

Many Aspire, Few Attain

by Walter A. Henrichsen

Walter A. Henrichsen's sermon warns of the spiritual warfare Christians face and the necessity of unwavering commitment to God to avoid mediocrity and failure.

Duration: 1:14:07

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6, Proverbs 28:20, Jeremiah 6:16, Matthew 22:37, Luke 16:10, Romans 12:9, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Topics: "Finishing Well"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of remembering and reviewing the truths of the Bible. He encourages the audience to hold tenaciously to these truths and make them the foundations of their lives. The speaker also warns against being kick-oriented and always seeking new things, as this can lead to ineffectiveness in serving God. He lists 14 ways in which individuals can render themselves ineffective for God and urges the audience to choose wisely and not climb on the shelf for God. The sermon references various Bible verses, including Deuteronomy 6:6 and Daniel 6:3, to support the speaker's points.

Transcript

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. And this spiritual warfare that is taking place, I think, probably is intensifying rather than receding. I think one of the places that you can see this beautifully portrayed is in the California.

I imagine that you can see it as well there as you can any place in our country. It seems like if there's anism, or if there is some sect, if there's anything that it's going to begin, it's out there in Southern California that it gets its start. I don't know why, but it just seems to be that way.

And I speak as a Californian. I was born and raised out there and lived the majority of my life out there, but that's just the way it is. Somehow all the kooks and all the weirdos, they have this kind of gravitate out there.

It's an amazing thing. But I remember when I was down in jungle camp in Mexico back in what, 61, 62? We used to go out on these survival hikes, go out into the jungle. I represented the Bible translators' jungle camp down there at Yaxochintila.

And we'd go out, and it was great. We loved camping out there. It's just really beautiful.

And you'd build a campfire and sleep in that jungle camp down there at Yaxochintila. And we'd go out, and it was great. We loved camping out there.

It was just beautiful. And you'd build a campfire and sleep around in these lean-to's, and you build a nice... I love camping out there. It's just pretty beautiful.

And you build a campfire and sleep around it in these lean-to's. And we go out, and it was great. I love camping out there.

It's just pretty beautiful. And you build a campfire and sleep around it in these lean-to's, and you build a nice and big... because the campfire, of course, would drive the animals deep into the forest or into the jungle. But if you happen to wake up about two in the morning and look out, as the campfire had dwindled down, the lower the campfire got, the braver the animals became and the closer to the camp they got.

And if you look carefully into the jungle, you could see these pairs of eyes looking in from the forest at you. It kind of formed a circle as they looked in at you. It was an incentive to throw a few more logs on.

Not so much because of the coldness of the night, but because you didn't know what was behind those set of eyeballs. In many respects, that's what we're having today in evangelical Christianity in America. Because, gang, you see, my generation, the generation that came before me, was a moral generation.

The generation that now has the scene is an amoral generation, an immoral generation. And as the fires of evangelical Christianity grow dim, and as biblical preaching grows less and less across the nation, and as people more and more give themselves to sin and greed and the affluent life and permissivism and all of those things, then closer and closer into the camp come the eyes of the evil one. And I think probably today, because we have abandoned the Puritan ethic, because we have given over to the fruits of existentialism, we can see probably around us, like we have never seen in the last 50 years, the forces of evil encroaching on our camp.

And the occult, the witchcraft, the Satan worship, and all of these manifestations are very, very real. There are demons. There are demon-possessed people.

There is sorcery. And when you begin to play with astrology and Ouija boards and all of this other stuff, you are just giving expression to that which is not the figment of a man's imagination, but that which is on every page of the Bible. And I believe that because of this, we not only live in perilous days, but we live in days of unprecedented opportunity.

Because the one glimmer of hope in all of it is that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. And that's the blessed promise, of course, in Romans chapter 5, verse 20. But I remind you that our devil is like a roaring lion, and his objective is to devour.

And he is in the process of it. He is devouring through dope. He is devouring through loose living.

He is devouring through people giving themselves to wrong goals and objectives. Turn with me in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 20. Anybody, before you turn to it, tell me what Deuteronomy 20, the subject of it is.

Warfare, okay. Who will read verse 8? Okay. Involvement in this warfare, gang, is a voluntary thing.

It's your choice. Who knows, who can quote 2 Timothy 2, 3 and 4? I know you know 2 Timothy 2 too. But how about verses 3 and 4? Who can quote it for us? Okay.

Okay. Endure suffering and hardship if you plan on getting into the battle, says the Apostle Paul. And gang, I think that if there is one thing I want to impress upon your minds this morning, is that the battle that you are engaged in is a battle for keeps.

Let me encourage you, don't enter into it unless you plan on winning. Don't enter into it unless you plan on giving your life in exchange for it. Don't enter into it unless you plan on suffering and enduring hardship.

Because your adversary, the devil, and his legions of demons, they play dirty. They fight rough. They give no quarter.

Now, he that is in you is greater than he that is in the world. You are on the winning side. You can take refuge and consolation in that.

But let me warn you, gang, it is a dirty, rough warfare that you engage in. And the deeper you get into it, the meaner and nastier it gets. And I just don't know how to impress upon your minds that enough.

Now, I know that there is a certain degree of commitment that is present in this room right here. You wouldn't be here otherwise. You'd be spending your spring break doing something else rather than coming to a bunch of meetings.

You know, studying your Bible or whatever it is you're doing here. I know that. But I also have enough gray hairs to know that men come and go.

And that the attrition rate in the Christian life is absolutely horrendous. That in the final analysis, many aspire, but few attain. Many begin well, but gang, precious few end well.

And basically what I want to talk to you about is approximately 14 ways on how you can climb on the shelf and render yourself ineffective for God. 14 ways that you can sign peace treaties with the devil and let him go his way while you go yours. And remember, the devil is willing to hold the ladder for any individual who wants to climb on the shelf for God.

It is your choice. I remind you that it is relatively easy to recruit collegians. The reason it is easy is that you happen to be at an age in which you view things from an idealistic point of view.

You've got a whole adventuresome life ahead of you. Everything looks like it's filled with opportunity. If there's one thing that the collegian today hates, it's mediocrity.

If there's one thing he wants, it's idealism. Idealism expressed in a better way of life. And that's the reason why.

It's the collegian that rallies people around the banner which seeks to destroy the establishment. Why? Because the establishment is given over to mediocrity. Because the establishment is compromised.

Because the establishment has gotten fat with self-interest. And the best thing to do from the idealist's point of view is to burn it down and build it over. Start over.

The average collegian is looking for a cause. He's looking for a flag to follow. He's looking for something to give his life to.

To recruit the collegian is a fairly easy thing to do. I'm sure you have discovered that. I'm sure you have found yourself strangely warmed inside and moved with the desire to really make your life count.

But it's a long uphill climb. And the older you get, the more you feel like quitting. Because you see, victory is in the future.

Victory isn't just around the corner. Victory doesn't come by burning down a building. Victory doesn't come by having a law or two rescinded.

Victory doesn't come by having the university change its ways. These are all symptoms. And the battle that you're engaging in is a battle that will take the rest of your life.

And it will consume every ounce of your energy. Like I said, I don't know how to impress upon you that more strongly. And you know, I talk to men who are just like you in their thirties, forties, and fifties.

I say just like you because when they were in their twenties, they were giving themselves to the same cause you're giving yourself to. Ask you for what you're giving your life to. It's the conquering of the world for Jesus Christ, nothing less.

We're going for broke. And their attitude towards you is a very benevolent attitude. A very benign look comes across their face.

And they pat you on the back and say, well, bless your heart. That's idealism for you. Excuse me.

And you have just met a person who is aspired and not attained. You have met a person who started well and ended poorly. You have met a man who began like you began.

And yet, somewhere down the road have opted for mediocrity. And most of you sitting here this morning will do the same thing. In a room filled with this, there will be less than maybe five of you who, by the time you reach forty years of age, will be giving yourself to the same goal that you're giving yourself to today.

The cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things will enter in. It will choke the word. Your life will become unfruitful.

You'll begin to give yourself to wall-to-wall carpet, to foam rubber, to push buttons, to the acquiring of things. You'll be thinking in terms of retirement, and pensions, and the stock market, and wealth. You will be encumbered with junk.

And you'll be happily involved in it. And there's no way that more than probably five to a half a dozen of you will continue with the same fervor and the same commitment ten years from now that you have right this minute. And I don't know which five it's going to be, but there are just some resolutions that you're going to have to make in your own soul if you want to be one of them.

You cannot give yourself or your enemy a quarter. The Apostle Paul talked like this, didn't he? 1 Corinthians chapter 9. Turn with me for a moment to it. That's found in the New Testament, kid.

These Aggies, they don't know the Old Testament from the New. I've got to help them. You know how that is.

Verses 24 to the end of the chapter. Who will read it for us? Okay? Know ye not that they who run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain it. And every man that striveth for a man, how they do it, to obtain it.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly. So fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means.

Lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. You're in the business of preaching to others. Let me suggest a few ways that you could become a castaway.

Now this is by no means an exhaustive list. I'm not even mentioning these necessarily in the order of their importance. I'm sure that if we gave ourselves to it, we could double or triple this list of ways of ruining your life.

But I'm just going to mention a few. Okay? For number one, no heart for God. Who can quote or read for us Psalm 27.4? Okay? One thing he seeks after.

Not these forty things I dabble at. But this one thing I'm seeking after, says David. Or Deuteronomy 6, verses 4 and 5. Who can look that one up for us? Here in Israel, the Lord, our God, is one Lord.

And thou shalt love... Okay. Go ahead. And these words which I command you to teach them diligently unto thy children.

And thou shalt talk to them... Okay. Great. Praise God for scripture memory.

This is terrific. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. With everything you've got.

Let me ask you, gang. Do you have a real heart for God? Do you love Him with everything you have in you? Do you find that your life is consumed with the desire to follow Him? I'm not talking about emotionalism here now. I'm not talking about sentimentality.

I'm talking about the resolute spirit. That somewhere along the way, you have driven a stake deep into the ground. And said, Oh God, I will.

I will follow you with all of my heart, and with all of my soul, and with all of my mind. There are many Christians around. There are very few godly people.

And gang, there is a big difference between those two words. Lot of Christians. Few godly men.

Lot of Christian gals. Few godly women. And I remember, long before I was married, I just prayed, Lord, if you ever want me to get married, I don't want a Christian girl, I want a godly woman.

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain. But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Lord, that's what I want.

A woman that loves God. Gang, do you love the Lord your God this morning? With everything you have? Number two. The second reason why many aspire and few attain is because they have never learned to

hate sin.

Romans 12, 9. Anybody memorize the 12th chapter of Romans and pick up the 9th? Alright, who will read it for us? Okay. Abhor evil, and cleave good. Close your mind, eyes, for a moment, and think of something that really nauseates you, just makes you sick to your stomach to look at.

Can you think of something that really nauseates you? You get around it, you almost upchuck. Do you have something in mind? Now that's the word that he's using here in Romans 12, 9, when it says, Abhor that which is evil. I want you to view sin, says the Bible, like you view that which you're thinking about right now.

So that when you see sin, your attitude toward it is just like that. You can hardly contain yourself. You almost begin to gag so badly.

Gang, do you have a hatred for sin this morning? Do you find that you hate it? Do you abhor that which is evil? Now I know all of us are plagued with little sins. But there are some of you sitting here this morning that you don't hate evil. As a matter of fact, there are little pet sins in your life that what you've done is you've taken them and you have embraced them to your bosom.

And you play with them and you pet them. And maybe nobody else in this room knows about them except you and God. Have you ever thought about the fact, gang, that people will do in the presence of the living God what they'll never do in front of other people? There are things that you'll do in God's presence that you won't do in front of me or in front of anybody else sitting in this room.

Isn't that true? You'll think thoughts and you'll commit acts in the quietness and privacy of your own room or your own life that you'd never think of doing in front of another person. Isn't that true? Now be honest with me. You bet it is.

God says, I want you to hate sin. Abhor it. And there are some of you sitting here this morning that you don't hate it.

You're cherishing it. There are sins that you have embraced. You have allowed them to rule in your life.

You play with them. You have never dealt the victory blow to them. The power has been given you.

All you have to do is appropriate it. But the fact of the matter is you don't want to because you enjoy it. And there's no way you'll survive.

There's no way you're going to make it. You're going to be one of the attrition. You're going to be one of the casualties.

Number three. The third way that you can climb on the shelf for God is by having no hunger for the Word. Jeremiah 15-16.

Who can quote it for us? He's so sharp in Scripture memory this morning. One of you can quote it for sure. Great.

And how about one other one since we're really good on Scripture memory. 1 Peter 2-2. All through the Bible it talks about the importance of hiding the Word of God in your life.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. Thy words were fine and I did eat them. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sit against thee.

The Word of God. Quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And gang, your only chance of survival is to take the Word of God and to hide it into your life because the Word of God cleans.

The Word of God gives you the life and character of Jesus Christ. The Word of God gives you power. The Word of God gives you the ability to do the will of God.

How are you doing about hiding the Word of God in your life? Has the Word become perfunctory for you? Are you doing Bible study? Or are you studying the Bible? There's a big difference between the two, you know. I know that probably most of you here are doing Bible study. But let me ask you another question.

Are you studying the Bible? Are you really giving yourself to it? See, I can fill out an advanced ABC blank in about 45 minutes. But to study the chapter takes me between 10 and 15 hours. And I can show up in 45 minutes preparation in your Bible study.

And I can have the blanks all filled out and I can participate and I can make it look pretty good. I have done my Bible study. But I have not studied my Bible.

How are you doing in terms of studying the Bible? Are you hiding it in your life? Do you find that you hunger for it? Do you find that you've got kind of a sweet tooth for the Word? Is it honey and milk to your lips? Do you find that you love to drink deep at its well? If not, gang, I submit for your consideration this morning that there is no way you're going to make it. You're going to be one of those who began well and ended poorly. There's no way you can survive.

I run across again and again and again in the Christian life people who say, well, you know, Hendrickson, you can't be legalistic in these things. And that's right. You know, I find it.

I get around the Navigators and they kind of squeeze me into their mold. Oh, man. It's like sawdust in my mouth.

And I know exactly what you're talking about. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. But gang, remember, that's not your Bible study leader's problem.

That's not your Navigator representative's fault. That is your fault. It's because of the coldness of your heart.

It's because you have no hunger for the word of God that you're facing that problem. Yours is not a legalistic problem, my friend. Yours is a spiritual problem.

If you've been trapped in the web of method rather than using method as a key to unlock the treasures, you can solve that problem, you know. You can solve that problem first of all by spending mucho time in it, huh? You can solve that problem by meditating and thinking on the word of God instead of doing the perfunctory ritual of the form. You can really make it live, thirdly, by applying it.

The word of God was given primarily not to increase your knowledge but to change your life. Gang, do you make sure that you're applying the word of God? Number four. The fourth reason why many aspire and few attain is they've never learned to trust God.

Instead of me giving you references on this, why don't you just quote three or four verses that you know by heart that deal with the importance of trusting God. Give the reference for now. Not everybody at once here now.

I think it's Psalm 375. Okay. Psalm 375.

Great. Proverbs 3, 5, and 6. All right. One or two more.

One or two hundred. Gang, there are going to be times in your life when the living God, to use a gambler's term, is going to take all of the blue chips and he's going to push them right in the middle of the table and he's going to say, Hey friend, we're going for broke on that one. Let's see how you're doing in your Christian life.

And more often than not, people push all kinds of panic buttons on the console and punch out. And if you want to really walk with God, then you've got to learn to trust Him. And if you want to learn to trust Him, you've got to learn to trust Him in the little things so that when the big things come across your life, you have established a habit of it.

Because I'm here to tell you this morning that it's going to take place. Your faith is going to be tested. You are no greater than your forefathers.

The day's going to come when the bottom's going to drop out, the roof is going to cave in, and somebody's going to say, Cheer up, it's going to get worse. And sure enough, you'll cheer up and it'll get worse. Are you trusting God in the little things? How about in your finances? Well, that's a tough one, isn't it? To really trust God in this area.

To give when you can't afford it. You know, there's no faith involved in giving when you can't afford it, is there? Faith comes when you give and you can't afford it. And a lot of things in your life you can do without faith, gang.

Without faith, you can get married. Without faith, you can have a home. Without faith, you can be a millionaire.

Without faith, you can live a normal, relatively happy life. But there's one thing you cannot do without faith. You know what it is? You tell me.

Please God. Where is it found? Hebrews 11.6. And this morning, if you're planning on pleasing God, gang, you've got to walk by faith. Have you ever taken that long walk with Isaac to Mount Moriah? Let me caution you.

Don't use a rubber knife on him. And after you have given Isaac back to God, don't go back and visit the gravesite and wish like crazy for the resurrection. God is in control.

All he wants from you is intelligent cooperation. Boil down to one word that simply means trust. And many of you here will never make it simply because you cannot muster up enough courage and faith in your soul to really trust him when the going gets rough.

Number five. You'll never attain because you refuse to burn your boats. The story is told of Cortes when he took his men to Mexico.

They landed at Veracruz. His objective was to march on Mexico City and conquer Montezuma. He took all of his forces and he put them on the beach and sent demolition teams out to the ships and he burnt them to the bottom of the Pacific.

And all the men stood there on shore and watched those ships first burn and then sink. And embedded in their mind was the realization that there was no turning back. They were in Mexico for life.

And you know why? It's a long swim to Spain. Let me ask you, gang. Have you burnt your ships? Have you taken whatever avenues of retreat? I'm talking about mental things.

And you burnt them? How about education? You began in college or the university there with a goal. You had something in mind. You decided you were going to go get a degree to do something.

There's nothing wrong with education. There's nothing wrong with getting your degree. But there is something wrong with it if that becomes an end in and of itself.

Because since you've been there at the university, God's got a hold of your heart and your life. He's shaken you and turned you every way, but loose. He's still got a hold of you.

But that one area, have you let go of it? Have you given God back your degree and your goals as far as your vocation and the direction of your life is concerned? Like I say, nothing wrong with going to the university. Nothing wrong with getting an education. There is something terribly wrong with making that an end in and of itself.

If your university is a mission field for you to accomplish the will of God well and good, if the university is a means for you to accomplish your own selfish ends, you know as well as I do you're living in sin. And God wants you to burn that boat. Or how about your boyfriend or your girlfriend? Have you given them back to God? Oh, I've known many a person who's bit the dust on this one.

They have punched out. They've never made it simply because they've been unwilling to commit this area of their life to God. You know, there are several reasons why people date.

But one reason that is sin is to shop for a husband or a wife. We talked about Isaac. Have you ever taken Isaac in this area of your life up to Mount Moriah and built it to death below? That's a tough one.

Because you see, gang, after you give this back to God, it may very well be the guy won't give it back to you. It may be that you'll live the rest of your life single. Are you willing to do it? Are you willing to wait 10, 15 years before you get married? You know, I would rather have you get married at age 35 or 40 to the right person than get married at age 25 to the wrong person.

I'd rather have you live 10 fewer years with the right person than 10 more years with the wrong person. Have you burnt that ship? Have you taken that and built the death blow to it and given that back to God? I remember I was involved in the life of a church a while back. Some parents asked me to talk to their 18-year-old daughter.

We'll call her name Sharon. Beautiful young girl. Really an attractive, sweet, sharp-looking gal.

Sharon was in love with this guy. She wanted to marry him. I asked her if it was the will of God, and she said no.

I asked her if she was willing to give it back to God, and she said no. We talked about it. We talked about it until, oh, maybe 2 or 3 in the morning.

We had a long, long discussion about it. But Sharon had made up her mind that she was going to marry this guy, and she did. Oh, about a year and a half later, I was talking to the folks in the same church, and I said, how's Sharon? They kind of dropped their head and said, oh, fine.

What's she doing now? Well, she's got a baby girl. She's living in an apartment by herself. Her husband left her.

She's divorced, and she doesn't know what to do now. Be not deceived, for your God is not mocked. What you sow you will reap.

And the only way you can avoid that terrible, terrible plight is to let God make those decisions. Gang, I don't know what area of your life you've got to do it, but whatever it is, you burn those ships. You give them back to God.

Number six, many people never make it because they enter the road of no return. Deuteronomy 32:6, who's memorized it? Hark! Nobody has memorized Deuteronomy 32:6? Put that one, gang, on the top of your list for future memory. And somebody look it up and read it to us.

Moses is speaking here. He's making his closing remarks to the children of Israel before God buries him. He's reviewing his life with the children of Israel.

Remember, he spent the first 40 years in the palace, the second 40 years squeezing sand between his toes, and the third 40 years wandering around the wilderness with a rebellious people, burying his own generation. Can you imagine the number of funerals Moses had to attend? Forty years of burying his own generation. And there were a slug of them.

Now he's reviewing his life. And he says, but the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes and would not hear me. Why was God angry? Well, you remember that out there in the wilderness, the children of Israel had complained about water.

God said, strike the rock and the water will come out. He struck the rock, and sure enough, the water came out. The second time that the same incident happened, God said, speak to the rock.

But Moses got angry and struck the rock because of the rebelliousness of the people. The water came out, but God said, Moses, you're through. You will not go into the Promised Land.

Now remember, Moses had lived 120 years of his life with one thing in mind, getting into that Promised Land. Can you imagine that? A hundred and twenty years, and now he couldn't go because of one dumb mistake. Just one, not two, not three, not five.

One. Because you see, Paul tells us over there in Corinthians that that rock was Jesus Christ, and he's to be smitten only once. And because of that, God said, you will not go into the Promised Land.

Now, Moses pled with God. Lord, change your mind. Lord, please, give me another chance.

And notice what it says here. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes and would not hear me. And the Lord said unto me, let it suffice thee, speak no more unto me of this matter.

Moses, don't bring up the subject again. And gang, when God says, don't bring up the subject again, you know, probably is best not to bring up the subject again. The sixth reason why people don't make it is they enter under the road of no return.

Gang, market, and market well. There are certain decisions that you will make in your life that are irrevocable. Once made, you have entered the road of no return.

There are things that you can do that 1 John 1.9 just doesn't work on. We were talking about marriage and courtship. Let's bring that back for a moment and take another look at it.

You marry the wrong person, and you wake up some morning and find out that you're lying next to the wrong guy, don't try 1 John 1.9. God says, forget it. It's until death do you part. That is an irrevocable decision.

And you can plead with God. You can say, God, I made a mistake. God says, tough grits, friend.

You've had the schnitz. You're through. And gang, there are certain decisions that you'll make along the way that if you don't make them in the center of God's will, at that point you automatically become disqualified from the race.

And you're through. Make your decisions, and make them well. Number seven.

The seventh reason why people will never make it is because they have an independent spirit. And some of you here fit that category just to a tee. You're mavericks.

You're loners. You want to serve God, but you want to serve God your way. You're kind of like the guy I was asking about what he thought of the Episcopal form of government.

He says, well, I'm a good person, unless I can be one. And a lot of you got that in your own craw. You're against spiritual authority and spiritual leadership unless you can be the authority and the leader.

And you have forgotten that God says, I will not give you that which is your own until you've been part of that which is another man. By the way, where is that found? Okay. Luke 16, 12.

Second Kings 2.2. The Navigators affectionately call that verse Second Kingothy 2.2. Anybody know that verse by heart? Hark! Nobody's memorized Second Kingothy 2.2? That goes right under Deuteronomy 3.26 in your future memory list, gang. Who will read it for us? Okay. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Carry here, I pray thee, for the Lord is with thee.

And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, Okay. Elijah said unto Elisha, Carry here. Elisha says, no way, friend.

For you go, I go. There's no way you can get rid of me. Now, gang, you hear preached a lot, where is your Timothy? This morning I want to ask you another question.

Where is your Paul? Where is the guy or the gal that you have committed yourself to in that Elijah-Elisha relationship? Where is your Elijah? Where is the person that you're going to lock into by the will of God and go for broke with? Oh, man. But, you know, after all, God is my teacher. The guy can speak to me just as easily as he can speak to anybody else.

After all, doesn't the Bible say that you shouldn't be, you know, Lord over the flock and you shouldn't be like little tin gods? And, man, you've got a dozen verses that you can quote on that. And that's true. You're absolutely right.

Nobody is your Lord but Jesus. We're not talking about lordship. We're talking about an independent spirit.

And you remember that that was the same argument that three other dudes back in the Old Testament gave to old Moses. Remember what their names were? Well, they had the trouble, too. But there were three guys that came to him and said, You take too much upon yourself, Moses.

God can speak to us just as easily as he can speak to you. We don't need to follow you, man alive. Don't we believe in the priesthood of believers? I mean, doesn't my prayer get through to God? Can't God speak to me? I mean, after all, why not to follow your leadership? Remember who those guys were? And? Dathan? No? Dathan, Korah, and Abiram.

No? No, that was the strange fire where the sons of Aaron that got consumed. Dathan, Korah, and Abiram said that. And Moses said, Well, why don't we go talk this over with God and see what God says? So they said, Okay, let's do it.

So they went over to God. God says, Moses, why don't you step aside and let me show you what I think of that idea. So Moses steps aside.

And God opens up the earth. And Dathan, Korah, and Abiram, and all that appertainness. I like the King James, how they say things, you know.

All that appertainness to them. God closes the earth back up. Then he sends fire and consumes the hundred and so princes that were with him in rebellion.

And then turns and says to the children of Israel, Any other questions? And Israel got mad at Moses and said, Moses, you dirty rat. You sick God on us. And God said, Moses, step aside and let me show you what I think of that idea.

Thousands more died of the plague that day because of that. And finally God said, Any other questions? And the children of Israel said, No, I think we got the point. God does not hanker to an independent spirit.

By the way, if you want to read that over your morning devotions sometime, that's found in Numbers chapter 16. Now you don't have to follow anybody, gang. You can be a maverick.

You can be a loner and go your own way. It's up to you. But I know a quicker way to climb on the shelf.

Number eight, a lack of wholeheartedness. How about a couple of verses on wholeheartedness? I'll let you quote me a few here, okay? Okay, great. Great.

Colossians 3.23 is a good verse. Another one. Okay.

Great verse. 31.21. Anyone else have another one? Who knows 2 Chronicles 25.2? Okay, good. Who was that, by the way? Who was that? Amaziah.

Sure was. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He did what was right.

Get that. He did what was right. There was one thing lacking.

His heart wasn't right. And God couldn't use him. In that same chapter, 2 Chronicles 25.2, in that same chapter, Amaziah's dead.

Gang, some of you create the impression that you're kind of doing God and the Navigators a favor by being around. That God Almighty is about the luckiest of lucky to have you on His team. And as far as the Navigators are concerned, you're God's gift to them.

And I want to remind you this morning that nothing could be further from the truth. Now, God is delighted beyond words over the fact that you're His. He loves you with an everlasting love.

The Navigators counted a fantastic privilege to have you as a collaborator. But never deceive yourselves into believing that you are doing either God or man a favor by being faithful. And it is easy, gang, to be wholehearted in the things you like doing.

It's tougher than a cob being wholehearted in the things you don't like doing. And I remember when I moved to the Navigator home, my job, every Saturday morning, was to clean the bathroom in the master bedroom. And I can remember, on my hands and knees, over the toilet bowl with the Ajax and the sponge, cleaning that thing, wondering to myself, Henrickson, what in the fat are you doing here? There are millions of places you could be different than sitting here looking down inside of a toilet.

And gang, you know, it's hard enough cleaning your own dirt. Harder yet cleaning other people's dirt. True? How are you in terms of your wholeheartedness in being a servant of God? You know, I don't mind being a servant of Jesus Christ.

I revel in it. I don't mind you calling me a servant. You know what I mind? You treating me like a servant.

That's what eats me. Know what I mean? Can you be wholehearted, gang, when people treat you like you say you are, a servant of the Most High God and a servant of your fellow man? Number nine. Many aspire, but few attain because they're unfaithful in the little things.

Who can give us a couple of verses on faithful in the little things? Okay. Who can help him out? Luke 16.10. You have not been faithful in the unrighteous things. Okay, now I think that we never finished ten.

Let's go back and hit ten again. Who will read it for us? Okay, good? Okay, it starts with the faithful rather than the unfaithful, doesn't it? Okay. Lawrence Sanney said concerning Charlie Riggs, he was one of the few men he'd ever worked with where when he gave Charlie something to do, he could check it off as being accomplished and never had to go back and follow through to see if he'd really done it.

Boy, that challenges me. Can people say that about you? When you've been given an assignment, when somebody's asked you to do something, they can just mark it off as being completed, that nobody ever has to come back and check up on you again to see if you've done it. It's finished.

No matter how small it is, well, it's picking up a couple of postage stamps on the way back from school, or whether it's dropping a letter in the mail, or whether it's whatever it is, when they've been asked to do it, they can count it done. How are you on that? Are you faithful in that which is least? Jesus said there is no way that I'm going to give you much until you've proven yourself faithful in the little things. No way.

And gang, promotion doesn't come from men, it comes from God. God puts down one and sets up another. Where's that found? Close.

Six and seven. Good. The tenth reason why many of you will never make it is because of envy, jealousy, and bitterness.

A competitive spirit. Hebrews 12, 15. Who can quote that for us? Anybody.

Go ahead, kid. Okay. Envy, that bitter spirit, that spirit of resentment, poisons not only you but many others.

And I marked in the margin of my Bible next to that verse, you see, this bitterness, root of bitterness, as the King James calls it, comes as a result of real or supposed ill treatment. It doesn't make any difference. You can get just as bitter thinking people did bad to you as you can with people doing bad things to you.

Remember, gang, that feeling hurt or feeling sorry for yourself are bedfellows of bitterness. Self-pity is just the other side of the coin of a root of bitterness. Have you ever felt sorry for yourself? Have you ever felt hurt over the way people have treated you? Boy, you're bordering on bitterness.

It was George Washington Carver, I believe, who said, and I quote, I will never let another man ruin my life by making me hate him. Boy, those are profound words. Because you see, when you hate, you destroy only yourself.

If God is God, and He is, then nobody can hurt you. Nobody. That simply means that any time you're angry with another person, it's not really with the other person that you're angry, it's with God, because God was the one that allowed that to happen in your life.

Whenever circumstances go amiss, and things don't go your way, and you get angry, and you become resentful, and bitterness begins to creep in your heart, remember, gang, remember, your complaint is always, underline that word, always, it is always with God, never with anybody else. There is no such thing as having a problem with another person. It doesn't exist.

And it'll destroy you. If you let it, it'll destroy you. The eleventh reason.

People never make it because they cannot take rebuke. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives. Well, I don't mind God rebuking me, but what I hate is other people rebuking me.

The fact of the matter is, God uses other people. Somebody quote for me, Proverbs 15, verse 32. Well, that's another one you ought to memorize.

He that refuses destruction does what? He despises himself. He despises his own soul, as the King James puts it. Gang, if you refuse to take instruction, you are despising your own soul.

Why? Because you see, the rebuke that comes into your life is for your own good. Are you still in Proverbs? Flip on over to the first part of Proverbs. Oops, I'm in Job.

No wonder I can't find it. Proverbs 9, verse 8 and 9. Somebody read those two verses. See, you don't reprove a scorner because he turns around and hates you.

You reprove wise men because they'll love you for it. Let me ask you something, gang. When was the last time somebody rebuked you, sat down, and instructed you more perfectly in a way? When was the last time? If it hasn't been rather recent, I'll tell you why it is.

It's because people don't consider you to be wise. They think you're a scorner. The reason people don't rebuke you is they're afraid to rebuke you.

They're afraid that if they rebuke you, you won't take it. Don't deceive yourself into believing that you haven't been rebuked lately because you haven't needed it. You need it.

The question is, are you getting it? And if you're not getting it, gang, it's because people are afraid of you. If you're not getting it, it's because they're afraid that if they tell you like it is, you'll bite them. You'll scorn them.

You can tell whether or not people think you're wise by how often they rebuke you. I remember Warren Myers and we were doing a Bible study together and one time, really challenged my old soul, my lamb, one time, his application was he was praying that God would send somebody into his life to rebuke him at least once a week. Want to pray that one? Many people don't make it because they refuse to take rebuke.

Well, gang, you know, we've gone at this for quite a while. Why don't we quit here? No, why don't we just, why don't we close it here because the list is legion, gang. I could just go on, you know.

There's reams of it. Somebody read Jeremiah 6, 16 to 19. I don't expect you to memorize this passage.

Maybe some of you have. It's a good one. Thus says the Lord, Stand by the way, and see and ask for the ancient path, where the good way is, and walk in it, and you shall find rest for your soul.

But they said, we will not walk in it. And I said, a watchman over you, saying, listen to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, we will not listen.

Therefore, hear, O nation, and know, O congregation, what is among you. Hear, O words, behold, I am bringing disaster on the people, the fruit of their plan, because they have not listened to my word. And as for my law, they have rejected it also.

Okay, I don't know how to title this one. Let me take a stab at it and see if we can grab a hold of it. I think it's an important principle.

And I think it eats a lot of people's lunches, frankly. Let's say that this twelfth way that you foul up for God is that you seek change for the sake of change. Now, maybe that's not a good way to say that.

Let's put it down, and you can alter the wording on that later. But you seek change for the sake of change. Now, our generation, probably, as much as any generation that's ever lived, is kick-oriented.

Always looking for a new thing. Possibly that comes as a result of our bend toward existentialism, which says that meaning is found in an experience. And experiences get old hat, so we're constantly looking for other experiences.

And I know this typifies the non-Christian to a T, but I find that it also really plagues the Christian. And God says here, Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old or the ancient paths, not trotting off looking for some new thing, new gimmick. And some of you sitting here this morning, when you met the Navigators for the first time, were really turned on and excited.

Boy, everything blessed you. The Navigators could do no ill. Everything was great.

Everything was perfect. Now, the Navigators can barely do any good. But now you look at the Navigators, and they're stagnated.

Full of cliches. Always talking about doing the same thing the same way. You remember the day when to talk about the hand illustration just absolutely excited every bone in your body.

Today? Oh, not the hand illustration again. Know what I mean? And we get tired of the old ways. So we're constantly looking for the new.

Constantly going after some gimmick. Something new. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

The Navigators have taught me now what I can learn from them. I'll go and go someplace else. And so you get the wanderlust.

And you're off looking. Off searching. And like I say, this really typifies the non-Christian generation.

But gang, I suggest to you that it can easily get in your soul too. You know what I'm talking about? You understand what I'm trying to say to you at this point? Change for the sake of change. Gang, you'll never make it.

You grab ahold of spiritual truth and you review it, and you review it, and you review it. If there's one word, my friend, that the Bible talks about again and again in the Old Testament, it's the word remember. Remember.

Remember. Remember. Quote for me again Deuteronomy 6.6. Right.

Review them, and review them, and review them to your children and to your children's children. And you go over them again. Let them be like frontlets before your eyes.

You just go over them, and over them, and over them. Do you take these great truths of the Bible and hold tenaciously to them? Do you seek for the ancient paths and allow those great truths to become the foundations of your life? Are you kick-oriented, always looking for some new thing? Number 13. Now, I know you're not going to believe this now.

The 13th one I just suggested to you because it's right around the corner for you. And that is that you'll never make it because you're going to allow your flesh to gravitate towards security. See, when I was a single man, I didn't need a house.

When I was a single man, I didn't even need an automobile. When I was a single man, everything that I owned with the exception of some books that I had, I could put in a briefcase or a suitcase, I should say, and carry it with me. I prided myself in traveling light.

But you see, when you get married, well, you need transportation. And when you get a car, you need a garage. And then you need a house.

And when you have a house, you need, of course, carpets. You've got to have chairs. You've got to have a table, too, to sit down on.

And then, of course, you need a washer and a dryer because you've got to have clothes. And then you've got kids. You've got to have diapers.

And you've got to have baby beds. And then, of course, you've got to have, and you've got to have, and you've got to have. And pretty soon it starts coming.

And more and more and more junk accumulates. Now, gang, the question isn't whether or not you have wall-to-wall carpet. The question is whether or not wall-to-wall carpet has you.

And I remember old Mert and Madeline Martin. When they came back from Korea, God gave them a beautiful home over there in Norfolk, just a gorgeous thing. And the gang gave them some furniture, and there was some beautiful stuff in their house.

And old Mert said to me, you know, we were talking about the home and the way God had blessed him, and he said, when we move, this stays. And sure enough, about two years later, they moved to Mexico, and they go now and visit the home they used to live in, and that furniture and that carpeting and all that stuff is still there. They refuse to allow themselves to get entangled in things.

And you're going to have to watch that, gang, because gals can give themselves to cut glass bowls into china and into silver so easily. And men can give themselves to the counterpart just as easily. Well, let's quit with number 14 here.

Many will not make it because they lose heart for the battle. This was the problem of David over in 2 Samuel 11, wasn't it? And it came to pass in times when kings go forth to battle that David tarried still at Jerusalem. David had fought so many battles and killed so many giants and had won so many campaigns that it was all half to him.

Well, let the younger men do it for a change now. And that was the beginning of the end of David. David kept his kingdom, but he had lost the blessing of God upon his life.

And so also you. Boy, gang, you know, in the early days, you come to Christ and you witness to everything that moves. Just bingo, you're right on him.

You're so excited and so thrilled and it's so easy to become sophisticated. Well, God didn't give me the right opportunity this time. The fact of the matter was it wasn't a lack of opportunity.

It was a lack of boldness that made us not witness to the person. And rather than experience giving us less fear, experience for some reason makes us more fearful. Witnessing and getting out into the battle doesn't get easier as you get older, gang.

It gets harder. I don't know why that is, but it is so. And if you're having difficulty witnessing now as a collegian out there on the campus, I've got bad news for you.

You're not going to witness at all once you graduate. Oh, you'll talk about witnessing. I'll witness with my life.

But it won't happen. Men won't come to Christ because of your life. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by a good life.

Is that what the Bible says? No. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by... Well, it's now you've got to make the decision, gang. Some of you sitting here saying, yeah, I'll make it.

But because you're not dealing with compromise in your life, you won't. And in the quiet moments of your own soul, you know you won't. As I said at the beginning, there's just a handful of you who are going to really make it.

It's a question of which ones will. If we the navigators knew who you were, you're the ones we'd really like to major on. If you know that you're not willing to pay the price, then let me just suggest that you go ahead and punch out now.

It'll save you a lot less pain. It'll be a lot easier on you. If you're not a finisher, then gang, don't be a starter.

Okay? Let's pray. Well, Lord, only You can take and make this really relevant to us. Only You can give us the discipline and determination to make our lives really count.

And I pray, oh God, that that is exactly what would happen. Lord, I pray for this gang right here. I pray that You deliver them from mediocrity.

I pray that You deliver them from ease and comfort. I pray for perspective, that You would bring things into focus for them, that they'd give their lives to that which is truly important. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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