down within five minutes. And now they're thinking like he wants them to think.

And he's got them right there by a gentle answer. The louder they got, the quieter he spoke. And I will never ever forget many conversations where I would hear people yelling, screaming in offices, and he would just sit there, and he would just every single time put that fire out.

And I'm ready to get up out of my chair, and he's just sitting there calmly and doing that. And he's such a reminder for me when I read this because our words can either fuel the flames of rage or they can quench them. When your children are upset and angry, remember this verse, a gentle answer, you'll put anger in its place.

It can extinguish that. Not only does it extinguish it, but it prevents them. A gentle answer.

Do you know how many arguments are started by not necessarily what we say, but how we say it? So he's saying right here, a soft answer will turn away wrath. Memorize this verse. I don't care what translation you use.

Memorize this verse. If you use a gentle answer, you will turn away wrath. And the New American Commentary says this.

It's the ability to advert needless quarreling and to live in harmony with others. This is a virtue of wisdom. Now, listen to this.

Many conflicts arise, not because the issues separating the parties are so great, but because of the temperaments of the people. So many of our conflicts aren't anything great and magnificent, and it's, oh, how are we gonna get through it? The conflicts are normal, but it's the temperament of the people. Does that ring a bell in marriage? Husbands and wives, a gentle answer turns away wrath.

And I have not mastered this, so look to this. Not to this, not to the pulpit. James reminds us, if you or I do not bridle our tongues, our religion is useless.

Bridle your tongues. I can see some of the kids going, what are you talking about? Well, you know what a bridle is, right, on a horse? What is it for? To restrain and to control. So James is saying, if you don't even control or restrain your tongue or the words that come out of your mouth, your religion is useless.

How many times have you said, oh, I wish they didn't know I was a Christian, after you just gave them a salt rifle worth of words, because it's useless, it's pointless, we're hypocritical. Our words and our actions must match our profession of faith, bottom line. Our words are very important because out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth is going to speak.

So when somebody is hot tempered and says all these kinds of things, and they say, I don't know what happened, I don't know what came over me. I know what came over you, your heart's in a very bad condition. Your heart needs that rejuvenating power, that repentance needs to take place.

We need to have gentle, we need to be known for our gentleness, not for our rigidity. Are you known as a gentle person, or are you known as a hothead? Don't get around, oh, you know him, that's just the way he is. That's not good, that's not wisdom.

God's will, since we're talking about God's will, has to do with the words we say and how we say them. Verse two, the tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of fools pours out folly. I mean, that's pretty self-explanatory.

The tongue of the wise person, you will commend knowledge, but the mouth of fools, all they do is they just pour out folly. All day long, they're just pouring out folly. Verse three, the eyes of the Lord are in every place.

Some of you need to hear that tonight. This is a good reminder of God's omnipresence. He is everywhere.

Omnipresence, omnipotent, all-powerful, omnipresence everywhere. And omniscient, all-knowing. So He is everywhere.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place. He keeps watch on the evil and the good. Reminds us of God's sovereign control.

Verse four, a gentle tongue is a tree of life. What's this guy's problem with the mouth and the tongue? What's he trying to do here? Well, you have to remember, they didn't have whiteout, and they didn't have copy and paste, and this doesn't flow, and I already said this, right? And a lot of these proverbs were written over years. And He's reminding us, listen, go back.

I know you already forgot about verse one, a soft answer, so let me remind you again. A gentle tongue is a tree of life. But perverseness is in it breaks the spirit.

So again, what is God's will? Do we build others up with our words, or do we break them down? Let me say this too. Anytime you use harsh words, they need to be well thought out. Harsh words should not be reactionary.

Gentle words should be reactionary. And I'm trying to get to a point with my kids, even, that I'm, ooh, let me just not say, let me just be gentle, because it's hard, because our flesh wants to just throw out all this junk. Our flesh just loves to just tell people off and just spew it out and all this hatred.

So our words carry weight. Verse five, a fool despises his father's instructions, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent. Now, there's a word we don't hear very much.

I don't know why the English Standard Version chose to use prudent, but what it means is it's having a good sense in dealing with practical matters. So let me break this down for you. A fool who despises

instruction is foolish, of course, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.

That's a tongue twister. What he's saying here is basically, fools don't use good sense in dealing with practical matters. Fools aren't careful in considering the consequences.

And fools aren't careful in managing their resources. That's what prudence is. So in short, fools, those who don't like instruction, they don't use good judgment, and they don't consider the consequences.

That is what is foolish. So if we're talking about God's will, if you want to know God's will in your life, a lot of it starts right here. He gives us wisdom.

What is wise? What is foolish? And a lot of times, God allows us to make decisions, so we have to use wisdom. That's what he's saying here. Be careful.

Use prudence. Verse six. I gotta hurry.

I'm gonna keep you guys here forever. In the house of the righteous, there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked. The lips of the wise spread knowledge, not so for the hearts of the fools.

Verse eight. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. Wait a minute, why is a wicked person sacrificing? Well, let's read on.

The sacrifice of a wicked person is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but he loves him who pursues righteousness. So why is the wicked person sacrificing? Well, I like what John Piper put here.

The answer seems to be that an act that is good in itself, listen to this, an act that is good in itself can become ugly to God when it is done with the wrong motives. An outward act that looks respectable to some can look horrible in God's eyes because it comes from a heart that is wrong. So basically, God is saying the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to me.

God desires mercy, not sacrifice, brokenness, not formalism. Now basically, the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination. What would happen in the New Testament, right? They would bring their sacrifice to God.

They would come to the temple as if nothing's happening. Here's my sacrifice. I'm gonna sit here and worship God.

God's saying, put away from me all that stuff. Don't bring sacrifice into this house because your heart is not right. Your heart is wicked and deceitful.

You've been cheating. You've been lying. You've been doing all these things.

Don't come in here as if you're in right relationship with me. Oh, that's a message for the church today. People all across this landscape come into the church as if they're doing God a favor.

I'm gonna come in, my sacrifice, my time, and God's saying, listen, it doesn't even, it doesn't even matter. Put away from me. You see the verse here in Amos.

Put away from me these stringed instruments. Put away from me all this stuff. Get this out of here.

God says, I'm sick of it, but let justice run down like a river and righteousness like a mighty stream. See, God is more concerned about the heart than our actions from a hypocritical heart. He wants genuine actions.

That's what he's saying here. If you do something and your heart is not right, that's an abomination to me. If you weren't here last week, I would encourage you, doubly encourage you to look at last week's message online, A Call to Worship.

It was by far one of the most requested sermons we've had and I just felt God's presence the entire sermon and I dealt a little bit with this. But I encourage you to do that when you get back home tonight. It'll kind of pick up where we left off.

Verse 10, there is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way. See, we don't like that verse. But he's saying right here, there is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way.

So if somebody's going through severe discipline by God, thank him. Because what's happening is we're forsaking the way and that's how he draws us back to him. Listen, do not go that way.

I've got to bring severe discipline, why? Because without pain, we don't move. If we're not going through financial relation or spiritual pain, we just think, we just love the direction we're going, well, God must be blessing me. God must be enjoying this.

God doesn't care, look at this. So he has to bring pain and discipline to turn us back. That's why when I often talk about the direction of our nation, I always say, do not confuse God's patience with his approval.

Let me say that again. Do not confuse God's patience with his approval. We're getting away with all kinds of stuff.

And well, nothing's happening. The scoffers are saying, oh, where's their God now? Nothing's happening. Look, we're living like animals basically.

But we have to remember there's a judgment hand of God that is going to fall upon a nation. It's going to fall upon a group of people. All of us will stand before the judgment seat someday and give an account for our lives.

So he's saying there, just be careful there. When you are being disciplined, don't become bitter, become better and break. Because a lot of times when God is disciplining us and sometimes, you know, I will never say if somebody's going through something challenging, they're being disciplined because then all of us are being disciplined all the time.

But we know through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, he's saying that's not right. You need to change this. You need to work on this.

And we can ignore that conviction and that voice of God, that still small voice, will become quieter and quieter and quieter until we walk around thinking, that's no big deal. So invite that discipline from God to redirect us. And then it says, whoever hates this will die.

See, there we go. If you love discipline from God, use that to turn back to him, you will live. Now verse 11, with the King James, the new King James calls Hale, the English standard version calls Hale and Destruction.

Basically, Hale and Destruction lie open before the Lord. How much more the hearts of the children of man. A scoffer does not like to be reproved.

He will not go the way of the wise. And this parallels, if I don't have a lot of time, that's why I put some notes in there. This parallels exactly Romans 1, 18.

One of the most popular verses in the churches today. Mm-mm, you'll rarely hear this verse read because people get upset. But it parallels perfectly, the wrath of God.

What, the wrath of God? What about the love of God, Shane? Well, you have to understand the wrath of God to understand the love of God. You can't understand the love of God without understanding the wrath of God. Because what is love without a polar opposite? So you can only stand love if you understand hatred.

So it's saying the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of people. Here's what they do. They suppress the truth.

It reminds me of my kids trying to push a big basketball underneath the water in the pool, right? They push you down, push you down. They're suppressing. Oh, look it, look it, look it, look it, let go.

Bam, it hits them right in the head. They bite their tongue and now they're crying for the next half hour. But that's what it reminds me of.

Mankind is suppressing the truth. Look what I'm getting away with. Look at this, look it.

Let me put my foot on it and get away down there. I'm suppressing the truth. And God says, you are not without excuse because my invisible attributes are clearly seen.

Creation screams creator. There is no excuse, no excuse. So in any time saying, what about the guy out in the jungle of Africa who's never heard about Christ? Creation screams creator.

His invisible attributes are clearly seen. God is calling and convicting through the power of the Holy Spirit. I believe that all men, when they stand before God, there will not be any excuses because His truth is revealed in creation.

Read Romans one when you get home. God makes it plain to them. So what is God's will? God's will is that you embrace constructive criticism, you embrace the rebuke of God, you embrace a discipline.

And if you don't like what I'm saying, as we often say, you need to hear what I'm saying. I found this little truth to be so true at this church especially. When people don't like what I'm saying, 10 times out of 10, it's exactly what they need to hear.

Always. Because when you get to the core of it, you're challenging the relationship with God. That's all that, this isn't Shane's opinion poll.

This isn't my idea. This is just what God's word says. And that conviction is a good thing because usually people get upset first, right? I can't believe he's saying that we're under the condemnation and wrath of God.

You get upset. And then what do you do? You ponder it. Hmm, where could that be? And then sometimes people break and say, Lord, if that's true, show me.

I wanna turn my life over to you. Or they get harder and bitter and resentful and don't wanna have anything to do with the truth. So enjoy conviction and thank God for conviction because conviction without that, we would never change.

We would never change without that. I wanna give a side note here on verse 10 that we read. There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way.

Whoever hates reproof will die. And we talked about God using discipline to draw us back. And I made a point here and I wanna clarify it and I wanna expound upon it.

God is not an enabler. See, what is an enabler? Do you guys know? Well, here's the Eidelman definition. One who bails someone out of the consequences of their addictions or their bad decisions.

They enable them by helping them stay in the destructive lifestyle. Many of us know women are gonna be starting the series on boundaries. I'm sure you'll touch on this.

But God is not an enabler. When he sees us in a destructive lifestyle, he sends words from the pulpit sometimes. He sends words from other people.

He sends, somehow he wants to get your attention. He'll just shake your life up so you don't know what happened, so you have to turn to him. He is not an enabler.

He's not up in heaven with his hands in his pocket going, oh, I guess I should bail him out again and again and again. Now be careful because he is our shepherd. He is our strong tower.

He is our support. We run to him for everything. But there's a difference between running to him with a broken, repentant heart and him restoring and guiding and supplying and providing and then him also using circumstances to draw us back to him.

Parents understand this. We're good enablers, aren't we? We just keep bailing our kids out, bailing them out, here's some more money. And they never learn.

They're 33 years old and they just keep borrowing from us. Enabling, enabling, enabling. God is not an enabler and we shouldn't be either.

It's tough love, I know. And different situations call for different things. But it wasn't until I remember my parents, my mom's here when my mom and dad said, listen, next year we're not paying your bills anymore.

Car insurance, fuel, it's all you. What? How am I gonna do that? Welcome to the real world. Welcome to the world.

So God is not an enabler. So be careful there that we don't become one. Verse 13, a glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.

The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on folly. All the days of the afflicted are evil, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast. In a nutshell, spiritual, emotional

and mental wholeness result from submission to the truth.

That's what he's saying there. If we don't submit to the truth of God's Word, we encounter difficulty, spiritually, emotionally and mentally. Verse 16, oh gosh, if our nation would just remember this.

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, just a little with the fear of the Lord, than a great treasure and trouble with it. Better is dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it. Basically saying better is to sit down with a little side salad and be in harmony with your spouse than go sit in famous days and argue all night.

Practical application. Better is, all we have is this little salad and we don't have much. Be thankful for that, that there's peace in the home.

Do you know how many husbands just love a quiet home? Oh, it's our cave, it's our, just quiet, just give me quietness. And that's not gonna happen where I'm at with three, I'm gonna have four little kids now under eight years old. So I have to get up early in the morning to avoid that, that constant, but guess what? In 10 years, we're not gonna, we're gonna wish that that was happening again, aren't we? That's what everybody tells me.

So better is just a little. We have to be so thankful. We should be the most thankful people on the planet.

But instead, we're not. We want more and we want more and we want more. We're measuring success by the world standard.

Pastors are measuring success by how many chairs are full. Listen, we can have 1,000 people and not be faithful to the Word of God. We're succeeding according to man, but not according to God.

So you have to be very careful how you measure success. Because a lot of times, we're not gonna be the Brad Pitt and all these little Hollywood stars and all the people wanna be movie stars and rock stars. That's, a lot of times, not even close to God's will.

He buries His men and women in the midst of paltry things so they can just learn and submit. That faithfulness, God calls us to be faithful. So if we're just thankful, do you know that thankfulness can, fear and anxiety will run the other direction when you're thankful? Bitterness, jealousy, envy will run the other way when you're thankful? We don't, marriage issues come to a screeching halt when you're just thankful and loving? So that's what He's saying here, cheerful heart, a glad heart.

That was verse 13, but back here, better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure. Better is little with the fear of the Lord. Notice how He didn't say better is little with peace and comfort, but He said, better is little with the fear of the Lord.

As long as you have the fear of the Lord, you have everything. As long as you're in right relationship with God and you have that fear of God in your heart, you are on solid ground, trust me. Next verse, verse 18.

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention. So it begs the question, do you stir up strife or do you quiet the conversation, quiet what's happening? Bottom line is, are you an instigator? Are you an instigator? He's saying, do not be an instigator. God's will is that we be calm people and avoid arguing and debating and upsetting.

Listen, let me say that again. God's will is that we become calm people. We avoid, when possible, arguing.

We avoid debating and we avoid upsetting. Yes, this sermon was convicting for me, if you're wondering. Like I always say, it steps on my toes before it steps on yours.

But we have to watch what we say from our mouth, especially our little kids, we're shaping and molding them. They're so impressionable. Verse 19, the way of the sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.

Any guesses? Here we go again, the item in paraphrase. A lazy person's life is filled with unnecessary difficulties and pain, but the path of God-fearing men and women is protected and well-maintained. Amen is right.

The way of a sluggard. You know what that is? It's a snail. The way of a foolish, lazy person.

The Bible minces no words. It comes straight out and just calls it what it is. Verse 20, a wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.

21, folly is joy to him who lacks sense, but a man of understanding walks straight ahead. Verse 22, I wanna spend just a minute on this one if I can, because I think it's gonna help some people. Verse 22, without counsel, plans fail, but with many advisors, they succeed.

Verse 23, to make an apt answer is a joy to a man, which is to make an appropriate answer, to give a good answer, that's a joy to a man. And a word in season, oh, how good it is. But all this stems from without counsel, plans fail.

What's he saying here? Well, here's an excerpt I put in here. Those who counsel us can generally offer guidance and make correct observations, whereas we might be inclined to lean on our emotions. So be careful, from time to time, you might, or me, will be tempted to find someone to confirm our feelings.

We'll ask coworkers, we'll ask friends for advice until they tell us what we want to hear. That's not seeking godly counsel. He's saying without genuine counsel, our plans will fail.

Now, here's where I want to tie that in, and we're talking about God's will. Here's four keys that I've, biblically, I've thought back over my own life. I've read a lot of different books on God's will.

These are four keys you need to know when it comes to knowing God's will. Are you ready? Number one, whatever it is, is it biblical? You might say, oh, Shane, of course, golly. You didn't have to say that.

Yeah, I did. Oh, yeah, trust me. Because I'll ask people, is it, is it, what's a, oh, I don't care what that says, but you don't know my situation.

For example, we have, there's couples sometimes we talk to who are living together. And you know what that usually leads to, right? Fill in the blank. And then they come and ask, is it God's will that we get married? Well, let's back up and start over at what we do know to be God's will.

Let's start, can we start with that? Because we're not gonna be able to determine the other until we get this side right. Well, Shane, no, we love each other. What's the big deal? We don't care.

See, it's biblical. They're not even starting with square one. So they're going through dating this, and they're wondering, there's so, there's so much anxiety.

Is it God's will? I don't know, we shouldn't. Well, let's go back and fix what's broken first. Is it biblical? And I, financially, I'll tell people, is it, is it biblical? I mean, is that right with your money? Is that misleading? Well, I mean, Shane, to make it in business today, we've got to really, you know, it's, is it biblical? Well, probably not, but it's the only way I can survive out there.

You see how, see how this is often used? Is it biblical? A lot of times, too, I'll counsel, I met with a couple, a few months back, they don't go here, but it was interesting, on the marriage counseling, you know, we're talking about, well, is it, you know, do you have grounds? Is it biblical? And we're talking, and they're like, biblical? Well, we just don't, irreconcilable differences. We don't get along, we're done. We don't love each other.

Is it biblical? See, see how we miss God's will half the time by just this one question? So a lot of times you think, oh, well, of course, that's common sense, but we don't apply it. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. So number one, it starts with obeying what we know to be right.

Then number two, when it comes to God's will, and it depends on the area, but yes, are you gifted for it? Is God gifted you for this, for this certain thing that you're considering? Does it mesh with your character, with who you are, with how God's designed you? Number three, allow God to open and shut the doors. This is huge, because when we try to determine God's will, you know what we try to do? Push that door open, it's not, I don't care, give me a jackhammer, I'm gonna open this door. It's not opening, give me some dynamite, I'm gonna open this, I know God's opening this door, I'm gonna open this door.

That's, no, no, no, make sure He opens those doors, makes it loud and clear. And mainly what I've, you know, I don't wanna repeat stories I've already told here, but a lot of times when God opens a door, then you walk through, you just walk, you don't force the doors open. I mean, everything from this church, they ask, would you wanna use this building? Like, well, sure, there's an open door.

The paper, the articles you guys read in the paper, that started four years ago. They asked me if I would write one article on voting, and they said it was well-received, can you keep sending us articles? Well, okay, I guess, sure I can. The same thing with the radio.

People say, have you ever thought about being radio? We've got somebody that can put together, we go, okay, I get. See, these, I'm not trying, every time I try to, now, there's plenty of doors I've tried to force open. I've tried to kick those things open, I've tried to manipulate everything, it never works out.

So when it comes to knowing God's will, this is key. And you wanna know why we kick the door open? Because we are in a hurry. Be still and know that I am God.

Oh, no, I don't like that one. Those who run upon the Lord, those who wait upon the Lord, they will renew their strength. See, there's power in waiting.

Because a lot of times, what God's called you to, He's planting the seed now. It's not something that necessarily is gonna happen next week. I mean, think about when the prophet came to, Samuel came to anoint the next king of Israel.

He kept trying to pour the oil over the sons of Jesse. No, no, no, no, oh, is there anybody else? Well, yeah, I got this little guy in the back, David. He's kind of, you know, just a little, you know, kind of high tense and young guy.

He said, go get him. And then when he poured the oil on David, it flowed, and God said, that's my man. Did they get a big procession and a parade and a band? What did David go back and do? Tend to cheap.

He just went back and tended cheap. And then he had to fight Saul for years and years and years. So a lot of times, see, God's calling me to do this.

Let me run ahead and do it. He said, no, no, no, no, no. I'm showing you what I've called you to do because now you've gotta build the character so when you get there, the weight doesn't crush you.

So a lot of times, we see, I saw myself doing this 10 years ago, but I would have fell flat on my face nine years ago or up until we started because of all the shaping and character. And still, I don't feel ready or prepared because it's still a process until the day I die. But he'll show you something, probably with the people doing worship tonight, it's phenomenal.

They probably want that calling on their life. God says, good, I'm gonna call you to lead worship someday, but not yet. You've got character development that needs to take place.

And that happens in all of us. So it's a good thing to wait upon the Lord. And that leads me right to my next point.

Seek godly counsel. Looking back, all the godly counsel that I sought, when I went against it, it was not good. It's like, God, I just don't know what they're talking about.

The Spirit's leading me, brother. I know, no, not necessarily. Here's why, here's why.

Seeking godly counsel helps us determine if we're being Spirit-led or flesh-led. See, we have to remember the Spirit leads us, but guess what else does? The flesh leads us. So we've got these two forces pulling us in this direction.

So godly counsel, they have no vested interest. They don't care. They're just gonna say, hey, based on what I see, let me, here's what I feel.

Their emotions aren't involved. They don't have, and here's your list here, ulterior motives because a lot of times we wanna do ministry, but we have ulterior motives. I know people who love missions trips.

Why? Because it's their family vacation. They stay in a five-star hotel and they drink champagne. That's their missions trip, ulterior motives.

Motives are a great check. Think about that. Would worship teams still sing if they weren't singing from the front and they had to sing from the backstage and we piped it into music? Would I still speak if I wasn't applauded for my efforts? Luckily, I get as much criticism as praise, so it keeps me very well balanced.

Just read the paper and the editorials. But think about that. We have ulterior motives.

I have ulterior motives. Shit, I can't believe you're saying that. Who doesn't? Because it's the flesh and the spirit warring.

Ulterior motives. Why do we do what we do? Does anybody do anything perfectly with a perfect, sincere heart and they have no vested interest whatsoever? So that's why you seek godly counsel. Godly counsel, because they can help us determine do we have ulterior motives.

The next reason people like to move ahead in the things that are God's will is sometimes they want to prove something. Prove something. See, I want to show everybody that I've arrived.

I want to prove my parents wrong. I want to prove my older sister wrong. I want to show them that I've arrived.

Wrong motives. And godly counsel will be able to sift through that. And you ask people, what do you think of this? What else happens? We have unrealistic expectations.

Oh my Lord. We think we're going to open a business. By next year, we're going to be making \$150,000 a year.

Things are good. I'll retire by the age of this. We have fantasies, basically.

So what do godly counselors do? They help us. So those who don't like to seek godly counsel, that concerns me a little bit because that tells me they don't want to hear certain things. They want to avoid it.

So they don't seek godly counsel. They do their own thing. And guess what happens nine times out of 10? They're not being led of the Spirit because godly counsel is one of the things that we can use.

And the last thing I put on here, or the last two, financial gain. We make decisions based on financial gain. Many times.

Where godly counsel can sift through that. We also make decisions on easy life. I got a good story for you.

I don't think I've ever told this one. It's not a big deal. Morgan will remember this big time.

When I was praying about planning a church, I couldn't believe this was happening. I was like, you've got to be kidding me. I mean, oh my Lord.

And she ran into somebody. A lot of you guys hear Chip Ingram on the radio. Well, they wanted to plan a church here in Lancaster two and a half years ago.

So I drove up to Los Gatos. I met with their staff up there. And we're going to plan a church here.

I was so excited. You want to know why? You want to know why? All I had to do was push play on a DVD player. And we watched Chip's videos half the time.

She'll tell you, I was so excited. They'll pay all our bills. They'll pay rent.

They'll pay salary. Great. I just have to push play on a DVD and facilitate a church service.

It's called a life simulcast for those who are wondering. And many churches have gone that direction and it works sometimes. If there's a dynamic speaker, Chip's a good speaker.

So it probably could have worked. But I knew God was, you're not going to hit play. That's so easy though.

I don't have to prepare. I can just come and hit play and DVD. You see that, how that worked? For weeks, I fought this and fought this and finally said, darn it.

Man. I mean, I met with everyone from pastors in the Valley. I can name a few that you would know.

My mom, I think Mark, you told me. Other people said, I don't know if that's a good idea. I mean, God's called you to speak.

Why don't you? No, I don't want to do that. That's hard. Every single week.

This is so easy. Just push play. This is God's will.

An open door. Somebody's in from his church looking to plan a church. I feel called to plan a church.

This is a huge open door. They've got financial reserves. This is, how can this not be God's will? Well, because early in the morning, I knew what I was doing.

Pushing play on a DVD sounds very easy, and it is. They said, half the time, just play his DVDs and half the time, you speak. Oh man, that is wonderful.

But what was controlling me? Ease of life. Ease of life. Because inside all of us, what is known as the flesh, the flesh doesn't like hard work.

The flesh doesn't like work at all. The flesh doesn't like to be wrong. The flesh doesn't like discipline.

The flesh basically doesn't like anything the spirit likes. So they're constantly fighting each other. That's why godly counsel, that's why I want to spend time here, because you should seek godly counsel.

Not just counsel. Not the lady who does your hair or nails is just gonna tell you, oh dear, you just go for it. You just, don't hold back.

You just tell your husband that. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Godly counsel.

Godly counsel. Because I can find many people that tell me what I want to hear. Why? Because they want to be your friend.

Godly counsel will tell you the truth even when it hurts. And they would say to me, or people, you're not ready. You're not ready for that yet.

And that's okay because they see that you're not quite ready for that yet. And that's what godly counsel does. Verse 24, the path of life leads upward for the prudent.

That he may turn away from Sheol beneath, which is hell, Gehenna in the New Testament. So our lifestyle reflects the direction that we are heading. Do you realize that? If you take nothing away from this message tonight, take this away from it.

Your lifestyle right now is pointing in the clear direction of where you're going. Is god your number one focus, or are you going in the wrong direction? Our lifestyle reflects it. There's no way around it.

The path of life leads upward, but he that turns from it heads downward to Sheol beneath. Verse 25, the Lord tears down the house of the proud, but He maintains the widow's boundaries. The thought of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, but gracious words are pure.

Whoever is greedy for unjust gain, listen to this. If you're greedy for unjust gain, I hope all the senators in Congress are listening to this one. Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.

In other words, honest work pays off in a nutshell. Honest work pays off. Is it hard? Absolutely.

It's absolutely hard. Verse 30, the light of the eyes rejoice the heart. Let me read that again.

The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones. What's he saying there? Good news refreshes the bones. You ever hear good news, you're refreshed? Let me give you a word of encouragement tonight.

I'm gonna try this. When we start our fast, I'm gonna talk about next week, I'm gonna try a news media fast because there's too much junk coming out. Finally, brethren, whenever things are pure and honest and noble and just and upright, meditate on these things.

Many of us are meditating too much on what is going across around the world. We wonder why we're anxious and fearful. We wonder why we wanna go down to the gun store and purchase a gun safe and 15 guns and maybe a AR assault rifle before they ban them.

You gotta get ready. Be careful. Be careful who you're listening to and how much you're allowing in.

It's not good to hear about all the shootings and all the violence and all the rape and all the murder and all this and all this and all this, all we're doing. Your mind cannot handle that. It's called overload.

That's why Paul, at the end of Philippians, he's speaking to the church in Philippi. At the end of his letter, he says, finally, brethren, finally, after all that, whatever things are pure and noble and honest and upright and worth virtue and character, those are the things you should be meditating on because what happens, we become very fearful. We look at the news, oh, the world's coming apart.

The sky's falling and it looks like, who do we trust in? God is just sitting there holding, going, oh, you guys, read my book. It might get a little challenging, but if we had 15 minutes, I could take you back to the early church in Rome where you would have a newborn baby being hung over a lion's den and say, denounce Christ or we will drop your child, and you hear the bones being crushed and the child scream as you don't denounce him. You think we got it hard, folks? Go pick up Fox's Book of Martyrs.

Being burned at the stake, tar all over you and flames just lit up. Be careful what you're feeding your mind. I'm preaching to myself too because you can get very worried and very scared and very anxious and very irritable and very fearful.

Guess what happens? We do not make good decisions in that state of mind, financially, relationally, or spiritually because God has made the human mind to dwell and meditate on the Word of God, not on all this junk. I'm not saying don't be informed, but be very careful because I see it all the time. The people that are so captivated by all this stuff that's going on out there, this big conspiracy, all these different things, be careful, be careful, because God is still on the throne.

Yes, there's gonna be conspiracies. Yes, there's gonna be mayhem. Yes, there's gonna be murder.

Yes, there's gonna be deceit. Yes, they're coming after the Christians at some point. Absolutely.

But we're not even supposed to have a spirit of fear. So be careful. You can control that.

He says right here, good news refreshes the bones. Philippians says reflect on those things that are good. And the ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.

Whoever ignores instruction despises himself. But who listens to reproof gains intelligence. Now listen, I think we're gonna miss what he's saying there.

Whoever ignores instruction, you despise yourself. So when God's Word goes out corporately like this or individually when you're talking to people, if you embrace that, you're going to prosper and be in God's will. If you reject that, then you don't like the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

That's what he's saying here. And then verse 33 is what this ends with. The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom and humility comes before honor.

He closed the whole chapter here with this. The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom and humility comes before honor. What he's saying there is often we must humble ourselves before situations improve.

Do you want your finances to improve, your marriage to improve, your spiritual life with God to improve? Guess what it usually takes? Humility. And that hurts every single time. I don't want to humble myself.

My spirit does, but what does my flesh say? You don't dare. Hold on to all that. But he says, listen, if you just humble yourself.

And the question to consider on this verse is this. How can people fear the Lord, but still serve their own gods? That's a quote from 2 Kings 17, 33. I stumble over it every time I read it.

They feared the Lord, but they served their own gods. What? They feared the Lord, but they served their own gods and they didn't fear the Lord. They feared the Lord.

Remember what Jesus said? Many draw nigh unto me by what they say, but their hearts are far from me. So he's bringing it all home here. You can say all these things, but it's our heart that really tilts the scale in the direction toward God.

So the last two things I want to just leave you with. If I could take all this and just encapsulate it in two takeaways. Number one is words carry weight.

What God's word says to you and what you say to others. Think about that. Those two things, how you talk to others.

Are we yelling at our kids, yelling at our spouse? What we say, what words come out, how we talk and what God's word says to us. If you can concentrate on those things. And the last thing, I asked Ashton if he could memorize this song, and I don't think he, it was too short notice.

But many of you have heard that song that goes, never once did we walk alone, never once did you leave us on our own. You are faithful, God, you are faithful. And I just thought of that song.

I think it's Matt Redman, where he says that never once did we ever walk alone, never once did you leave us on our own. God, you are faithful. And we need to remember that.

When you hear the weight of these kind of things, oh, let that weight drive you to the cross. Anytime I feel the weight of the conviction of God's word, I allow it to drive me to the cross. Because he'll never leave us, he'll never forsake us.

So you cannot do any of this stuff, any of this stuff here that you feel like you need to work on, and I need to work on, it has to be the work of the Spirit as we surrender to God's work and allow him to work in us. We can't do it on our own, we can't just try to be better. You know how many people I've talked to come out, are still stuck in addictions? I'll try better tomorrow, I think I can master this, I'll get over it, I'll start on New Year's Eve.

No, it never happens. Because we have to turn that over to God, and allow the Spirit to work inside of us. So those are the takeaways that I would take from this chapter, what you say and what God's word says to you, and then never underestimate his faithfulness.

God is faithful all the time. No matter what we're going through, a lot of times I used to think that God would take me over the storm. I made it, that's a close call.

What's he do? He carries us through, because that's the only way, and I'm not gonna blabber this point because I have before, but that's the only way you know him, as shepherd. That's the only way you know him as provider. That's the only way you know him as your strong tower, as your strength, because he's taking you through it.

If he just takes you around it, you don't experience anything. We'd be immature, weak, no foundation whatsoever, Christians falling apart at every whim. But it's through that crucible of affliction, the Bible called the furnace of affliction, that God takes us through, we come out stronger, and that's the whole point of him carrying us through those things.

I will be with you no matter what we're going through, and we'll be tested, we'll be tried, but at the end, we can look back and we say, I know him as my shepherd, because he led me, he guided me, and he provided for me. So as the band comes back up, we're gonna close. I'm just gonna close in prayer as they're coming up and getting ready, and then we'll end with Matt, we'll end with a few announcements.

And I'm gonna stand at the back and greet people after the service, because I don't do that enough, and some of you are new, and come up and say hello. But I wanna encourage you guys, I know sometimes this is heavy, but the reason I talk so much about humility and giving it all to God is because that's what changed my life. That's what changed my life, because it's God changing me by the work of the Holy Spirit as I submit to that work.

We don't understand that we have a will that we can say, no, God, I'll give you this room and no more. But it's not until we finally surrender all and say, Lord, you take my finances, you take my spirituality, you take my marriage, Lord, take everything, please, I'm yours. Lord, will you guide me, will you direct me as you empty yourself of yourself, basically, God begins to fill you with the Spirit.

That's why I'm so passionate about these things is because I've experienced God changing me through the submission and surrender to the Spirit's work. And that's why I would plead with you to consider that. Have we mastered it? No, do I do it perfectly? Absolutely not.

But we should be dying, we should die trying. We should have a life of surrender. The New Testament church was a church of surrender, a church of brokenness, a church seeking the glory of God and no other.

With that said, let's pray. Dear heavenly Father, Lord, I pray tonight that you would take some of these things from your word, Lord, and begin to penetrate our hearts. Lord, convict us during this last song right

now of areas, Lord, that you want us to give over to you, Lord, whether it's our marriage, our difficulties, our financial situation, Lord, even our health.

Lord, family members that are just going through hell. Lord, whatever it is, Lord, I pray tonight that we would give these areas to you and say, Lord, I can't do it anymore. I give you all, I surrender all.

Lord, in my strength, I cannot do it, but you can. Lord, encourage this body tonight. Lord, please visit us during this last song.

Lord, just begin to mend the hearts through these words, Lord, as we worship you and thank you for what you did. Thank you for the cross and thank you for Christ. And we pray this in Jesus' name, amen, amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/yLzxcQGP7V0.mp4>

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