

Jesus' High View of Marriage

by Steve Gallagher

This sermon delves into the complex topic of divorce and remarriage, exploring the cultural context of Jesus' teachings on the subject. It emphasizes the importance of reverencing marriage, seeking God's will above personal desires, and understanding God's character of love and restoration. The sermon encourages listeners to be led by the Spirit, seek spiritual wisdom, and walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Scripture: Matthew 19:1, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Colossians 1:9, Romans 8:14, Psalm 51:10, Proverbs 3:5, James 1:5, Ephesians 5:25, Galatians 5:22

Topics: "Marriage", "God's Will and Restoration"

Description

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Transcript

Good morning, everyone. So, two times ago, you know, we're on a rotation of speakers here. Two times ago, I got to speak of a subject when Mary and Martha, remember that? And Mary chose the better part.

She was worshiping at the feet of Jesus. What a wonderful subject. And then the last time I spoke was the prodigal son.

All about repentance, which is my life's message. I love preaching on repentance because there's such life. The life of God is on the other side of it.

This time, I didn't get off so good. Divorce and remarriage. Yikes.

So, it's fallen on me. If you don't understand this, we've been going through the life of Christ. Working our way through almost two years now.

And we're still only to Matthew 19. And so, it's fallen on me to tackle this thorny subject. Let's just look at the word here.

Lord, I do pray that you will somehow bring out your feelings and your sense on this subject. As we work our way through this, Lord. Help me to properly represent you.

In Jesus' name. Excuse me. So, Matthew 19 verse 1. When Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

And large crowds followed him. And he healed them there. Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing him.

And asking, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all? Let me just stop there for a minute. Maybe provide a little context here. First of all, throughout all these different episodes, incidents, situations that we've been working our way through the life of Christ.

It just keeps coming up time and time again. The Pharisees right there, just dogging his steps, challenging him, questioning him, ridiculing him. Doing anything they could to bring disrepute upon him.

And so this question is not like a sincere question. They have something, it's actually a well thought out scheme. That they want to destroy him.

And we'll get to that here in a few minutes. But let me provide a little backdrop of this question. The Pharisees at that time were made up of two branches.

One branch followed the teachings of an elder, what a rabbi called Shemai. And the other, they were more the conservative branch. And then the other was Hillel.

And so many Pharisees followed his line of thought. And he was more liberal minded. And so they differed on practically everything that came along.

The issue of divorce really is only touched on a couple of times in the Old Testament, believe it or not. And one of those situations, passages in Deuteronomy 24 where this situation is addressed. And the first verse says, when a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, he should write her a certificate of divorce and put it in her hand and send her out from his house.

Okay, so that's what it says. Shemai's crowd believed or focused on the word indecency, meaning adultery. If she's committed adultery.

So they put it, you know, focused on that. That the woman has committed adultery, she should be divorced. Hillel's understanding of it or focus on it was when it says here, she finds no favor in his eyes.

So it's a much more liberal, broad-minded perspective on what gave them the right to divorce their wife. And by the way, I don't know if you noticed this or not, but Jesus in the Old Testament and so on, you never hear anything about the wife divorcing the husband. And there's a reason for that, because the whole backdrop of the culture of that time, and really across the entire, yeah, at least the Near East, probably the entire world, was that women were looked at as a possession of the man.

Kind of like the guy's prize bull, you know, except maybe a half a step up from that. But really not much more than that. It wasn't like American culture is today, you know.

And this is what we constantly do, is we put our 21st century American culture into the Word of God, and that always tends to lead us astray. It tends to Americanize something that was written by Jewish men

2,000 years ago and beyond. So anyway, back in those days, women were looked at as second-class citizens.

They really had no rights. And if a woman was divorced, she was put out of the house. Literally put out of the house.

She had to walk away from her children, walk away from everything. And there was nothing she could do about it. And so Hillel's teaching, which most of the Jewish men of the time ascribed to, she could be put out for anything.

She burnt the eggs. You're out of here. You know, that kind of thing.

Or more likely, the guy spotted some prettier girl or something, and he just, you know, I want that girl. And she would just be put out of the house. It was just a cruel system.

So in Deuteronomy 24, what God was doing was trying to protect the woman, because the certificate of divorce protected her, instead of just putting her out of the house. I can't get into all the details of this. The thing that bothers me about this is it's so technical when you get into really studying it out, and I'm trying to not get too technical.

But anyway, just trust me on this, that God's concern for the wife was to protect her, and to protect her rights. So what the Pharisees were doing here, they were laying a trap for Jesus. If he took the side of Hillel, I mean, took the side of Shammai, then he would be being pitted against the popular teaching of the day.

It would be kind of like us today, where the grace teaching, grace covers everything, it doesn't really matter what you do. So to stand against that in this day and age, in our church culture, is kind of difficult. And it's kind of like that back then.

And so the Pharisees were kind of setting him against the Jewish men of the day, but their treachery went further than that, because this country that they entered into beyond the Jordan was called Perea, and Perea was where Herod Antipas lived. Herod Antipas, if you remember, is the one who had John the Baptist beheaded. Why? Because John the Baptist was publicly calling him out for stealing his brother's wife and having her divorce his brother so he could marry her.

And John the Baptist was fearlessly calling him out, and he was beheaded because of it. So this was a cunning ploy, well-thought-out strategy on the part of the disciples. This wasn't just some off-the-cuff question.

They were looking to do Jesus in. At the very least, ruin his reputation. Perhaps even more than that, have him killed by Herod Antipas.

All right, so that's a little of the backdrop. Let's continue reading here. Verse 4, And he answered and said, Have you not read? That's a question he asks the Jews a lot.

Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate. They said to him, Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and

send her away? He said to them, Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives.

But from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, Whoever divorces his wife except for immorality and marries another woman commits adultery. Okay, that's what Jesus said.

Now my experience in the church has been that there's two extremes. I could almost say, I'm going to say in this understanding of this situation, and it's kind of true across the board that there's two extremes, and we want to find middle ground, I can just tell you that. On the extreme, I'll say the left, would be Christians, let's call them cultural Christians.

Cultural meaning heavily influenced by the world. And so the pounding message and the pounding value system of the world is what's ringing in their ears all the time. Why? Because they go to church on Sunday for a couple hours, but the rest of the week they are just filling themselves with the message of the world.

Television, Internet, social media, just constant messaging like that, and it has really corrupted their understanding of the Word of God and so on. So that would be one side, and what they have been taught is that their feelings and their desires dictate every decision in life. And even to the exclusion of the Word of God, because the Word is kind of tiny in their mind because they're not in it, they're not feeding on it, they're just kind of like a little bit here and there and Sunday morning, of course, but really they're filling their minds with the world.

So that's on one extreme. On the other extreme would be a hard-line perspective from religious-minded people who at times can become very narrow-minded and rigid in their understanding of what the Scripture is saying. I don't know how else to put it other than that.

And so for people on that side, or to that extreme is what I'm talking about, to that extreme, they would see a black-and-white statement here. Jesus said if you are divorced, you cannot remarry. And so, you know, really? I could just sit down and call it a day because that's what Jesus said, right? Are you guys with me? Am I just up here talking to myself? Do you ever wonder about that? Totally, he gets it.

It's like they're just daydreaming. When's this guy going to be done? I got things to say. You better listen to me.

Okay, what Jesus said seems to be a black-and-white statement, but I'm hoping to bring a little color to it and take some of the starkness out of it, okay? Because I don't believe it's as stark as it's presented by those way over there. I don't think it's quite that black-and-white. I think that, let me put it this way.

Kathy's book, I can't remember exactly how you said it, but basically the way she had to write the book was there's so many different variations of situations that we deal with with wives married to you guys, you know, and there's all kinds of different settings and circumstances and stuff. Every situation is unique and different. And I think that if Jesus were in our midst like Moses, you know, in his day when he would sit and consider different things and render judgments and so on with situations that came up, I think that Jesus would be looking at each situation uniquely.

But he was painted into a corner by this Pharisee. He didn't get up that morning and say, oh, I think I'll talk on divorce and remarriage today. No, he was asked a question, put on the spot, and he gave an answer.

And it's not that his answer was wrong, it's just that all I'm suggesting, I think this is true, is that if the Lord were sitting there in our situation today, it wouldn't be just a black and white statement. I don't think his response would be that simplistic. Now, for the sake of our situation here, I'm going to limit it to what we mostly encounter here at Pure Life Ministries, which is that you guys have committed some kind of sin and your wife has filed for divorce.

So I'm going to go by that to just kind of work my way through this. Thank you. He's an intern.

He's been trained well. Thank you. Glad someone's listening.

So I'm going to just touch on a few things that helped me to just paint some color in this. Do you guys care? All right. You're listening, right? All right.

The first thing is any time you come across a situation, especially if there's some kind of controversy in the church, you've got to apply hermeneutical laws to the situation. Golly, that was difficult. Whenever an honest scholar looks at a passage of scripture, he has at least two questions.

We don't have time to get into all of it, but I'm just going to limit it to two questions, all right? He's going to ask himself these two questions. These are very important in understanding what the scripture is actually saying. The first question is, what did the author intend to communicate? And one of the issues with that would be, is this intended to be a situational text or a normative text? All right.

Normative situational. What in the world is Pastor Steve talking about? Normative would mean a passage of scripture that all believers in all cultures, in all situations, this text is going to apply to every believer anytime, anywhere. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

I don't care if you're on the planet Pluto. That applies to you if you're a believer. Got that, Carla? Okay.

Don't be sleeping on me back there. A situational text is something that was meant for the people, his audience at that particular time and situation. So let me give you an extreme example of this.

Paul writes to Timothy, come before winter and bring my cloak. I don't think the Lord expects us to go looking for Paul's cloak, right? That's probably not what he's talking about. How about this, a little closer to our situation.

This comes out of 1 Corinthians 11. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.

If this is normative, I'm in trouble. Because for the last 40 years, every morning I go on a prayer walk in the woods with a hat on. And throughout the day I'll be out working on my property and stuff.

I always have a hat on when I'm out there working. And so, you know, I'm regularly kind of off and on just talking to the Lord. I just do that.

I just like to talk to him. I need to talk to him. Now, can you imagine if I had to take my hat off every time? Wait a minute, Lord.

Wow, that would be difficult. That is what I consider situational. Women with head coverings.

Now, let me just say that I love this tradition. I really do. Because to me, that woman is making a statement to the world, I belong to the Lord.

You know, and especially in our day and age with all the filthy-minded men out there, I think it's refreshing to see women just have that expression of decency. You know, I'm not something for you to be lusting after and so on. I just like that.

But women, such as my wife, who don't wear a head covering, like in church and stuff, I don't think she's in sin because I think it was part of the culture of the time. It was part of the understanding of the time. And I just tend to think it was a situational text.

Are you understanding where I'm... Yes, sir. Okay, good. Now, regarding divorce and remarriage.

Normative or situational? Well, I'm going to say that I tend to think it's situational, what Jesus is referring to here. There's many reasons, I just don't have time. Really, if I would have had two hours, I probably could have covered everything, but I just... Yeah, we can't do that.

I'm going to say situational, and that's going to partly be understood a little better with the second question that a scholar would ask himself is, how would the audience of his day have understood what he was saying? So, when Moses spoke, what were the children of Israel like? What was their culture like, you know, out there in the wilderness? What was going on? What was the setting like and all of that? When Moses spoke, what was he saying to them? You have to have that understanding. It wasn't 21st century America. And we're constantly, and I've been guilty of it too, we are constantly trying to force-fit something that was of a Middle Eastern culture in primitive times into 21st century American Christianity.

It doesn't work like that. We have to fit ourselves into that culture to understand completely what was being expressed. Israel was a theocratic nation with a closed society.

That was some pretty big words, huh, Chris? He's still mulling that over. Theocratic nation ruled by God with a closed society. The Jews were very... You know, this has been their problem for 2,000 years, why the world hates them, or one of the reasons the world hates them is because they're so closed off as a culture, as a people.

No matter if they're in France, you know, 1940, or Palestine 2,000 years ago, they were a closed society. But we aren't like that. We're not a theocratic nation, that's for sure.

And we're not a closed society either. We need to try to get our minds back there. So let's look at the context again of that situation, the culture.

The Pharisees had this contempt for women. And if they wanted to just dump a woman, they could do that. And by the way, the Hebrew word for divorce is actually send out.

That's literally what it means, send her out. And that's what they could do and would do if they wanted to. So if that happened in 1st century Judea, what is she going to do? What happens to her? She's been stripped of her reputation.

She's been stripped of her children. She's been stripped of her home. She's been stripped of her sustenance.

You see how cruel and unmerciful this way, this chauvinistic culture was like towards women in that time. So what was Jesus thinking when he said these words? And I propose to you that I think he was mainly concerned about the way these women were being treated by these chauvinistic men that just wanted to use them. And if they wanted to dump them, even if they didn't, it was always hanging over their heads.

He can dump me anytime he wants. So she's got to walk on eggshells around him her whole life. So how does that work in 21st century America where 50% of marriages end in divorce? And how does it work in a culture where women are considered equal to men and can go out and earn a living just like a man can? And how does it relate to us in this day when nearly always if there's a divorce the women are the ones who end up with the children? Completely different situation.

Completely different cultural background. And so I just don't tend to think what Jesus is saying was meant as a normative commandment, meant for all people, all times, every situation, forever and ever. I just don't tend to see it that way.

All right. Number two. I want to take a look at this statement Jesus made, what therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

The reference in his statement is to a marriage of two people who have the Holy Spirit indwelling them in a marriage ceremony that is done, consummated in the sight of God with the understanding that they both have sought God's will and they're both convinced we are marrying the person that God has ordained for us to be married to. That's what I believe Jesus is referring to when he says God has joined together these two people. This was not referring to, I don't believe, referring to a flimsy, flippant kind of commitment that is so often made in marriages in our day.

So, if you have two believers, true believers, let's pick on Austin and Tabitha. Tabitha, who's missing quite suspiciously this morning. We're all wondering what's happened to Austin's wife.

She's a midwife. She's doing what midwives do. But anyway, Austin, you know what? I'm not going to pick on you anymore.

Yeah, I can see. I need a couple. How about Patrick and Joella back there? Yeah.

Patrick and Joella, if you two start having problems, now, you guys didn't notice this, but when I said that, Patrick had his arm around her and he right away took his arm off her. There's already a breach right now. Put your arm back around her.

Okay, this is getting away from me. You two start having problems. This is what I think the Lord would say to you.

You need to both humble yourselves, quit just thinking about yourself, and start thinking about the other person. You made this covenant before me, and I expect you to honor it. That's what I think the Lord would say to you two.

So don't get any strange ideas back there. So in other words, a marriage done with two believers in the right spirit is a holy consecration before God. Now, back to our situation here.

You guys. Now, this is interesting that Luke had you raise your hands if you had made a commitment to the Lord. Boy, did you nail yourself.

That commitment didn't hold out very well, did it? And I question, those of you that are married, I question the level of your sincerity when you said your vows. You know why I question that? Because I know what I was like, and I know that I was exactly what I said earlier. I made my vows.

Just get me through this ceremony. We want to be married. Just a flippant, complete lack of concern about is this really God's will? And I suspect maybe your wives, some of you probably have godly wives, and for them, they were really trying to honor God with their marriage when they married you.

But most of you had sexual sin hidden that you didn't tell her about. So you went into it as a deceiver. I did too.

Me too. So I just don't tend to see that as a marriage that God has put together. It doesn't mean that it can't become something beautiful.

Ours has. And, you know, once I got her straightened out, payback's coming, I know. No, really though, I would say for the last 38, 40 years, it's been 44 years almost, we've had a wonderful, wonderful marriage that God has blessed and used.

So all I'm trying to get at is I'm questioning that the marriage Jesus is referring to fits in with marriages today that aren't entered into with that kind of consecration. That's all I'm saying. I actually think there's something very big here, and that is the will of God.

If marriage isn't entered into with the real belief that this is the will of God, then I'm just going to question that God's in it. So whatever with that, that's just one more thing of what has made me kind of push me over to a little over this side is that statement. Alright, the third thing is have to take into consideration what is God really like? His character.

And this is a big thing to me also. Now Kathy and I, if you don't know this, we were both divorced before, and we got married, and this all happened back in our days of sin. And a few years ago a very religious minded man, way over on that extreme, sent word to me, and he said, tell Steve Gallagher that he needs to put his wife away.

And what he meant by that was that I was to buy her a house or rent her a house and she was to live separate from me because, you know, we are transgressing the law and she is to live separate. Okay. Now where is the mercy for Kathy in that scenario? She is supposed to be treated like a leper from this community.

Really? You can see where people go with this kind of thinking. You know, whatever the case with divorce and remarriage, okay, whatever the case is with that, I just want to tell you something I absolutely state with unequivocal that was a big word and it just tied me up. What else do I say? Confidence.

Confidence. God is not a harsh religious scrupulous rule dispenser. That is not the Lord that I know.

He's a God, He's a being of love. God is agape. The scripture tells us that.

It doesn't say God is a rule dispenser. His laws are built on the law of love. And if you'll take the time to read through the New Testament Commandments, you will find that every one of them has to do with loving God and loving others.

The Ten Commandments, same thing. The first four loving God, the last six loving other people. It's not about keeping minutiae rules.

It's about interacting with this being in love. And I can just testify for myself that I obey him because I want to please him. Because I love him because he's been so good to me.

Now some people are on the side of just tell me the rules and I'll obey the rules. And okay, I'm not saying that's necessarily altogether wrong. But you better have more life in your relationship with God than that.

A couple months ago, one of my guys here, he's sitting here this morning, came to me pretty discouraged. And his situation, a pastor he had talked to had told him, given him a little phrase, it's become a little phrase here in the church, one wife for life. And he was pretty discouraged the day that he came to me.

And he was saying that the thought of going, he's about 30 years old, the thought of going the rest of my life with no hope whatsoever of ever being married is just yeah, I don't have the strong enough word to express what he was, what I saw on his face that day, he told me this. And I said, I know what Jesus said, but my experience with the Lord, that does not describe the God that I know that would lay that on you. It just doesn't.

I'm not saying I'm right, I'm just saying that from my perspective, my understanding of the Lord, what he's like, how he's treated me and so on, that is not the way he comes across to me. Now I'm not advocating some loose approach to Scripture, absolutely not, and if you've read any of my writings, you know that I'm not like that. I'm not a loosey-goosey with... Am I supposed to say that? Moving on.

Number four, the fourth thing I just want to touch on. God is a God of restoration. And this was one of the things the Pharisees hated about Jesus, because he gladly went to the sinners, and gladly tried to win them, just like Luke was expressing, wanting to win them to himself.

By the way, one of the scholars that I was reading on this subject said, he's referring to certain traditions and denominations that believe that you can't be in ministry if you are divorced. And he said, God's a divorcee. I guess he can't be on their elder board.

I'm sorry. I'm not looking to offend anyone. I just thought it was kind of funny.

But it's true. God divorced Israel. God loves to restore people.

Redemption is the heart of the gospel, guys. It's the heart. That's where you have... That's why you have hope.

I don't care what you've done. I've said this in I don't know how many prisons I've spoken in. I don't care what you've done.

And I know I've spoken to murderers, serial killers, rapists, child molesters, everything you can imagine. I have ministered to them in prisons. And I have told them, I don't care what you have done.

Our God is a God of restoration. And he's a God of redemption. It doesn't matter how bad you've... You know, whatever it is you have done.

There's always redemption at the cross for anybody. You know, it isn't so much sin that's condemned in scripture. It's a given that humans are going to sin.

What was roundly condemned was lack of repentance, a lack of change, a lack of turning to God. That is what God condemns. Mostly.

More than anything. And you have the pictures, really a beautiful picture of this, Zacchaeus, which I'm going to be preaching on his story in about a month. And I've already come up with the title.

I haven't done any studying on it. But I got a title. Would you like to hear it? How do I know you really mean it? You've said things in the past you didn't mean, you know.

Got a track record there. Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus, the ultimate taker.

That sounds good, right? We'll see if it turns out. What about Moses and David? Both of them murdered men. And Paul, maybe.

I mean, he hounded Christians, got through them in prison. Some believe that he actually had Christians killed. You've got the three biggest branches of scripture.

These are the men God used to pen those words. All destroyers of life. And am I to believe that being married or married after you've been divorced trumps that? That this is the unpardonable sin? I don't think so.

Even if it is sin. I'm not even saying it is. I mean, it could be.

I'm just giving you what I... Listen, guys. I am intellectually honest. I don't buy into systems.

These doctrinal systems that try to lump everything the way someone thought it up a few hundred years ago or something. This is the way it is, and they impose that on scripture, and every scripture has to fit within... That's what they do. I'm not like that.

I'm not a systems guy. So, you know, I try to be intellectually honest when I'm researching situations and what the Word of God is saying. And so I could be wrong.

I mean, when I studied this out, this is where I came to. But I could be wrong, because Jesus did say what he said. I will mention this, that one of the men I studied as I was researching this is a scholar.

How do I put this? You've got preachers like me on this level. Then you've got commentators that are maybe a level above. These are the guys who write those commentaries.

This is the guy that the commentators go to. So he's a research scholar. So I've been studying these guys the last few months or weeks or whatever.

And this particular guy, he actually wrote a book, not to the general Christian public, but to pastors about this subject and where I ended up. And I didn't do it because of him. I'm just saying that as I studied his stuff, okay, well, he's saying basically the same stuff that I'm saying.

He ended up in the same place, for what that's worth. Alright, so I'm going to wrap things up here. Basically, we have two groups of people represented here.

Those who are married or hope to be married one day. That's one group. And I want to strongly exhort you guys.

How many of you are married and you're not, you know, being divorced? Your wife isn't following from divorce. Okay, a bunch of you. God bless you guys.

Man, after what you've put your wife through, boy, you better treat her like gold when you get back home. And whatever single guys, how many single guys in here? Wow, a bunch of you too. Has anybody left? Am I just preaching this message and nobody's paying attention? Alright, well, let me talk to you guys.

First of all, you're married or you hope to be married. I want to strongly exhort you to reverence your marriage. Reverence it.

Treat it with the reverence it's due. Recently, we've had a couple of weddings. One of them back there we just referred to.

And Gabe and Mercy, I don't know where Gabe and Mercy are at and why they're playing hooky. But, I want to read a couple of passages that, let me just get to these. Pastor Nate officiated Patrick and Joella's wedding.

And this is what he said. He said a really wonderful thing, but this is just kind of a synopsis of it. He said, the significance of marriage is that it is a living illustration of the relationship that God desires to have with his people.

Nothing about the marriage relationship is coincidental. Every aspect has been intentionally designed to communicate a message. From the differing roles, the two becoming one, the new life that springs forth from the intimate relationship.

Marriage is God's visible sign of an invisible relationship. And because it's God's sign, it's extremely sacred, holy, and anointed by God for a purpose. Yeah, that's very profound.

You could sit and chew on that for a long time. And Pastor Ed gave one at Gabe and Mercy's wedding. And referring to this verse that we saw, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

He said, that's the origin and sanctity of marriage. An institution as old as creation and as holy as God himself is holy. I have only one charge to give you.

Your charge is to preserve the oneness of this marriage. To preserve the physical oneness, the emotional oneness, and most importantly of all, the spiritual oneness of this marriage. And I will tell you this, maintaining spiritual oneness is the key.

Alright, those are very profound statements. Showing the sanctity, the beauty of what marriage before God should be. So again, if you're married or hope to be married, you need to make sure that you're entering into it or whatever treating it with the utmost reverence.

Alright, those who are divorced. Is anybody divorced? Just my staff? I'm not sure what that says about us. Alright, so those of you guys who are divorced or in the process, whatever.

I have a question that trumps everything else. What is God's will for your life? That's it right there. That's the most important thing.

What is God's will for your life? You guys in the past lived by your feelings and desires. You did what you wanted to do. If you felt like whatever, you just did what you wanted to do.

However you felt at the time. But you've got to learn now to live your life submitted to God's authority at all times. You have to figure it out.

Some things are black and white. They are clear. Just absolutely clear in scripture.

Other things are not so clear. And so those things you have to find God's will. I was talking to Pastor Ed earlier and he said when he counsels guys on this subject, he tells them go and find out for yourself.

Go and seek the Lord about what he believes on this subject. But I'll say even beyond that is seek the Lord for his will for your life. And to do that, we've always taught the first thing you have to do is you have to become neutral.

If 90% of you wants to be married and you're just driven, driven, driven, I've got to have a wife, I've got to be married. You're not going to be able to hear from God. If you had a feeling like I met this girl and I feel like it's God's will that I be married.

How do you know that? When your voice is booming inside your head, how are you supposed to hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit? You've got to get to the place of being neutral. In other words, Lord you know my heart, I want to be married. But if you feel like I need to be single then I'm okay with that.

I'll just be alright because I want to be in your will no matter what because if I get married and out of your will it's going to be a disaster. So I want to be in your will, that is the most important thing even beyond my desire to be married. And then once you've come to that point you've got to pray about God's will.

And when I say pray for his will, I don't mean pray night and day for a wife. That's not how can you be neutral and do that? You just practically speaking you just mention it to the Lord occasionally. Lord, I bring it to you again, you know, I just need to know your will on this matter.

He'll speak to you guys if you'll learn to listen for his voice. Get all the clutter out of your head. You're getting the clutter out of your head since you've been here.

You don't have the world booming its voice in your head anymore. You have spiritual voices coming at you all the time. You should be getting to a place while you're here of being able to hear the voice of the Lord.

Getting that sense inside, I know the Lord is speaking to me about such and such. Your past history has been to live by your desires and I know that the Lord has something else for you and he wants to teach you how to be led by him. Paul said, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

You know what it means to be led by the Lord. You need to come into that where that's a real thing to you. Not just some religious reading the Bible and doing what you think it says or something.

Learning how to hear from the Lord honestly, with an honest heart. Alright. I want to end with a prayer that Paul prayed for the Colossians.

Pastor Ed's going to come up and do something with this mess. This is what Paul prayed Colossians 1, 9 and 10. For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask

that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

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