

Proverbs 23- How Does 23 Apply to Me?

by Shane Idleman

Proverbs 23 teaches us the importance of living a balanced life, practicing good stewardship, and living with integrity, in order to avoid the pitfalls of wealth and indulge in God's will.

Duration: 47:10

Scripture: Proverbs 23:1-26

Topics: "Seeking Wisdom", "Christian Integrity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking wisdom and guidance from God's Word to transform our lives. It addresses the need to avoid being enticed by sin and to pursue truth, obedience, and integrity. The message highlights the cost of following Christ, the significance of honoring parents, and the dangers of being led astray by seduction and addiction.

Transcript

Dear Heavenly Father, as always we pray that you would move in this service. Lord, I pray that your word would do heart surgery, Lord, for those who need it. But I also pray that it would build up and it would encourage, Lord, and we don't want to play church.

Lord, we want to leave here different than when we arrived. Lord, begin to show us how your word can truly transform our lives for those who embrace it. Lord, I do ask for clarity and precision with these words, Lord, let me not go beyond what you want me to say.

Lord, but as we exhaust this chapter, I pray that you would infuse knowledge, Lord, into all of our hearts and show us, Lord, how you want us to live. Lord, show us how chapter 23 applies to all of us. Lord, I also want to take this time to pray for Jim Hearn tonight, Lord.

I pray that you bring healing to that body. Lord, we know you can heal, we know you can repair, we know you can restore, Lord, I ask that tonight. Lord, we plead the blood over this.

We ask by Jesus' stripes that he be healed tonight, Lord, begin to restore and repair his body. Lord, bring so much peace and comfort to that family that they will truly know, they will truly know your peace in the midst of adversity. And we give you this service tonight, we pray this in Jesus' name, amen, amen.

Proverbs 23, how does it, how does 23 apply to me? You might say, Shane, you're running out of title messages, and I'm not, it just sounded catchy, number one, but number two is as I'm going through it, I'm

thinking, wow, there's a lot of different areas here, and we should ask the question, how does this apply to me? Anytime you can get into God's word, let me tell you what I do every morning. I try to say, Lord, what are you trying to show me today? Will you speak to my heart today? Whether it's in Proverbs or Psalms or the New Testament, one of the best things you can do is, Lord, what are you trying to tell me today? And when that conviction comes, what's the next step? Obey it, obey it. There's been many times I've felt, you know, the need to just put my Bible down and get into a time of worship and prayer and get to that later.

And there's been other times it's been reversed, where I just want to just dig into the word of God. And the problem is, a lot of you right now are saying, that sounds boring. And the reason that sounds boring is because we haven't, I believe, fully surrendered this area of our life to God and say, Lord, give me a passion for your word.

I want to know your word, I want to study your word, Lord, will you give me that passion? And he's looking to answer that type of prayer. So with that said, Proverbs 23, verse one. The intro, as you see there, is the verses 19, hear my son and be wise and guide your heart in the way.

And I'm going to kind of springboard off of that because our heart wants to go a certain direction. And God's word says to guide your heart. Because if you don't guide your heart, it'll guide you.

I've belabored that point many times. We're called as Christians to guide our heart, not to let it guide us. And that's where we get in trouble.

And that's where this whole sermon is really going. Verse one, when you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you and put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.

And I like what the New American Commentary says here. It says the rich do not give away their favors for free. They want something in return, and it's generally much more than what they have invested.

One can lose his own soul in the exchange. And this area of putting a knife to your throat, what I gleaned from it is we have to take extreme measures to avoid indulging. There's delicacies there.

There's these things. He said, put a knife to your throat. And I think that's a good word for us as Christians.

We have to take extreme measures to avoid indulging in certain areas, whether that be you fill in the blank, alcohol, food, promiscuity, different things. We have to take extreme measures sometimes to avoid those things. And that's why sometimes we're labeled holy roller, extreme, fanatical, all these different terms.

Why? Because we look different than the culture. We're supposed to look different than the culture. We're supposed to have an extreme view about us, extreme Christianity, not in a bad way, but to be different and distinct.

And I've talked about this at men's conferences, a lot of things, of course, with pornography being the big thing right now that's taking men down. You've got to take extreme measures. You've got to put things in place.

You've got to get rid of certain things. Well, I don't know if I want it that bad when you don't want it bad enough because the flesh will win every opportunity it's given. You've got to take extreme measures to

come against those things.

And the next verse he's saying, do not overwork to be rich because of your own understanding. Stop or cease. Will you set your eyes on that which is not for riches certainly make themselves wings and they fly away like an eagle toward heaven.

And he's saying here, do not overwork to become rich because of your own understanding. Stop. And a lot of people I've seen it.

Many men when their kids are grown now and they're getting ready to retire, they realize they've wasted an entire lifetime chasing those things that can never be caught to stop overworking. He's not saying don't work hard. Don't overwork to become rich in the pursuit of wealth because you know what? It's never enough.

Just another dollar more. Just another dollar more. And we work and we overwork and we work to get to catch that elusive something out there that's never there.

It can't be caught because the more you feed that, the more you want that. When I was in the fitness industry, some of my, the guys above me were making 25, \$30,000 a month. It's like, wow.

But that drove all of us. Oh, I want to be there. I want to be there too.

And I'd watch these guys after the next Hummer and the house on the hill and they did this and this and this and this and never saw their wife, never saw their kids, nothing. They keep chasing because it's never enough. Because what happens when you're chasing those things, you find out the guy down the street makes a little bit more and now you've got to bump it up and catch up and keep up with the Joneses.

And we've created this culture where we've got to keep up with the Joneses. Facebook doesn't help. Got this, got that.

Oh, I'm going to be doing this and this and this. So you're saying because of your own understanding, because you don't see how this principle works, stop working so hard and pursuing these riches that never satisfy. And I put on here in your notes, the power of a balanced life.

If I gleaned anything from this scripture, it's this, the power of a balanced life. You know what that means? Not too much here, not too much there. Having that balanced life.

So when you think about that with your kids or some of the older adults or you're so busy here or there, we've got to, in our culture, bring everything back to balance and moderation because we are in high octane society. We are in high gear and the transmission is going to blow pretty soon. Everybody's so busy, so busy, so busy, and then if we're not busy, we're entertaining ourselves to death.

And I was reading recent statistics on their finding that a lot of entertainment or TV at night doesn't relax you. It stimulates you. And then we go to bed, we kind of, why we can't sleep, we've got this high energy lifestyle and we're going, we're going, we're going.

There's never a time to just stop. That was, I believe, one of the whole purposes of the Sabbath, day of rest, is for man to slow down, stop, and just wait on God and serve him. It's okay to turn your phone off, not check your email and just recharge.

The power of the balanced life. Because when you have a balanced life, other things are balanced, relationally, financially, spiritually. What happens when it doesn't? It tilts the scale in the other direction.

So the balanced life is definitely important. Verse six, do not eat the bread of a miser. You guys hear that term very much? A miser.

It's somebody, they just hold on to everything. It's wealthy. A lot of times, people are wealthy, they just hold on to everything, everything, miser, just Scrooge.

It's not Christmas time, but think of him. Do not eat the bread of a miser, nor despise, or I'm sorry, nor desire his delicacies. For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart is not with you. The more so you have eaten, you will vomit up and waste your pleasant words. Now what is the problem with this, guys, in Proverbs? They're always going after the wealthy, the miser, the wealthy, wealthy, wealthy.

Since we started in Proverbs 1, I don't know if you've noticed that. It's very simple because wealth, if we're not careful, riches, the pursuit of those things actually compete with our relationship with God. That's why Jesus said, you cannot serve both the God of this world, mammon, and the God of the Bible.

You'll love one and despise the other, or be loyal to one and reject the other. You cannot serve both God and this world. And so we see that, we say, yeah, yeah, yeah, I know, I know.

We can all say, I know, I know that scripture. That's common sense, absolutely. But if our hearts were to be revealed, what God do we really serve? Because it's very easy to quote that scripture, very easy to quote scripture.

Actually it's very easy to quote scripture, you can just say it. Oh yeah, it's hard for rich men to enter heaven, yeah, but if I could just get that, get this. And remember, I want to remind you as often as I can, is that the power of God's word is in the obedience and in the application, not in just knowing it.

Even atheists know some of the Bible, even non-Christians, cults know some of the Bible. You can yell at your spouse and say, you submit to me, I'm the husband of this house. You know the Bible, but you got it out of context, number one.

Number two, that's not the manner in which it was written. So you see the power there is in the application. So if we don't spend time in it, how are we going to have the application when we're not? And you have to remember, on this verse, do not eat the bread of a miser, delicacies, all these different things.

Eating and drinking, we've missed this in our culture, eating and drinking used to be fellowship, is what that was. You would eat with someone, like Jews wouldn't eat with Samaritans, and that was fellowshiping. That was a big deal in their culture, to actually sit down and eat with somebody.

And I was reminded of 2 Corinthians 6.14, do not be yoked together with unbelievers, for what does righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there with Christ with the devil? And what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? And it's that same principle, is be careful who we associate with. Verse nine, do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words. Let me say that again.

Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words. Now on this one, I want you to recall Matthew 7.6, where Jesus said, do not throw your pearls before the pigs. And this is an interesting topic, because wait a minute, Jesus actually tells us, don't throw your pearls before pigs.

Don't, and the prophet says, don't speak in the hearing of a fool. Don't even talk to them. Well, it's like, well, where do you find the balance at? I mean, I thought we're supposed to witness.

I thought we're supposed to talk to a fool who says in his heart, there is no God. What's the balance here? What's going on? Well, let me bring a little clarity, especially we don't have time to put Jesus' words into context, but basically they're saying, in both of these, don't waste teaching or your time on the unteachable. They're not responsive.

And I see this a lot when I get emails or letters of people that are upset. Answer a fool not according to his folly, because all they wanna do is argue, and they have no vested interest whatsoever in my opinion. So I'm not gonna even answer that person.

What's the point? It drains my time and my energy. And we just had this recently happen. A person, well, this happens sometimes.

They say, Shane, they send me this video. Hey, what are your thoughts on this subject? What, do you really want my thoughts? Or are you just trying to get me to watch the video? I mean, that's what happens, because I don't have time to sit there and watch a 30-minute video and give a discourse and tell you my thoughts if all you wanna do is argue. You see the difference there? And I can find out right away as soon as I say, well, you know, this, we've gotta be careful.

Here's my thoughts, and then they just, their email's about this long, and boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Oh, you just wanted to argue and debate and try to convince me that you're always right. I see.

I see how that works. And you guys, you can probably think of people in your own life right now, right? Why do I even bother? And the idlerman paraphrase. This is what I took from the scripture.

We only have a certain amount of time and energy and resources. Good stewardship involves far more than just financial stewardship. It also involves investing time and energy wisely.

It's okay to say no as the women are learning in their boundaries class. It's okay to say no. That's a very healthy, productive word.

No, I can't do that right now. No, I'm not gonna take that on. No, I can't be responsible.

No, I can't stay committed in that area. It's okay to say that, to stop responding, helping, and enabling certain people. A misappropriation of time takes valuable resources, including time away from our families and our relationship with God.

It all depends on your situation. If you spend a lot of time with certain people who are not teachable, they're draining you emotionally, maybe financially. You're getting irritable.

What am I, he's saying, listen, do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise your wisdom. And Jesus says, do not put your pearls before the swine, because they'll just tramp all over them. Because we only have a certain amount of hours in the day and a certain amount of time and energy.

Make sure you're investing it wisely. And I've noticed a lot of times when I respond to these people and they're going back and forth, oh, I'm just getting irritated. Then I take it out on my family.

Kids come in the room, go, get out this guy, get this guy, you know, and you just get irritated. Why am I investing my time and energy and resources on something that is pointless? So that's basically the thrust of that whole text there. Verse 10, do not remove the ancient landmark, nor enter the field of the fatherless, for their redeemer is mighty, and he will plead their cause against you.

In a nutshell, fair and honest in all our dealings will lead to blessings, but dishonesty leads to God being against you. And he's saying, do not remove the ancient landmarks. And back then they'd say, you see that property line way back there, that big boulder, that big mark there, that's my property line.

And then at night, sometimes people go out and they move that rock a little bit closer. They move it a little bit closer. Looks like my property's shrinking.

You're shrinking these things. See, listen, don't manipulate. Use integrity.

God will be against you. Because God sees those things. He said, I will be against you.

That should be a word for some of you in this room tonight. Start living your life by integrity. You've lived your whole life trying to manipulate and trying to, you know, this and do this, and if I could just do this, and if I do this and work it over here, and stop scheming.

Just live a life based on integrity. And that God will bless that decision. Maybe not immediately, but long-term.

That's the fruit of an obedient life, comes later. Not necessarily right off the bat. We've talked about that before, the pain of discipline or the pain of regret.

Those are, throughout life, you're gonna face either one of those choices. I'd rather face the pain of discipline now or the pain of regret later. Those are options, especially when it comes to financial stewardship.

Verse 12, apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge. And I love what Oswald Chambers says here. Jesus will often wreck a life before he saves it.

What that means here is apply your heart to instruction. If you don't apply your heart to instruction, if you're going the wrong direction, like the prodigal son, Jesus often will wreck your life before he saves it. Because I don't know very many people who are healthy, wealthy, doing great, they just wake up, oh, I guess I should turn to God today.

How often does that happen? How many Hollywood actresses or actors do you see coming to Christ? Basketball stars, baseball stars. I mean, I read a very sad story, should have brought it in now with Michael Jordan turning 50 and just what he's going through on being this idol and now he's not. I still think he's Baron Coby.

I saw your Facebook post. Don't answer a fool according to his folly. See, I'm going after him there.

I'm going after him there. But it's sad because they actually call him Yahweh or something like that at work, like the God, the man. And he's like, what are you doing in your 50s? Well, yeah.

We weren't designed to be American idol. We were designed to crush our idols at the foot of the cross and follow Him. That's where truth, peace, and fulfillment comes from.

All, you will never, ever. I remember Jim Carrey interviews, most so depressed, the funniest guy so depressed. Why? Because it doesn't fulfill.

It wasn't designed to because we're not God and we think we are. Verse 13, do not withhold correction from a child. For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.

Well, there we go. Next verse. But you know what, I need to say something here because this isn't, you know, and I looked up this in the Hebrew language and I couldn't quite pronounce it, so I wasn't gonna try.

And it's not, you know, we're thinking beat him up. It's more of inflicting punishment so they feel something. That's all it is.

And now the big movement, don't do that. Don't punish kids. Put them in school and teach them they come from apes and we wonder why they act like animals.

That's what's happening. A good little sting hurts. I got a lot of it made you think, oh, I'm not gonna do that again.

Now, there's a danger there because there's abusive things that can happen. And let me say that right now, if you are doing that to your children, it needs to stop and it needs to stop tonight. If you are, they are not, you're not supposed to break the spirit, you're supposed to break the will of the child and not keep beating and hurting.

The loving father should have hands of steel but hands of love as well to be able to hold and nurture those kids and not just beat and be on them. Be on them. So I see why there has been big movements against, you know, they take one little Christian family, probably a homeschooler from Arkansas.

What? And they go, look, look what he did to this family. No, Christians are this. And no, we just understand that you've got to train and discipline a child.

You've got to train and discipline that child. Remember the story I gave last week about Chuck Swindoll, you know, that lady in the school system. What happened within 25 years? If you weren't here, go back and listen to last week's message, but that's what's happening.

Kids need to feel a little punishment, a little, you cannot do that. Now they're cussing. They're telling, I don't need to listen to you.

You're not the police and this and they're, and they're walking around like they're in charge. They're like little gods and they're not. They need to be put in their place because of love.

Not anger, hatred, love. Break the will, but not the spirit. And I did a message on parenting and Proverbs.

You can also go online and hear more on this. And strike to experience a little bit of pain, but not to wound them. Verse 15, my son, if your heart is wise, my heart will rejoice.

Indeed, I myself, yes, my innermost being will rejoice when your lips speak right things. The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice and he who begets a wise child will delight in him. Let your father and your

mother be glad and let her who bore you rejoice.

Just think about that. Kids, how we live our lives can bring honor to our parents or great misery. Ask my mom after the service, would she rather see me up here right now or head in the schooners in two hours and being drunk and hungover tomorrow morning, not going anywhere? See, it's a reflection.

They say, I want so much for my children, but also be encouraged because this prodigal had to go through a journey. I can stand up here now because I did a lot of that. It's not licensed to do it, but I'm saying there's hope.

Keep contending, keep praying for your kids, for your family. And if you're the prodigal son, it's time to come home because it will not get easier. It gets more difficult, more challenging.

We don't know how much of God's grace we can accomplish. We can't just go along and abuse His grace. He'll keep calling us back.

But at some point, there's a ramification there for our actions and for our choices. But I also put, this is myself included, parents should be more proud of a degree from the master rather than a master's degree. That's gonna hurt some people, especially when this goes out later in the radio, different things, because so many parents are so concerned about a college education or about this, or they gotta go to this Ivy League or this school or this school, and they're pressing and they're pushing.

Shane, are you against education? Absolutely not. I'm educating myself still every morning in theology and pneumatology and eschatol and all these things so I can teach. It's important.

I want my kids to learn. But if we start to force these things on, how God has not created them, what it becomes is we want our kids to live, we wanna live vicariously through our children, to be what I never was, to be that star and that athlete and that great football player and this and go to this school and this school, and I never did. There's a healthy balance there, because again, I don't wanna, I'm not putting down education.

I'm not putting down school, because these things are important. We should do that. But make sure you want your kids to have a degree from the master over a master's degree.

What do we do? And then this suffers. This suffers. We stick them in an ungodly institution to go and mold and shape their minds and we wonder why they come out rejecting God.

As a man thinks, so he becomes. So be very careful, and this is a lesson to myself too. God, how have you created them? What do you want them to do? I remember I only made it two months into college.

Maybe a month and a half. Barely graduate high school. Barely, 1.8, not proud of that.

Do I think that's a good path to go? Of course not. But God takes all things and works together for good to those who love him. So he took all that.

See, it wasn't I was stupid and couldn't do this. I just had no passion for those things. It was boring.

It was ridiculous. And God filled me with the Spirit, then I couldn't put these things down. I had to learn and learn and learn.

So learning's not bad, but we have to put that master degree down and put the degree from him up and let that be the guiding light. Let that be the focus of everything. Verse 17, do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day, for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.

And he's saying, listen, there is a heaven, there is a hell, there is an eternity that we will all face someday. Actually, Christians, I believe we are living in eternity now. Even though we're here on earth, our eternity has already started, because it doesn't stop and then start back up.

We're gonna keep existing. So does people who reject God. And he's saying, listen, do not even envy sinners.

This life we live right now is like this. That's it, that was your whole life, right there, compared to eternity. You wanna see it again? From birth to death, right there.

I could do a whole sermon on how I see, and it's affected me before too, how envy will just destroy you. The Bible calls it coveting as well. You're wanting something that others have, and you begin to get upset.

I don't want that. And I'll joke with Facebook again, but it sure hasn't helped things, has it? I'd be nice to have that nice car and five vacations this year so far, and a new house there, and all this furnishings, and we just get inundated with what others are having. That's one of the problems with social media.

It's not really who we are. It's who we want people to think we are. You don't see all the bad posts.

Just got in a bad fight with my spouse tonight. Unmasked him to leave and sleep on the couch. No, you see, church was wonderful.

Church was great. You don't see it. My little kid just threw a drink at me.

Now I'm sitting at Starbucks having a latte. You see that part, you don't see the other part. So we've created this whole culture.

You go on there and you spend an hour, and you're like, I'm so depressed, my life sucks. My life stinks. I'm not going to the river.

I'm not going to Laughlin. I'm not going to Vegas. I'm not going to Cancun.

I'm not going to Hawaii. It's just bombarded of all the great, wonderful. And what happens? Envy comes up.

We get envious. What do we do? De-friend, de-friend. I'm guilty of this.

I've de-posted before. That little button says, if you don't want to see posts from this person anymore, click this button. Yes, I don't care if you're eating chocolate cookies or you're going.

I'm not on that much. I'm just joking with you. And again, I want to be careful because I'm not one of those guys that TV and Facebook, everything's of the devil.

A lot of these things are neutral. But what do you do with it? If it's zapping all your time, zapping all your energy, you just sit on there and get envy and jealous every single time you view it. Well, that might not be very healthy.

So he's saying, if you're envy, if you're going to envy people, it's going to be a very destructive lifestyle. It kills your joy. It diminishes your peace and it leads to quarrels and gossip.

There's no good thing that comes from that. So he's saying, listen, live in light of eternity and a thankful heart is not easily angered. Verse 19, hear my son, be wise and guide your heart in the way it should go.

That's what this whole chapter was about. How does 23 apply to me? So as I'm speaking right now, how does 23 apply to you? So he's saying here, guide your heart, direct your heart. You're in charge.

We're not, as Christians, we are given the power to conquer sin and to say no and to flee temptation and to change our lives. And I don't want to beat this up and think I'll sit over here on the obedient camp all the time. Like you got to just obey, obey, obey, obey, obey, obey, obey, obey, obey, obey.

Why aren't you obeying? Why aren't you obeying? Why aren't you listening? Why aren't you listening? Because there's something known as the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit and the sanctification process that God changes us. So actually, do you know that God changes you? Left to yourself, you would not change yourself. So obedience by itself will get you nowhere.

And I often say sanctification, changing us, is God's job, but obedience is our job. And how that works, I'm not real sure. Because if you don't think obedience is important, let me tell you about 20 scriptures right now that would counteract all of that.

Making no provision from the flesh and fleeing from this and not confronting and not conforming and not doing this and abstaining and all these things, very important. But then it's God who changes us. And I believe it's as we submit to Him and submit to His will and obey that that work of the Spirit begins to take place.

When we resist that work of the Spirit, when we say, I'm not going to obey, I'm gonna leave here just as mad, just as bitter, just as upset. I don't like the person sitting next to me any more than when I got here. Well, I'm not gonna change anything.

I don't care what that guy has to say up there. He's dressed funny, he's young, he sounds cocky. No, I'm just passionate.

You have to have both the work of the Spirit and obedience. My wife picks out my clothes, by the way. I don't do, if I could get away with it, I'd have shorts and flip flops.

That's not gonna work. Only at men's conferences down by the beach does that ever work. Verse 22, young adults, listen to this verse.

Listen to your Father who begot you and do not despise your mother when she is old. Listen to your father and your mother. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

I've heard that a thousand times. Well, you need to hear it a thousand and one. You wanna know why? There's nobody on the planet who has your best interest at heart.

Nobody on the planet, not even me. Not even your uncle, your friend, your this, nobody. Nobody has your best interest at hand other than your parents.

Well, they're telling me things I don't like to hear exactly because they're trying to warn you. They've seen the other side before and it's not pretty. Think about that.

Next time they wanna help you, be open to that feedback. Let them guide you and direct you. God gives us parents for a reason.

They say, I've been there, I've done that, it's not good. Here's what you need to do, son. Here's what you need to do, daughter.

Nah, my parents don't know anything. I mean, we laugh, right? I'm my kid's hero right now. Just yesterday, my daughter was saying something.

My son goes, oh, no way, only God could do that. And maybe daddy. I'm like, wow.

What happens at 15, though? You don't know anything, you old man. You're not relevant. You don't know anything.

You go from a hero to a jerk. Or a hero to a, now, you know, kids go with me everywhere, daddy, and then when you get to a certain age, don't go with me anywhere. Drop me off two blocks away.

I don't wanna be seen with you. Why don't you wanna be seen with me? Because you're so cool now. You've got it down, brother.

You know it all at 17. Let me tell you right now, you know nothing at 17, or 18, or 19. It takes years.

Life will chew you up and spit you out. It does. It does.

Pride cometh before a fall. That's why you see so many young adults fall is because they think they know it all. As soon as you think you know it all, you will fall.

The word's crystal clear on that. Verse 23, buy the truth and do not sell it. Also, wisdom and instruction and understanding.

Buy the truth. What does buy mean? Buy the truth. There's value there.

There's a cost. So pursuing the truth, being men and women of the truth, there will be a cost. You will not be liked by everyone.

Society will mock you. They will belittle you. They will say certain things about you.

Your lifestyle will look a little different. There is a cost to it. I talked to you guys, remember, four or five months ago about the cost that our family has with speaking these kind of messages.

Gotta be careful where we live, where our addresses go, all this hate mail, all these people. There's a cost to speaking the truth in love. There is a cost there, and there will be a cost.

Jesus said even count the cost. If you're gonna follow me, count the cost. What's this gonna require of you? I mean, what drives me crazy is this Christianity we've created in our culture, that you're just gonna be cool and look like the world and have the best this and the best that and be like Brad Pitt Christian.

The Bible paints a very different picture. It paints a picture of dying to self, being crucified to the world, being mocked by the world, ridiculed by the world. Why? Because I follow Christ.

That's the Christianity I read about. Well, it's not marketable. Well, exactly right.

Exactly right, it's not marketable. It's not created to be marketable. It's created to be powerful.

And as soon as you remove the marketing and just preach what it is, that's where the power is. Do you know that the power of the cross is in the messiness of the cross, the blood of the cross, Christ being beaten beyond recognition, the hammers falling, the swords piercing, what He looked our Savior on the cross. That's messy.

Why is it so messy? That's the cost and the price of sin. That's the truth. And when you tell people that, they get this idea like this cross, it's nice and polished, there's no splinters, it looks so wonderful up there.

If we can have the real cross up there with the stains and everything, it would not be pretty. If I could play a clip from the Passion of the Christ right now, you would have to have some of your kids leave. Why? That's the truth.

You have to understand the wrath of God, the entire wrath of God. That's okay to say that. It's okay.

It's not gonna win me a popularity contest, but it's okay to say because the Bible says the wrath of God was satisfied once and for all on the cross. The entire wrath of God. That's what that word you see in the New Testament is, propitiation.

The wrath of God was satisfied on the cross in that one day on Calvary in Golgotha. When the sins of the world, Christ bared the punishment for us all. It's not pretty, it's not messy, it's not marketable.

But that's the truth. And the truth has a cost. And you need to remember that.

Absolute truth will cost you. Your lifestyle will look different. You'll handle your money different.

You'll treat your spouse different. You'll treat others different. You'll handle everything different because there's a difference about you, or there should be.

If there's no distinction from the world, you really have to look at, has my heart changed? Greg Laurie's famous for saying, if you were arrested for being a Christian, is there enough evidence in your life to convict you? Ouch. If you were arrested for being a Christian, is there enough evidence in your life to convict you? You just can't say, I go to church on Sunday. That's not evidence enough whatsoever.

I can name many different cults that go to church on Sunday or Saturday. Where's that distinction at? It's in the distinction is in the truth. There's a difference in our lifestyle.

And if this message is making you feel uncomfortable, that's okay. That's my job. That's my job.

I'm a sniper. I am. It's not an M40 made by the Marines.

It's 66 books in the Bible inspired by the hand of God. Think about that. But that's truth.

It cannot just hit a man dead center at a thousand yards with 40 mile an hour winds. It can hit a man halfway across this continent. That's what this is.

It's a sniper. It will take you out and you out and you out. That's the whole point of it.

I don't put a bullet in the chamber and pull the trigger. I put the place of the word of God in my heart and say, God, you bring the precision. You bring the power.

You bring the life changing word that will penetrate the heart and hit that man dead on or that woman dead on. Lord, that's what you do. It's a sniper.

It goes and goes and goes and hits there and there and there and there and there. That's why every other week somebody says, that was the best sermon ever since the church started. Well, how many best sermons are there? What did it do? It hit your heart there and there and there.

And then at last month there and there and there. And luckily I'll say, oh, how am I gonna talk myself back? Because I didn't do anything. I just submitted to God's word and said, Lord, let the fire fall.

Your word is like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces. That's the sniper right here. That's the rifle.

So another impression we have of Christianity that's not supposed to hurt, it hurts. And it offends until there's nothing left to hurt and to offend. Quoting again, Oswald Chambers.

I mean, that is a profound statement. Jesus Christ, the message of the gospel hurts us and offends us until there's nothing left to hurt and to offend. That is so true.

That is so true. And I just ask you tonight, if this is upsetting you submit to the word of God. This isn't some cocky, arrogant pastor up here.

This is a guy who's pleading, who's seen the other side of heaven and hell. I shouldn't even be up here today. I guarantee I'd be buried in Lancaster somewhere by now if I can continue on that course.

I've seen the destruction. I've seen what bringing the fulfillment of God's work can bring. He can wake me up at 3.30 this morning, folks.

I don't say it arrogantly. I say it because he woke me up, gets me worshiping and I can't stop. I look up and it's six in the morning, praying and worshiping and it doesn't come from me.

If it came from me, I'd still be in bed. It comes from God's spirit saying, "Wake up, Abba, Father." My crying, "Abba, Father, I want more of you. "I'm desperate for more.

"I need more of you. "I need that, Lord. "Would you help me? "Would you guide me?' And then when that joy and that peace comes, it's a high you'll never get for anything else because it is the one high that satisfies.

It is the one that'll never let you down. You don't come high and then come down depressed. You don't get on a high and then make bad decisions.

This is a high where it's called being filled with the spirit of God. It's okay to say being filled with the spirit of God today. You know, Peter said it 2,000 years ago.

He quoted the prophet Joel. He said, "In that day, I will pour out my spirit "on all flesh. "Your sons and your daughters will prophesy.

"Your old men will dream dreams. "Your young men will see visions. "And on my men's servant and on my maid's servant, "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh in those days." Peter says that is happening now.

This is that that the prophet Joel spoke of. Why do we want that today? It drives me crazy. They should be desperate for more and seeking hard after him.

Where is that? Where's that passion for the word of God? We own 14 Bibles, but we don't read anything. Why? Because the love of this world is crept in, and you can see the article in your bulletin. Read it tonight.

That's what's happened. The pleasures of this world have come in, and they've warred against your soul. There is a war going on in your soul.

Now, I might have to do part two next week. Verse 26, my son, give me your heart and let your eyes observe my ways. For a harlot is a deep pit and a seductress is a narrow well.

She also lies in wait as for a victim and increases the unfaithful among them. In a nutshell, just know this. To seduce means to persuade or entice.

If someone is persuading or enticing you to go against God's standard or making you fall, the relationship is destructive. There's no middle ground there. The adulteress, the seductress, it could be a guy or a girl, they're seducing you or seducing someone else to do things to pull them away from God's standard.

And this is the whole thing in the Christian community when we talk about sex before marriage, it absolutely sounds like we're some prude, outdated Puritans. It has nothing to do with that. It has everything to do with getting clarity and direction from the Word of God.

When you fall in this area and you get joined together, now the two that should become one flesh in marriage aren't. They're like this, and there's no direction. Your vision is cloudy.

You can't see God's will clearly because you've allowed this to cloud that area and be enticed in this area. That's why we encourage young adults, listen, stay abstinent, get married, and have that be the foundation of your marriage. It's not because we just like to do it and upset people.

God has given that sex in the context of man and woman. It's a very good gift that He has given. You abuse that gift and pervert that gift, then all hell breaks loose.

That's why you see all these marriages or relationships falling apart because it's not built on that solid foundation. It's not about being prude and outdated. It's about being godly and seeking the hand of God to direct you and give you direction in that relationship.

That's what he's saying here. Do not be led by seduction and seductress or a man or a woman. I don't wanna just leave that hanging there.

I might talk about this next week. I won't tell you what the title is because maybe it won't come back. But we should talk about this.

I did a year and a half ago on this whole thing of alcohol. Liberty has limits, right? As Christians, we have the liberty to have a drink. I have no problem with that.

The problem in our culture is most people abuse that liberty and that's what he's gonna go into for the next four or five verses about drinking strong drink, about how it leads you astray. Who has woe, who has sorrow, who has contentions, who has complaints? You do or I do when we are led away by these things and this addiction that's happening. So as Chelsea and Crystal come up, I'm not even gonna attempt to get in this.

We'll be here another 30 minutes. They're gonna come up and close with the worship song, I hope. But I wanna ask this in closing.

How does 23 apply to me? Hear my son and be wise and guide your heart in the way so that you will know God in a more deeper way. And that's basically what he's saying here is if you guide your heart in these areas and you call on God and you say, Lord, I want to work on these areas, I need you that he will begin to answer those prayers and you'll be conformed into the image of Christ. The Bible talks about that, but we have to submit our lifestyle.

We have to submit these areas. You know the areas right now. You wanna know why you know the areas? Because I upset those areas.

The sniper rifle hit those areas dead on that you know that God's speaking to you in because he does it to me, so I know he does it to you. So let's go ahead and stand. I think Isaac's gonna get the lights.

Lord, I just pray, Lord, for all the needs here tonight from healing, Lord, and restoration, from marriages to be restored and strengthened, Lord. Have us humble ourselves tonight, Lord, and say the words I'm sorry to those we need to apologize to. Lord, let us flee addiction and sexual perversion.

Lord, have us look to you and you alone. But I pray for strength in these areas. Lord, give us all the strength that we need.

And I just ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

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

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