

# The Cure for Church Hopping

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman discusses the importance of commitment to the church and the dangers of church hopping, emphasizing accountability and community in spiritual growth.*

**Duration:** 55:49

**Scripture:** Psalm 32:8, Matthew 16:18, John 15:5, Romans 12:4-5, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:11-13, Colossians 3:13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 10:25, 1 Peter 4:10

**Topics:** "Accountability", "Church Commitment"

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## Description

Shane Idleman addresses the issue of church hopping, emphasizing the importance of commitment to the local church and the body of Christ. He explains that many leave churches due to personal offense or unmet expectations, often failing to recognize their own role in the community. Idleman encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with Christ, to be active participants in their church, and to approach church life with a servant mentality rather than a consumer mindset. He highlights the necessity of accountability, the dangers of pride, and the importance of forgiveness within the church community. Ultimately, he calls for a return to the foundational truths of Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church.

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## Transcript

The message this morning is the cure for church hopping. You know what that is, don't you? Come on, how many of us have been guilty? Show of hands, or you wanna keep them down? I was a church hopper for a little while. So I can relate to this.

We are in a series entitled Theology on Fire. Theology on Fire, so in case you're unaware or new, we're talking about theology. We love biblical theology, sound doctrine, what does God's word say, but we also want it to be on fire, that with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

That's really, in my opinion, that's the biblical text of the New Testament church, or the biblical example is theology on fire. Because many churches read the Bible and there's no fire. Or they act really bizarre, but there's no truth.

It's not just emotionalism, it's marrying the two. And we find ourselves in an interesting topic this morning. Ekklesia is a word in the Greek that means the called out ones.

That's the church, Ekklesia. And it wouldn't have been a very good sermon title if I said the theology of Ekklesia. It's probably not gonna draw in too many listeners and viewers.

So I titled it The Cure for Church Hopping. Ekklesia is the called out ones. Ecclesiology would be the proper theological term on the study of the church.

And looking at this, I was a little overwhelmed because I could stay here a whole month or two. Because the church, the relationship to Christ, the church and the relationship with the world, the church politics. Politics, I wanna remind you, is not a bad word because God instituted government.

The family has a certain government. Politics, the way it leads itself. The church has a certain system of leadership.

And maybe we can get to that in the future. The church's destiny, the church's role in salvation. So in the aspect of theology, specifically systematic theology, where you go through theological truths systematically, this one is right there towards probably the end of most books on the study of the church.

So let's talk about a few things because it is very applicable to us because we are the church. We are the called out ones. And it's interesting, the church is not really, okay, our church we say.

The church is the body of Christ. So when I go to speak at different places, I'm part of that body of Christ. I'm part of that church, the global church.

When Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail, he's not talking about West Side Christian Fellowship or that church or this church. He's talking about the church at large throughout the world. So the origins, we know, I just quoted Matthew 16, 18.

Jesus said he will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Now, many people have asked me, and I'm sure you've thought about it, what does that mean, the gates of hell? And really, if you look at church history, you look at theological terms, you look at how it's been used in the past, early church fathers, and you see the gates, especially in the Old Testament, gates are often a sign of a city's strength, right? Vulnerability, the gates have been broken down. The gates close the gates.

Also, the rulers would meet at the gates. It was a central place for people to meet, but it was also the strength of a city. The walls of Jericho, right, they would open and close the gates.

If the gates were weak, that was their point of vulnerability. So in my opinion, I've held this opinion for quite a while, Jesus is saying the power of hell will not prevail. The gates of hell, the power of hell will not prevail.

The strength of hell, it has a strength. Satan's kingdom is not divided. They are very unified for destroying God's kingdom.

And that power, that authority in the demonic realm will not prevail against Jesus's church. Amen to that. Jesus will always get his word out.

As long as we stay under his protection and under his covering and under his shelter, we will prevail as well. And I tell people this, and I truly mean it. I don't think there's anything that Satan can do to sidetrack you, to make you go off course, to walk away from your salvation or whatever it is, as long as you stay underneath the covering of Christ.

If you abide in the branch in Christ, if you abide in that, you strengthen that relationship, no devil in hell can thwart that. And you say, well, what happens to all these people that walk away, or they seem to walk away, or they get trapped and sidetracked, the prodigal son. Well, they walk away from their protection and their covering.

If you build your house on the rock and you anchor it, I'm talking about some good anchors, right, at Home Depot. And you drill into that rock, go down, down, down. It's interesting.

And when I was in construction, the deeper we went in the ground meant the higher you're gonna go when you build. You should see the foundation of 9-11, of the Twin Towers. I was able to walk into that foundation, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep into the ground.

Why, because the higher you go, the deeper your foundation has to be. So same thing with you. You've gotta have a deep foundation.

You're anchored to Christ, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. They'll knock at the door. The rains will descend, the floods will come, but you will not fall if you're founded upon the rock.

And I just released an article I wrote a few years ago. It's entitled, Seven Reasons Why Christian Leaders Fall. And it's on, we just started a site, shaneidelman.com, and I can do some things on there as far as YouTube videos and helping people with health and writing articles and Fox News.

It's a little bit separate than the church because the church website got really confusing for people. There's just so much on there, nobody knew where to go, so we divided them up. Now we have a lot of my articles with YouTube if you're interested in eating healthy and staying in good shape and fighting for your health.

That's all on my page. The church is just focused on West Side Christian Fellowship. Long story short, people are hearing this right, hear this on the radio in different places.

They can go to shaneidelman.com and read Seven Reasons Why Christian Leaders Fall because people I've emailed before, and thank them for their book I've read on spirit and power preaching. I just thanked this man a few years ago and now I read in the news he had an affair, he had to resign. People have endorsed my books, have fallen.

And now if I redo the cover, I've gotta take some names off. Groups, organizations I've mentioned, I had to go through and clean up when I released all the books, it's e-books, it's free e-books recently. I had to go through and clean out some names of people who have fallen.

You hear the big mega church, I don't remember, I don't wanna really name names, but you can look there, it's in the news that people are falling left and right because they're not staying close to Christ. And I'll just share a few points, I obviously went into a lot of detail in this article, Seven Reasons Why Christian Leaders Fall. I just wrote this down this morning, so it really has not too much to do with the sermon other than I wanna encourage you.

The first reason, and these are in particular order, is many people say it'll never happen to me. It'll never happen to me. Well, there you go, partner, be careful.

And I started the article by saying that it happens to them the same reason it happens to all of us. It can happen to me, it can happen to you, it can happen to anybody who's a Christian. And once you begin to

walk away from the rock and you begin to build your house on the sand, to be careful.

So we have to say, you know what, that can happen to me, I better put up some safeguards. I need to be prepared, I need to be ready, I need to humbly admit here's my weaknesses. Hold me accountable.

You can say that to people. Hey, this is an area where there's a crack in the armor. I need you to just hold me accountable and walk along this journey with me.

You're bringing it to the light. See, they didn't do that. They didn't do that.

They would just keep quiet, oh, that'll never happen to me. Because really, we think that. I think, like, how do these guys, how do they, I mean, I can't even imagine it.

But then once you start to say that can never happen to me, then pride comes up and you, and actually, you begin to live by a different set of rules. And you begin to, well, now, especially as a person gets, the church gets bigger, they get more prominent, they get more well-known, then they think they're in celebrity status, up there with LeBron James. You know, and they think, now I can make my own rules and I can do things at the church that maybe other people can't because I'm King David.

Watch out, King David, because he fell. And another reason the majority of people say, I'm too busy, I tell you that all the time, they're too busy. Their devotional life has stopped.

They get to a point where they're too busy to put God first, and when you put God in the back burner, the world becomes to be more, you begin to be more hungry for the things of the world. So be careful, and these leaders, I've written, there's a book written, Steve Farrar, and I've mentioned this before, on finishing strong, how to finish strong, because one out of, I think it's nine out of 10 pastors don't finish. Like, oh, those are encouraging statistics.

But he talked about that. They interviewed 250 Christian men, primarily who fell from areas of leadership. This is 10, 15 years ago, and right up there, number two was they're too busy.

Their devotional life was gone. They had no time for God. Can you imagine that? That's why Martin Luther, he prayed three hours every morning.

He said, I'm too busy not to pray. See, that's why I say that has to be the priority. If things are coming in, those things need to go, and God needs to be the priority again.

Also, holiness was compromised in all these areas. And actually, it's funny, ecclesia is the called out ones. We're supposed to be called out, and they would actually begin to slip back into the patterns of the world.

Holiness was compromised, and everybody made fun of, what's our vice president's name? It slipped my mind. Mike Pence, right. The world just is laughing at him.

I don't go to lunch with women other than my wife. Oh, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Well, that's a pretty good one.

That's a pretty good form of accountability. You don't put stumbling blocks in front of yourself, but see, the world will always mock you when you want to live like Christ. There's so much more on those, but I'll have you look them up when you get a chance.

I put other things, like they didn't shore up weak areas. They knew an area was weak, and they didn't shore them up. I know on that book that I mentioned, 80% of those people who fell, fell because, 80%, fell because they counseled women, counseled people of the opposite sex.

80%, and see, there has to be guidelines there, because if you're attracted to someone, or the attraction's there, you don't need to be their counselor. It's just, well, that seems a little arrogant. I don't know, it's biblical.

And people, it's funny, I know pastors, I've had this stance myself. You have kind of a strong strats in this area where people say, he's not approachable, he's arrogant. Well, I'd rather be that than have him go get a job again, and being disgraced, right, because the enemy's always looking for opportune times.

So you remove those opportune times, and you stay close to the vine, and you have to plant your feet in this area of security. That's how the church can stay healthy. So that's when Jesus said, the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

Number one, the church is going to be here until the day Christ comes again. There's no way around that. Oh, and people even email me, like, atheist, you know.

Ah, look at Christianity, it's declining. Yeah, of course it is. Hello.

Hello. But in China, it's not, the Middle East, it's not, don't rate America by it. And because it's declining, I have a feeling a lot of that is due to casual Christianity, you know.

And we are, many will walk away from the faith, the Bible says, in the last times. People will look for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear, not what they need to hear. And we see that this is a prevailing view.

I think it was Voltaire. I don't remember how long ago this was, but he cursed Christianity, he said in, I think it was 100 years, don't quote me on any of this, it's just coming to memory now. But he said in 20 years, 100 years, whatever it is, I will have eradicated the Bible.

And I believe now, are they still printing Bibles in his house in Europe? You know, it's one of the largest Bible manufacturing printers bought his house to print these Bibles. See, the word of God will never, never fall away. The word of God will prevail.

So now we see that's the origins. Jesus built his church, it was believers that come out from the world, they are separate, they are different, as a matter of fact, you will do the most for the world when you look least like the world. You will do the most for the world when you look least like the world.

Yes, you can relate to them, yes, you'd be there for them, but you shouldn't look like the world. So here's our relationship with Christ. Often, throughout the New Testament, we are referred to as the Bride of Christ.

Is that interesting? You are, as a believer, the Bride of Christ. We fulfill the Great Commission while we're waiting for the wedding celebration. So basically, our role is to be the visual reflection of Christ, the tangible reflection of Christ here in the world.

That's why we're here. You represent me, you're an ambassador to me. You represent me, and while we're waiting for the wedding feast, you are to be the hands and feet of Christ.

That's why this is such a dangerous calling. That might have been a good title, too. Dangerous calling to be the church, because we're representing Christ.

That might change the way you talk to people, get that last word in, right, or have to act a certain way. If I'm representing Christ, the visual, what people see, the tangible, us touching them, we are to represent Christ while we're here. But many people say, this comes up often, it did a few months ago.

People say, well, I don't need to go to church to be a Christian. I run into people all the time. Now, is that not true? Of course that's true.

You don't have to go to church to be a Christian, but you will never operate effectively as a Christian. I don't think people will mature to the degree they can mature without being in the church. I don't think they'll grow spiritually just sitting at home watching live streams and picking their favorite teacher.

Why is that? Because we miss a vital element. I'm gonna get to in a minute. When we don't have fellowship like this, you miss ironing, sharpening iron.

It hurts a little bit, right? Challenge is convict. I found that these people have been hurt by the church, so they go, they're hermits in their house, and they don't have to be outside. Oh, that hurt a little bit.

They might tell me I have to work on something. See, if I go home and I just watch TV, I don't go to church, I don't have to be hurt by people. They don't have to tell me that I need to work on areas.

I don't like those convicting messages. I don't like people to challenge me, lovingly challenge me, and it hurts a little bit, doesn't it? Hebrews 10.25, it says, do not forsake the assembly. So whoever wrote the book of Hebrews is saying, do not forsake the assembly together, and exhort each other.

We're supposed to exhort each other, which, this is interesting. These words mean stirring and provoking. It's not all just encouragement.

Think about it. We always want the encouragement, but stirring and provoking, we should stir, I should, the messages should stir you and provoke you to change, and sometimes the people come up and they say, hey, do you know you're coming across this way, and I know you don't mean it, but you're kind of a jerk. You're being mean, you know, it's like, I'm not saying mean example, just anybody here, but see, that convicts you, that stirs you, right, to change.

Hey, you know, if I notice you've been drinking quite a bit, I saw you at the restaurant, you're pretty bad, I mean, I'm not going to church again. Well, why? Because you're stirred and convicted, and you don't like that, but that's the only way you'll grow. See, the church is, we forget, it's a hospital.

Sometimes you think it's just for glorified saints, and we're just all perfect here this morning. No, we're going through this journey together, so we're called to stir and convict, not with that attitude. Our attitude should be an attitude of love and forgiveness and coming alongside and helping, but it also should stir and convict a little bit.

That's how iron sharpens iron. Have you ever seen iron sharpening with a knife? I mean, the little sparks are flying, I'm sure the knife doesn't appreciate it, right, but that's how it's getting sharper. So the Paul, well, if Paul wrote Hebrews, let me say this, the coming together should be for nourishment, for health, for vitality, but also to stir and provoke each other to what? The Bible says to holiness.

So if I notice somebody time and time again, and they're not living a holy life, they're making some bad decisions, the church should be a place where they come and we can lovingly confront them and we can help them in their journey. That's one of the purposes for the church. And I had an email a few years ago, I think I included one in one of the books because it cracked me up.

This lady wrote and said, I continue to move from church to church to church. I can't seem to find a place where I fit. And then she said, I'm beginning to wonder if I'm the problem.

Well, if the shoe fits, right? But this is gonna be an interesting topic, the cure for church hopping. I wanna talk about five points to consider before leaving your church. You can find this article on the website as well.

Five points to consider before leaving your church because this is a big issue. People hop and move and leave a church. I've noticed, let me just throw this out there up front without even getting to these.

Gosh, I would say unless a person's moving out of town, 80%, 90% of people leaving don't need to leave. They just, they don't need to. It's an issue that could have been fixed, could have been resolved, or some iron was getting sharpened and they didn't like the sharpening process.

But it is hard though. Here's why love has to be the most important thing. Who wants to go to church week in and week out and be beat up? Oh, here comes, what's his name again? He's gonna get on me.

I mean, that's not the healthy environment either. We shouldn't be out in the front sin sniffing. Here comes Bill.

Bill, are you working on that problem we discussed? Are you? And see, that's the wrong attitude. People should want to come and be encouraged, but also when we're living in sin, we don't like to go to church because we are convicted. We are being sharpened a little bit.

So I would say the majority that I know of most people have left church have left because they have been hurt. And there's been over, probably over the last year, I know of at least two or three people, one was recently, that came here. And I knew they were under church discipline, a different church, because I guess people like to share that.

And I told them, I said, you need to go back and you need to fix that because that wrong spirit is going to be here. Do you think they appreciate my advice? Oh, absolutely not. They said all the right things at first and then now lashed out because, hey, you need to go back and fix that.

You need to go back and repent to that church or refix this attitude. Coming here isn't going to help anything. And they didn't like that.

And I wish more churches would do that because a lot of churches don't. They're like, well, brother, we're just going to pray for them and I would call the pastor. Listen, he's bringing his girlfriend to your church.

He's still married. Well, let's just hope the Holy Spirit convicts him. No, that's part of your job too.

You go to them. You talk to them. See, that's what the church should be, a loving, healthy, vibrant community of believers, but we also remove the cancer.

If you get that stem cell early on, right, you remove that cancer early on, it doesn't begin to affect the whole body. That's why Jesus said go to them, bring a witness, then bring it to the church. And we've got to remove that cancer, that leaven before it continues to grow.

So five points to consider before you're leaving your church. Here's number one. Do the leaders.

Do the leaders. Does the pastor view the scriptures as inerrant, the final authority? Now, I know this probably doesn't need to be said, but I think it does need to be said, mainly not here, but others that will listen to this. If your church is teaching the word of God, they view the scriptures as the inerrant, the final authority, then there's biblical grounds to stay put.

Again, I'm gonna get to more reasons for a minute. I know there's other reasons, but look at that first. You'd be amazed at how many people don't go to their pastor and ask this question or their church leadership.

Hey, do you believe that the Bible is God's final word, inerrant, without error, for all life and godliness from gay marriage to abortion? Do you believe that? You'll hear some interesting things. Well, you know, it's a good book. It's a good book.

I mean, there's a lot of principles from there that you can glean, and we do teach from it. Okay, but do you believe that it is the inerrant, inspired word of God that is authoritative? What do you mean by authoritative? Go, just run for cover, find another church, right? Because it's already going in the wrong direction. There are churches right now that will actually, that there's a big, I just saw it on the news.

There was a, right above a gay bar, it says, God takes pride in you, and we do too. We're all welcoming. And they're advertising on this big freeway saying that God doesn't condemn any of that because they don't take the Bible as authoritative.

And that's what you're seeing now. You're seeing this huge divide. I think that's where the big divide is gonna come from.

When they say the great falling away, the great falling away is going to be from truth. It's gonna be from truth. Those who hold to God's standard and those who don't.

And the, thank God that the Supreme Court voted in the Baker's case. Remember when I went to Fox News and talked about this? They voted in the Baker's case. They say, you know, we're getting so ridiculous on these things.

I can't even believe that had to go to the Supreme Court. But it's all targeted, it's all planned. You know, there's an agenda here.

And so you're gonna be seeing the big divide. I've never seen a country hate their president so much than the time we live in now. They don't care whatever.

If there's any good, they're gonna point out all the bad. You know, it just, and I'm not endorsing anybody. I'm just saying the facts are there.

You're seeing a huge divide in our country. And this is going to be a biggie. So ask the questions, do they view the Scriptures as an errant, the final authority? The verse of 2 Timothy, all Scripture, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

And is what? And is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, in what? In righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. Wow, that's the Bible you hold in front of you. Or it sits in front of you.

That is everything we need for life and godliness. Now, many will use this verse, some that say the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not valid for today. This is the verse they'll use.

And they're absolutely correct in this sense, that the Bible has everything we need to live godliness in Christ Jesus. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are supplemental. They don't take the place of the Bible.

They don't come over the top of the Bible. They are supplemental to the Bible. So that is the first thing.

But then the question comes up, but what if the pastor is no longer studying and his teaching reflects it? Basically, what about if the church is dead? See, that's happening too to a lot of churches. They hold to the inerrancy of Scripture, but it's a graveyard. They have theology, but not the fire.

They talk about the fire of God as if they're sitting on an iceberg, or act as if they're sitting on an iceberg. They're just cold, callous, dead. And that's a good question.

What I recommend to people, pray for fire. Pray for fire. Pray, but if God directs you, then you find the fire.

You leave. I believe a church that is dying, the Spirit of God is not there, that the person should stay and contend for as long as God allows them, for as long as God gives them peace, to sit and to wait on God and to pray, Lord, bring something, bring change. But if there is a release there, you feel, okay, I feel released.

I feel that this is going on. They're dead, the services are dead. I'm not growing, now it's hurting my family.

We need to make a decision here. God, I'm trusting your decision. You pray, and I believe God will lead you.

But also believe sometimes he has us stay put in those churches. I've been in those churches, and it's hard. It's hard because you wanna fall asleep, and you don't learn, you don't grow.

It's just dead, it's like what scripture, it's almost like you're at the dentist's office. And I joke about it, but it's true. And I get, I mean, I worry sometimes about that because I don't want that to happen here.

But I know the pastor's personal life and his devotional time and his study time and his time of worship, that's where the fire comes from. That's the reflect, that's where that comes from. So pastors where this has happened, happens need to spend more time in the prayer closet being broken before God.

Samuel Chaddock, I think it was the 1800s. If you can look up anything, he wrote a good book. I think it's called *The Way to Pentecost*.

He said it was one night God convicted him by the fire. His services were dead, the church was dead, just going through the motions. He threw all of his sermons that were preplanned, prepared, just perfect.

A seminary professor would be very pleased with his flow of the service. It meant all the hermeneutic qualities and the Bible study and homiletic and preaching. But he threw them all in the fire.

And then the fire of God fell upon him. People were being saved that week. See, he meant the risen Savior.

He fully surrendered his life. And see, the fire only comes from the Holy Spirit. The fire can't be manufactured.

It can't be let's get loud, let's get passionate on our own. The fire comes from the fire of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer or in the life of the pastor. So if that pastor needs fire, pray for it, pray for it.

God might have you stay there and pray for it, but he might have you go elsewhere. That's why you need to spend time with God and allow him to direct you, which leads me to point two. Is God's Spirit truly leading you? Is God's Spirit truly leading you? The conviction of the Holy Spirit is a true gift from God.

But sadly, many people ignore it. Yet they say that God is leading them to do this or that. But all too often, they find out that they made a very poor decision.

What happened? Well, in a nutshell, human feelings and goals and agendas led them. The Holy Spirit didn't. Here's what most Christians say.

And I was good at this in the past, okay? You ready for this? Well, we're just seeking God's will. But really, you've already made up your mind. You already have your plans.

You know what you're doing. Your agenda's set. You're fully aware that you are going to do what you want.

But we say, well, it's whatever God's will is. Very easy to say, very difficult to do, isn't it? We say whatever God's will is, but we're making plans to do what we wanna do. So my incursion would be, Lord, when you say whatever you want me to do, mean it.

Lord, whatever you want me to do, does that mean staying put? Does that mean moving? Does that mean going there? Does that mean taking this job? Does that mean not taking that job? Does it mean this? Does it, whatever your situation you're going through, health issues, people have been praying for, prayed for a lot of this when I was out of town, is prodigal sons, daughters, living in their home. Are they enabling them in their addiction? What do I do? I don't know what to do. So when we say, God, what is your will? My advice is, whatever that will is, Lord, you show me.

Because I have a plan sometimes. And I'll say it so it sounds good. Right, well, whatever his will is.

Because it sounds right, sounds spiritual. But the way we're living, the choices we're making is not conducive to what his will is. Now granted, when you follow God's will, you do have to step out in faith sometimes.

You step out, you test the water. You go to the job, the place where you're thinking of getting a new job, and you go there and you test out the water, and is there peace? Is there assurance? And you step out in faith, and God will direct that. Just make sure, Lord, it's whatever your will is, whatever that will is, Lord, you put on the brakes, you step on the gas, I'm willing to follow.

And mean it from your heart. And then God will, I believe, truly lead you. But I believe many people leave the church because they have been hurt, they've been offended.

God's not truly leading them. Human emotion is, I will instruct you. Psalm 32, eight, the good verse for this one.

I will instruct you, and I will teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with my eye. That's a promise you can take God to the bank on.

He says, I will direct you, I will guide you. But you have to be wanting to go in that direction. Right, if God says, I'm gonna have you go in that direction, I'll guide you, Shane, I say, okay, but I'm walking this way, would you guide me? No, you gotta turn, no, I'm not.

I'm not turning around, will you guide me? No, I'll guide you this way. So I have to turn around, oh, repentance. Right, change your mind, at least a change of action, and go God's direction.

In a nutshell, the humble he teaches his way. If we humble ourselves and say, Lord, whatever you want to do, I will do it. And just be careful, because money can get in the way.

Can it? Lord, whatever you want, but we're making plans for that job that makes a lot more, which isn't always bad, God opens that door. I believe God opens that door. But we can't assume that a good thing is a God thing.

And money does have a hold on us. It can really alter our decisions sometimes. I thought of that this morning.

It's funny it came back, so maybe I'll share it with you. Some stuff I'm not sure on. But this was hard for me, because many of you know, 2009, I was in real estate.

I had a real estate license doing really well. Was gonna rise up in the company. But then God said, plant the church a year later.

What? Okay. So I tried to do two for a while, right? And let the church build, let the church build and stay in real estate. But the carrot was the financial.

Well, I like this, kind of. We can go on vacation more. We can do more things.

And God says, will you fully give me everything? Oh sure, of course I will, of course. Of course I will. But I'll stay in here, right? You get \$8,000, \$12,000, \$19,000 checks in a week or a month.

It's hard to leave that. So I'm like, okay, Lord, whatever your will is. And he puts the pressure on.

I get to a point where I can't do both. I can't adequately pastor a church and still do this. I just, I can't do that.

So let's downsize, let's get a smaller house, pay off, lease my truck, try to get everything paid down, try to get their charge. We're really good on charge cards, but zero balances. So we took some time to get everything right and said, now, Lord, what do you want us to do? It was clear.

Break away from that. He used that as a season. But that was a little dangling carrot there.

And if it was up to me, I could try to juggle both as long as possible. But God, when you say, what is your will? And that's my experience, because I really knew what his will was. But like, well, why not try to do both? And God finally made that clear.

I think it's been four years now, I'm going in five years. But it was very fulfilling, very rewarding. But there are things, enticements, that will keep us away from fully knowing God's will.

But are finances important? Of course. If I just say, well, we're gonna just caution to the wind. Let's put up a tent in the desert.

You know, we'll help the kids find water and eat locusts and wild honey. And you know, that's not wise either sometimes. You have to use wisdom in that area.

So number three, how will leaving the church, if you're looking for church hopping, how will leaving the church affect the local body of believers? This is a biggie. Remember, it's one body. Not this church, that church, it's one body.

One body. So how will leaving affect the local body of believers? Here's why this is important. Our sinful tendency is to pull others down when we leave.

Well, you know, that church and the new believers or the world gets the wrong message, because we're always shooting our brothers and sisters. We're always putting others down. Well, because, and we know this, I did it too, come on, let's just be honest.

When we leave a church, we want people to know why we left. Where they were missing it. Why I had to leave.

Right, oh, you know, it's a little bit this, and we feel better. We build ourselves up. I mean, nobody's gonna say, I don't know why I left.

I was convicted, I was offended, and I don't wanna deal with it. I mean, that doesn't sound spiritual. But it hurts the local body of believers.

What we say about other churches. As long as they're solid. You know, if the church isn't solid, I will warn people.

And I will tell them, hey, be careful here. But even this church, we've been labeled some things, because when people leave, I heard one lady said that we were, many people have said this, sexist. Like, what do you mean by that? The only thing I can think of is we believe that the Bible teaches that the role of senior pastor is God created that as a man to lead in that area.

Not me coming underneath a woman and usurping the authority. We believe an elder pastor teacher is the male leadership as outlined in the New Testament. So if that's sexist, I don't know what to tell you.

That's not sexist. That means you might be convicted. Or my favorite one, that church is really legalistic.

Well, if you know what legalism means, we're actually not legalistic. Because I don't believe you can follow a set of rules and become very spiritual. Oh yeah, but you're always against this movie.

Yeah, I'm against rated R movies. There's tons of nudity and violence. That's not legalistic, that's biblical.

David said, I will put nothing wicked before my eyes. Either David or Job. I will put nothing wicked before my eyes.

So see, when you live holy, you'll be labeled because people are convicted. Or a favorite one, you've heard this one. That's a hell-firing brimstone church.

What do you mean by that? What do you mean by that? But really, how often have I talked about hell and screamed, you bunch of sinners, you're going to hell. You're going to hell. Turn our life over right now.

Can you feel the flames of hell burning? You sinners, you worthless. Of course not. But why do they get that? Because they're convicted.

Oh, I can't go there. Well, you feel convicted. See how that works? So we start to label churches.

Or it's too heavy, it's too convicting. But the reason is because we're convicted. Romans 12 says, for as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we being many are one body in Christ.

And individual members of one another. So the point of this scripture is, why hurt your brother or sister? Do you down talk your brother or sister? Some do. Right, but that's the same.

We're one body, so we should, yes, it's okay to go to other churches. I believe God calls people to different churches and from time to time. And what somebody needs might be something else, but also, might be somewhere else, but also feel that it's good to stay grounded and grow.

And grow where you're planted. Number four, how will leaving affect your family? If the family isn't growing at church, some hard questions need to be asked. See, here at this point, kind of, I don't know what the right word.

Irritates me a little bit, because people have this idea that the church is supposed to raise their kids. That, drop them off. You raise the kids.

One hour, one hour on Sunday, one and a half hour, two hours on Sunday. Okay. And see, but you don't offer foosball, and pizza, and Minecraft.

We wanna go to the place that does. And see, but see, that's, no, no, no. You are the primary teacher.

Teach a child, the verse we have, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Proverbs 22. So the church is not the primary teacher. We're to come along and supplement, and to help, and to help create an environment.

But people say, well, I'm leaving, but how will that affect your family? Are they, what about if the kids need to hear some things? Because we've turned into a culture, and I've been guilty of this. I know our family has. I mean, we're the World War II generation, compared to now.

We seem to tailor things around our kids, what they want. Not what they need. What they want.

So if a kid says, you know what, I'm just not having fun there. I like our old church. Okay, little Johnny, we'll start going back there again next week.

Little Johnny just ruled your house. He probably got convicted. He heard about sin.

And what he shouldn't be doing on his phone at 12 years old. But he doesn't like, see how that works? And we go, oh. Now, we, we want the church to reach kids.

We want them to want to go to church. We take pride in trying to have a great children's ministry church. What our focus, a lot of times, is I want to have quality sermons.

We want to have quality worship, and I want to have quality children's ministry. We want the kids to grow and enjoy it. But we have to be careful.

That should not always be the determining factor. And people will come, they'll say, oh man, do you have anything for this group? Or you don't? Okay, we're gonna go to the next church then. Well, why don't you stay and help us build that? See, that's why it gets frustrating.

You know what, that's a good point. Oh no, I just want to drop my kids off. See, I bet if they could find a church that has a laundromat.

Right, dry cleaner, arcade, Cinemark, worship service. Carl's Jr. Starbucks for sure. Starbucks for sure.

You know, that would be the church. That would be the church we would go to, because, and that's what's happening in the United States. Our kids are really ruling what we do and where we go.

But I want to be careful here, because I do understand, if you've got two teenagers, and they are really growing at a certain church, and they've been going to this youth group, they're growing, they're on fire for God, we can, Shane, we can go either at your church or a different church, then I understand that. I understand that, because you're making a wise decision. There was a family here.

They were on the prayer team, good friends, but friends I've developed over the years, and they were split up. Their kids were going to church in Santa Clarita, and they said, we're missing seeing our kids and our grandkids. It's a church at Saul in Santa Clarita.

We just want to let you know we'll be going down there. I said, you have our 100% support. I think that's a good idea.

If you can go with your grandkids and your kids, and you spend the day with them out there afterwards in Santa Clarita, and it's a family time, that's good. It's a solid church. I think that's healthy.

So see, there are situations, and I've encouraged it before. I've encouraged it. I will encourage it, and I'm not being facetious.

I truly want what's best for other people. And people come and say, I just love expository Bible teaching. Through the Bible, the entire Bible, I said, I can recommend a good church for you.

And I really can. If that's what your need is, that's what you want. You see how that works? And we don't put down the other church.

Actually, somebody's gonna speak for me while on vacation. He planted a Calvary Chapel Church in East Palmdale, 5060 Street East, and I would encourage you, if you know somebody you ever wanna visit, go for it. People say, oh, you'll lose people.

No, I won't, it's one body. I'm not intimidated by pastors, and they shouldn't be intimidated by me. I'm not in competition.

I'm not in competition with that church. God created us differently. Shane, here's your mold.

Here's what I want you to be. You do what I called you to do. Let me add to the church.

You don't compete. You don't have to worry about things. So we'll promote that church or a different church.

But long story short, he was a youth pastor when I was one of the elders for a short time. And he's planted a church. They're over there now, and I'm gonna have him speak for me when I'm gone.

Because he goes through the Bible. I was able to visit a few years ago, and it was on Easter, I think it was. Easter, we were on, yeah.

And it was really, I think we didn't have Sunday morning service, and it was, touched my heart. And I said, I'd love to have you speak sometime. And he's more expository.

We joke about that sometimes, you know? And he'll say, well, you know, Shane taught, and I'll say, oh, I'm topical, but you're expository, you know, and kind of, you know, it's a good thing there. But that's how God created us. I can't spend eight months in Leviticus.

I've tried. And it works. But it's not bad, it's good.

We need that, because a lot of you aren't aware of this, but I listened to all of Chuck Smith's through the Bible in eight months. As he went through it, I listened to it, I retained it. Oh, he broke down the sanctuary, the inner court, the outer court, the holy of holies, the 12 tribes camped around the nation, and Leviticus, and the Levitical priesthood, and what the blood meant, and the atoning sacrifice.

I got it, I love it. But God's called me to awake the church. He's called somebody else to be the expository.

He's called somebody else to be the pastor, shepherd, you know, to nurture pastors and believers. He's called other people to counseling. We need lots of counselors, and discipleship, and training.

We need those things. So see, there's different parts of the body. Why do we pull each other down? And we hurt each other, and we shoot each other, because it makes us look better.

So we have to be careful in this area. So here's the last point. Number five is actually number one.

Number one, are you ready for this? All right, I'm back where I'm not. I'm on a timer to preach, like it was last Sunday. Had a timer right there.

Okay, gotta hurry. You know, but all joking aside, this is the number one reason for church hoppers. Most people have a consumer mentality.

Oh, wow, it's quieter than I thought. No amens. But we do, don't we? We have a consumer mentality.

Consuming. Actually, we should go giving. We should go giving.

This is so funny. You guys are gonna like this. I usually don't tell people I'm going on vacation, because they come up to me and go, well, I'll just stay away then, too.

Like, no, no, no, don't stay away then, too. A friend of mine told me that. He goes, oh, I'm not coming.

No, no, you're missing it. You're missing it. You go to be a blessing.

How do you know the mom or the dad in the foyer doesn't need prayer? How do you know that little, you go to church and be a blessing. And here's the irony. I go to Bakersfield, they know their pastor's on vacation, so guess what? The guy comes up to me and goes, hey, I apologize.

We're a little light. We're about 1,000 light this weekend. 1,000 light this week.

Wow. Yeah, any time a pastor goes on vacation, what kind of people, I'm like, okay. I'm gonna let him have it this morning then.

Right, oh, here's some dumb guest speaker. Right, see how that works? It came back on me. People, they wanna, you know, they're going to be fed.

And I go, I'm not gonna go to some Shane Idleman guy from Lancaster. And it works the same way, because we need to go to church to be not consumers. Now, it's good to consume.

It's good to be fed. It's good to be built up. How many times do we say, I'm just not being fed? Now, that's legitimate sometimes.

I think people should be fed. But I don't think we always should come wanting to be fed. We also should come wanting to give.

Okay, Lord, maybe this speaker isn't what I had in mind, but I wanna be a blessing. I wanna worship you. I wanna know you.

How can you use me this morning? And see, we go wanting to give versus better than receive. And somebody by the name of Jesus said, it's better to give than to receive. So I will tell you up front, I would encourage you to come to the August Summer Series.

There's a lot of African American. He said, just call me black. Okay, so black pastor.

Built a relationship with him. He planted in East LA Church. He's gonna come speak in August, the second Sunday in August.

I heard his audio, powerful, powerful black pastor, aligned with kind of like my calling, and reaching the whole inner city down there. And then also, Steve Kilpatrick, who pastored Leona Valley Community Church 25, 30 years ago, is coming. And then finally, I've got Pastor Sean, who was kind of, I was underneath him when I came back to the Lord, and just to kind of share what is on his heart.

These people can really invest into your life if you allow them to do that, and open, say, okay, Lord, I want to give. I want to come giving, not just receiving. But just as a personal confession, I go often, too.

I wanna get. I wanna be encouraged. I wanna be built up.

Often, I'm preaching, so it's, you know, I have to sneak to a church somewhere else. But we come here, we also feel that we give back, and we do receive, that we receive from the worship. When God's speaking to me through the word right now, and the messaging, and we get built up and encouraged.

So that's just a thought. I would love to see attendance be the same, if not go up while I'm gone. I would love to see attendance, giving, be the same, and go up.

That would make my day, and I think it should, because I don't think we should just come to hear what I'm saying. Come to hear what God is saying, and to have different people, different people speak into your life, because they'll hit areas I'll never be able to touch on. That's why I told pastors, names Pastor Abram, and Nisa Leigh, you're hitting people I would never, ever be able to touch, and vice versa.

You see how God uses different giftings. So I'm just gonna give you the cure real quick, because we're running out of time. We need, here's what we need to do.

We need to replace our consumer mentality with a servant mentality. We need to allow iron to sharpen iron. We need to work through being offended, and allow forgiveness to heal our wounds.

Here's a biggie. Allow forgiveness to heal your wounds. The church will hurt you.

People will hurt you. You will get hurt. You didn't get noticed.

You didn't get recognized. You didn't get promoted. Somebody confronted you, or they weren't nice to you.

It's where we live. Welcome to my world, and yours, right? We live in this world, but the best way to grow and mature is to confront love, or to say, hey, you know what? You're right. Let's build this relationship.

I can look back. There could have been 10 varied times where we ended relationships, but because we said, you know what? Let's talk about this. Let's fight for this.

I know the enemy wants to get in here. Let's talk about it, and it actually came back stronger. The relationship is now stronger, because we work through that, and that's only how a Christian matures and grows.

If you show me a Christian who's not maturing, is not growing, is very carnal, I guarantee they've been hurt, and they're not working through it. They're not going back to that church. They're not gonna talk to it, because they've been hurt, and instead of saying, you know what? I take responsibility for some of this.

I could have been wrong. How can we, because God says, oh, is that humility I smell? Is that humility I smell, and brokenness, and I forgave you on the cross? Is that forgiveness I hear, and wanting to work on this? I love that. I will bless that person.

I will fill them with my spirit. I will give them the joy that surpasses all understanding, because when you hold in bitterness and unforgiveness, it's hurting you more than the other person. I guarantee you that.

There are people holding in so much unforgiveness and bitterness with others, and the other person's moved on. They don't even know. So I think it's been said that it's the only unforgiveness, bitterness, all that.

It's the only poison that we think, I don't know how it works, but something like a poison that we are drinking it, but we think the other person is ingesting it, or it's affecting them. I messed up that whole analogy. But the bottom line is, I'll find it, hopefully, for the next time.

But we think that, yeah, we'll get them. I mean, it's sad. Sometimes I know there's people that have been hurt by this church somehow, some way, but we don't even know.

I remember I told you guys this story. I won't tell any more stories, but while many years ago, now it's been, and this guy was so hurt by the church. And somebody told me, I go, hey, such and, I'm like, what happened? I've never seen him.

And he goes, he said, well, his mom died. Nobody reached out. And I said, we didn't know his mom died.

I had no clue. Let me call him. But see, see how the enemy works? Nobody, I even texted my mom.

I remember she goes, oh, my Lord, I didn't know that. I'm so sad. You didn't know either? So that is fertile soil for the devil.

He loves that. Too much assuming. Or people say, you didn't do this.

I posted on Facebook three months ago. I said, well, I don't spend a lot of time on Facebook. I didn't know.

I didn't know that happened. And see, we hold in this forgiveness, unforgiveness, we hold in this bitterness. And we think, well, I'm just, that's not, that's of the enemy.

I will tell you that right now. God wants us to say, you know what? I was hurt by that. I was offended by that.

I know you didn't mean it that way, but I was offended. And the person will say, hopefully, I didn't mean it that way. I'm sorry, let's work.

And then you just fix the relationship. The devil wants you to hold it in, avoid them, not talk to them, and go to church once a month and hope you don't see them there. You see how important this is? So I'm gonna close with this.

I was gonna talk about the church on the sacraments, but we don't have time for that. We recognize just baptism and communion. Communion is remembering, but baptism is identification.

And I believe the greatest hindrance to baptism is a fully surrendered life. Here's why baptism is so important. Believers come into the body of Christ, they believe, and they are to get baptized.

Jesus says, get baptized and identify with me. Identify with me. And again, this is what I hear most often.

I don't wanna get that serious, Shane. People have told me that. Oh, I'm not ready for that.

I don't wanna get that serious. Well, the cross was pretty serious. That was pretty serious.

So what we're saying is I don't wanna give up certain things. I don't wanna fully surrender my life. Baptism is the final step of full surrender, and I'm not ready for that.

Well, two things. First, I would personally have you check your faith. Have you truly been saved? Have you truly been saved? Because that's the heartbeat of a believer is to be baptized.

Or it could be somebody in their carnal state. They don't wanna give up their you-know-what or this. They don't wanna give it up.

I'm not ready for that. Well, let me encourage you. You better get ready for that.

You better remove that wrong attitude. It's a step of obedience. Jesus did it, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I believe that disobedience prevents the filling of the Spirit. So if you've not been baptized, or if you've been baptized as a child that didn't mean anything to you, or infant, I would encourage you to do that today. Come back.

We're doing it after the second service. We've already got about eight people signed up, and I'll stay a half hour afterwards just baptizing because it's a step of obedience. Because we know, here's what happens.

We know we need to do it, but our mind is playing tricks with us. I've been coming there a year. What will people think? I've been coming there two years.

What will people think? Who cares what people think? You just say, you know what? I never took the initiative to get baptized. I need to make that step. I need to take that step of obedience.

We just got an email from Northern Ireland yesterday. He said, I decided that enough is enough. I've been struggling with doubt about my salvation for many years.

See, I believe many people struggle with doubt about their salvation. Have you been there? Like, am I really saved? I don't know if I am. And I believe it has a lot to do with fully surrendering your life.

Because the more you surrender, the more you're filled with God's Spirit, then that doubt becomes assurance. That lack of hope becomes great hope because you're filled with God's Spirit. He said, I finally surrendered my life.

I put God first. I humbled myself. There was so much passion.

Now I love listening to worship. I love reading the Bible. What happens? Death to self has to take place.

Death to self has to take place.

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