

# Why Are People Falling Out of the Church?

by Greg Locke

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of staying focused on God and avoiding the dangers of loving the world in order to avoid falling away from the church.*

**Duration:** 55:55

**Scripture:** Acts 20:7

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Spiritual Complacency"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by talking about his love for watching boxing matches and how he enjoys seeing a good fight that goes several rounds. He then transitions to the topic of the Christian life, emphasizing that it is not always easy to read the Bible, pray, give, or show love and compassion towards others. He warns against being complacent and not staying in the fight for righteousness. The speaker shares a personal experience of witnessing someone who was once on fire for God but ended up falling away, emphasizing the importance of staying committed to Christ.

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## Transcript

We're back in chapter number 20 in your New Testament Bible tonight. Good to see you. I hope that you have a wonderful weekend.

Trust that you did. Good services in the church that you attended. And I'm looking forward to the service tonight, tomorrow night, and also Wednesday night.

Enjoyed so much the three services that we were able to have last week. Praise the Lord for the good spirit. This is the third, as we've said several times, this is the third of the staff training revivals that we've done.

And it's the third one that I've done, because this is the third one that the camp has done. But I believe this has been the one that has had the best spirit. Usually on the first night, you're filling me out, I'm filling you out.

It's a little bit difficult to know what to preach. But the first night, I believe the Lord just really gave us a good breakthrough, a good time of a spirit of revival. And then the next two nights, things just wonderfully, wonderfully worked together.

And we just praise the Lord for the good spirit. And I appreciate your kindness, appreciate your compassion, your hospitality towards me throughout the week. I've enjoyed getting to know many, many of you.

Able to go with Brother Raymond yesterday down to his dad's church and also Cat Douglas. They enjoyed that so much. Good to have the Robertson family back.

Glad the Lord brought them back safely. Glad Brother Duffy's able to be with us tonight. Hope it'll make him sick while I'm preaching.

Amen. Acts chapter number 20. That's all.

Stand, please, out of respect for God's Word tonight. Acts chapter number 20. Let your eyes please fall to verse number 7. Just a little while, we'll be turning to 2 Timothy, but that'll be in just a bit.

Acts chapter 20 and verse 7, the Bible says, And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight, verse 8. And there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep, and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep and fell down from the third loft and was taken up dead. And Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him.

When he therefore was come up again and had broken bread and eaten and talked a long while, even till the break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive and were not a little comforted. Tonight I bring you the simple message, why are people falling out of the church? Thank you very much.

You may be seated. Let's bow our heads and hearts. And let's pray and ask the Lord to bless our time together tonight.

Now, thank you, Lord, for the day you've given us. It's been a profitable day, and for that we're grateful. But now, Lord, our hearts have come to the time when we realize the devil's going to discourage and distract us from listening to the message of the Bible.

And so, Lord, we plead the blood of Jesus Christ upon the devil, the demons, and the imps of hell, that they would have no control nor power in their service for the next few moments. Father, we pray the Spirit of God would have full convicting power and sway. We pray that Jesus Christ would be uplifted and exalted.

We pray the Bible would be preached with authority. And, Lord, that you would help me tonight, that you would empty me of myself. Fill me with thy precious Holy Spirit.

And, Lord, I pray that I would not deviate from the text of the Word of God tonight. But, Lord, you would stir our hearts. But more than that, you would change our hearts based on what we're going to hear from the Bible tonight.

And I pray that this would be a great challenge to us. And, Father, you would help us to avoid some of the pitfalls that we'll deal with in just a few moments. And we'll thank you for everything that you'll say and do, for it's in Jesus' name that we ask it and pray.

Amen. Acts chapter number 20 is not only a familiar portion of Scripture, but it's a very interesting portion of Scripture. The Bible says that here's the Apostle Paul.

He's gathered together with the disciples. And by way of context, he's obviously with other people as well. The Bible says that he's meeting in a third-story church building, if you will.

And there were many lights, such as there are here tonight, in the upper chamber. I don't exactly know how many people were there. The Bible does not tell us what Paul was preaching.

But I know one thing. When the Holy Spirit of God says you're a long-winded preacher, friend, you must be a long-winded preacher. Because the Bible says that Paul was a long while preaching.

Matter of fact, he was preaching so long that another fellow decided he'd get himself a little cat nap. And the Bible says that Paul was preaching up until the time of about midnight. And here was this funny fellow with a funny name by the name of Eutychus.

He was sitting up in the window, and the Bible says that he fell asleep, and all of a sudden he began to just get a little daydreaming, and then his eyes began to close, he began to breathe heavy. And before you know it, pal, he was catching some Z's, and he fell out the window of a third-story church, and splat on the ground, was taken up dead. Now, you talk about in the middle of a revival meeting how you can get things stirred up.

Just push somebody out of the top of the church, friend, that'll do it for sure. And here's a man that fell out of the church, and he went and got splat on the ground, and the apostle Paul didn't even miss a lick. Read your Bible.

He just jumped right back down there. He went down there, laid on top of him. He said, don't worry about this fellow, his life is in him.

Brought him back from the dead. Pulled the guy up there. The Bible says, and the people were not a little comforted.

That's a funny phrase. You know what that means? It means they were a lot comforted. And here Paul, the Bible says, continued his speech until midnight.

But the funny thing about this is, here's this fellow sleeping in a window. He falls out. Paul goes down.

Never misses a beep. Never even skips a point, if you will. Raises him from the dead.

Brings him back. And your Bible says, and my Bible says, that he continued his speech until the break of day. Do you know what would happen to me if I preached until 6 o'clock tomorrow morning? When I came back next year for Staff Training Revival, that would be too soon.

That's exactly what would happen for him. And here was a man that not only preached till midnight. Here is a man that preached all the way until the wee hours of the morning.

And you talk about a man. It never even says anything about his Cheerios, his Wheaties, or his scrambled eggs. He just packed up his Bible.

And he went on to the next meeting and kept preaching the Word of God. But here was an interesting man. We could speculate tonight, by the way.

We could probably preach a silly sermon. I've heard a lot of silly sermons. But we could probably preach a silly sermon on why was he sitting up in the window.

I have no idea. If he was the average person, the average Baptist church, he was probably catching a smoke while Paul was preaching. But nonetheless, here he was sitting in the window.

But yet the Bible says that he fell asleep and he fell out. I'm going to be honest with you. I believe the physical condition, what happened to Mr. Eutychus, is a great spiritual picture.

Because you know what? We could sit here tonight and we will not do it. We could sit here tonight and we could raise hands and we could have people stand up and we could testify of people who we knew at your college or in your church or somebody that you knew well or somebody that was even on staff one time at this camp. You can think of people right now who at one time in their life, they seemed like they were the faithless Christian you knew.

It seemed like they were on fire for God. Man, they were devouring the Word of God. As Job said, I esteem the words of my mouth more than my necessary food.

And man, they were church lovers. They were God lovers. They were soul winners.

They were separated. And I mean, it seemed like they had everything going and they had the power of God. And all of a sudden, something happened in their life and you couldn't find them tonight with a pack of bloodhounds.

Why is that? Why is it that people fall away, if you will? Why is it that people seemingly fall out of the church? Why is it that all of a sudden somebody can be so faithful and so God-honoring and all of a sudden they get backslidden, they get rebellious, they find themselves in the hog pen with a prodigal son saying to themselves, I wish that I would have never left to begin with. Even the slaves and the servants in my father's house have it better than I do. Why is it that people fall away? I want you to take your Bibles tonight, please, where we will have the rest of our message to 2 Timothy 4. The book of 2 Timothy 4, I believe there's a man here who can illustrate what I'm trying to preach to you tonight.

2 Timothy 4. You know the books of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are basically all three major New Testament books. They deal much with the local church, but basically they have three qualifications. Number one, they have the qualifications for preachers and their wives.

Number two, they have the qualifications for deacons and their wives. And number three, they have the qualifications for church membership and also the qualifications for church dismissal. But yet in 2 Timothy 4, we have what I refer to as the swan song, if you will, the going-out status, the going-out song of the Apostle Paul.

He knows good and well that he's fixing to go to the Roman chopping block. He knows that down the steps of the Empress' palace, his head is going to roll. And he begins to say some things to young Timothy.

Now, just for sake of an outline, I'm going to outline for you several verses in 2 Timothy 4. But it is not the outline that I'm preaching on. So when I preach for one or two minutes, don't get excited, alright? This is

not the outline that I'm preaching on. Just for sake of introduction to build up to verse number 10, let me give you a simple outline and we'll alliterate what the letters are.

Number one, I give you what I call the realization. 2 Timothy 4, verse 1. Would you look there? Paul is writing, he says, I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead of his appearing in his kingdom. So he opens up by telling young Timothy, Son, you one day are going to give an account to Almighty God.

Everybody one day will stand before God in one way or another, whether they want to or not, whether they like it or not, whether they believe it or not. So he begins with the realization. Based on that realization, he then gives, secondly, the responsibility.

That responsibility is in verse number 2. Look there, he says, Preach the word. Be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Why, Timothy? Please look at verse 3. He tells Timothy why. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. But after their own lusts shall they heed to themselves teachers having itching ears.

And they, that's these people to whom he's preaching, shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things. Endure afflictions.

Do the work of an evangelist. Make full proof of thy ministry. Why? Because number 3, what I call the readiness.

Look in your Bibles, verse 6. For I am now ready to be offered. And the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight.

I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. So Paul said, listen, I've lived my life to the fullest.

He said, I've preached with all the zeal and all the vigor I can muster up. He said, I've led people to Christ. I know they're fixing to kill me.

I'm coming to the end of a soul-winning road. He said, but I am ready. Why? He was ready because of verse number 8, what we call the reward.

Look in verse 8, please. He said, henceforth, or because of this. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not unto me only, but unto them also that love is appearing.

Now, and dealing with all of this, he says it's all worth it based on the fact that one day we will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ. But notice, he then changes his tune, if you will. He then seemingly diverts and has an entirely different set of circumstances that he's preaching about.

Look in your Bibles, please, at verse number 9. All of a sudden he says, do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. That's what I call the request. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.

He said, Timothy, I'm a little bit lonely for fellowship. I'm a little bit to the place where I'm getting impatient and I know I've got the Spirit of God that's with me and I know I have other friends and other people that love me. He said, but listen, I'm a little bit lonely.

I'm weary and longing to see your face as a friend in Christ. He said, would you please come and see me? That is the request. Now, here's what I preach on tonight, the reason.

Why did he make that request? The Bible tells us, look at verse number 10. For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica, Cretans to Galatia, Titus and to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.

Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me, Paul says, for the ministry. So, the reason for this request, the reason that Paul said, son, would you come shortly unto me? Would you come quickly, fellowship with me? Man, I've got to have a prayer meeting. Would you come? The reason for that request was simply, your Bible says, for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.

Now, we will not deal with other portions of Scripture in the Bible where we read about Demas for time's sake. But if you write down sometimes, Colossians 4, verse number 14, you will find out the Bible says, Demas greeteth you. He is mentioned there in the book of Colossians at the end of the book.

Kind of the benediction, if you will, when things are going out, the commencement exercise. And he is mentioned there by way of giving gratitude, by way of giving thanksgiving and heartfelt devotion to the people of God. So here is a man who no doubt, according to the context of Scripture, was a saved man.

Here was a man that not only knew Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior, but here was a young man who was able to be mentored and tutored by none other than the Apostle Paul. Outside of John the Baptist, who Jesus said was the greatest man that ever walked forth of the womb of a woman, I believe the Apostle Paul was the greatest preacher, the greatest pastor, the greatest evangelist, the greatest missionary, the greatest author. Here was the greatest soul winner more than likely the world has ever known.

And Demas was under this great man of God. But yet my Bible tells me that the love for the world that Demas had in his heart, the love for the world that Demas had in his life was so great that he completely forsook the doctrines of the Word of God. He forsook that hot, fundamental Bible-preaching ministry that he had with the Apostle Paul.

And he went from greeting the church to not even going to church. He went from being with one of the greatest preachers that this world has ever known who turned the world upside down and turned every street corner in the Roman Empire into a fundamental pulpit for Jesus Christ. He went from that to absolute, utter devastation and ruin.

And the Apostle Paul, with a broken, grieving heart, says, Timothy, do thy diligence to come shortly unto me, for Demas has forsaken me. Have you ever read a verse like that in the Bible, or better yet? You ever seen that happen in somebody's life, or you know somebody that you've prayed for, and you know they're backslidden, you know they're not right with God? They know they're backslidden, they're not right with God. And here's what you think to yourself, because I think it of myself.

How in the world can somebody go from being faithful to God? How in the world can somebody go from devouring the Word of God, from praying, from making all of these decisions? Why is it that somebody can be so on fire for Christ, coming to camp, leading people to Christ, making decisions at an altar, doing staff training? Why is it that people can go up like a rocket, and six years later come down like a meteorite? Why does that happen? This message I must tell you quickly by way of making a very long story very

short. This message, when I was 18 years old, was birthed out of a burden. I was in Mexico, and I was there just for the first time, and I've been over there several times.

I was in a little town called Cuernavaca. And when I was there in Cuernavaca, I was not preaching as an 18-year-old teenager. I was a spectator at a big missions conference.

I've been back several times since then and been privileged to preach there. But nonetheless, I was there. I suppose we got there about Saturday night or late, late Sunday night.

I can't quite remember. The chairman of our deacon board, Brother Nevin Wax, flew us over there. And when my pastor was Dr. Tom Wallace from Franklin Road, we all went.

And I was excited just to be there. There was a young man whose name was not Ronald, but it will be for my message for the next few moments. This young man, Ronald, was living at the children's home with me, and he was a good kid.

He really was. I remember one night I preached at the Pacific Garden Mission, the Nashville Rescue Mission in Nashville, and I preached on 2 Corinthians 5, 17. Therefore, for any man to be in Christ, you know the verse.

I preached that. While we were going home, he said, You know, Greg, I don't believe I'm saved. I need to be a new creation.

I don't believe I've ever been saved. And so I talked to him. Driving home, he bowed his head, bowed his heart, got saved by the grace of God.

And I mean, it was almost like somebody sprinkled 10-10 fertilizer on this kid. I mean, he began to grow like a weed. I mean, he was rooted in the things of Christ.

He was doing well. And just before I went to Mexico, Brother Norris, about two weeks before I went to Mexico, I began to notice that there was a little bit of coolness in his life. I mean, here's a guy who was an avid soul winner.

I remember one night we was driving by this little place. It's a little chicken restaurant now. It was a little barbecuity restaurant at the time.

They was building this little barbecue joint. And we went passing by it, and these guys were down in this big electrical manhole. And I remember we drove by, and Ronald said, Stop here! Stop here, Greg! So I pulled in there real fast, and he got a stack full of gospel tracts, and he started handing out these gospel tracts, talking to these guys.

He said, Listen, if you touch one of these wires, and it was hot, would you go to hell? I mean, he was zealous, buddy. I mean, he'd talk to anybody about Christ. Before we'd go to bed at night, we'd get down on our knees, and we'd play together.

And I heard him cry and weep for his mom to be saved, and other people in his family to be saved. And I mean, here's a guy, he actually thought that the call of the Lord might be upon him to preach, and all that God's hand was upon him. And I said, Listen, just pray about it, and let the Lord nurture that thing in your heart.

And he really seemed to be doing well. He was a good kid. Seemed like he had a good head screwed on his shoulders.

It was right. He knew what he wanted in life, and he was pleasing the Lord. Now, obviously, he wasn't perfect.

Nobody is. But nonetheless, about two weeks before I went to Mexico, I started noticing that there's a little bit of coolness in his attitude. Some things began to change in his attitude there at the children's home, and I kept telling him, Listen, you have to change this.

You have to change that. You have to change it. It seemed like he was getting a little bit more sneaky than normal, a little bit more sneaky than usual.

And I thought to myself, Man, something's going to happen. I began to pray, and I began to pray. An overwhelming burden for this fellow, Ronald, when I was in Mexico.

I was able to call back two times when I was in Mexico. I called back on Tuesday. I called back on Friday.

Something like that, I believe. But the first of the week, I called back, and I mean, I'd only been gone two or three days. And I called back, and at the end of the conversation, I told Brother Mike, I said, By the way, I said, How's Ronald doing? He said, I was kind of hoping you wouldn't ask the first time you called.

He said, I know I don't want to ruin your trip there the first time to Mexico. He said, But we had to send Ronald home. He said, He went down to the barn.

He said, You know how he'd been slipping around? He said, He went back down there, and he got to smoking again. He said, He wouldn't give that up. He said, He got to saying some things you ought not say, doing some things you ought not do, and this, that, and the other.

He said, He just was rebellious. He said, He just would not conform. And he got all mad, and blew up, and began to cuss, and spit, and holler, and yell, and curse God and everything else.

And so he had to send him home. And I remember I said, All right, Brother Mike, I'll say I love you. Goodbye.

And I hung up the phone. And I was sitting under, I don't know, it's kind of these little canopy-type things. And we had this big old swanky high-rise hotel.

You know, that's great to go outdoors, swim and pool. And I suppose it was about 6.30 at night. Service started at 7 o'clock.

We just got through with dinner. And I was sitting out there, and I had my Bible as an 18-year-old teenager. And I remember I took my hands, and I buried my face in my hands.

And I began to weep like a little baby. And I remember saying to myself, How in the world can somebody be so on fire for God? How is it that somebody can be saved, follow the Lord and believers' baptism, get in the church, get in the Bible, hunker down, begin to do what's right, win people to Christ, love God, pray? How is it that somebody like that can end up being a demis and falling away? The very next day. The very next day, that morning when I got up and began to have my devotions.

I do not believe in coincidence, but I do believe in providence. My devotions were in 2 Timothy 4. And I began to read down through that chapter, and my heart was still grieved, and my heart was still broken. I remember I got down to verse 10, and immediately Ronald's name popped into my mind as I thought to myself, For demis hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.

I give you several points tonight. We're through and we'll be done. Let me give you this quickly, just a diagram, very simply, for why I believe, when I was an 18-year-old teenager, that God gave me this diagram.

I believe it tonight just as much, if not more, than when I began to preach it as a teenager. But tonight, let me give you several simple points in what I call a diagram. Sometimes I draw this, sometimes I write it down, but we've got enough sense tonight, we can write it down in our brain and fly away from our Bible.

I want to give you something, and in your mind, I want you to use it as a circle. In your mind, I want you to use it circle-square, however you want to, but a circle works a little better for the diagram. But I want you to use it a circular motion tonight in your mind.

I want to give you several undeniable scriptural points why I believe that people start out well, as we're doing this week, but yet maybe by the end of the summer, by the end of the year, by the end of the next three or four months, the next three or four years, something like that, they just kind of get to the place where they're no longer living for God. What makes a demis? Number one, write this down. First and foremost, we have a conversion.

We have a conversion. Now please, beside the word conversion, just for clarification purposes, you might want to write down one of these words. Choice, change, something like that.

Here's why I clarify that. When I use the word conversion, I am not speaking of a salvation conversion. Now, the word conversion does not mean to be saved.

The word conversion means to change. For example, we do call somebody was converted, alright? When were you converted? Tell me about your conversion experience. That means a change, because when a person gets saved, they do change according to the Word of God.

But when I use the word conversion, I'm using it in this context. Remember Jesus looked at Peter, and He said, Peter, when thou art converted, thou shalt strengthen the brethren. Now, was Jesus saying, Peter, when you get saved, you're going to strengthen the brotherhood.

No, no, that's not what He's saying. Why? Because He's already talking to a saved man. Was He saying, Peter, when you get saved again, you're going to strengthen the brotherhood.

No, no, He wasn't saying that, because when you get saved, you're saved one time for all of time and for all of eternity, sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, Ephesians 4.30. What He was saying, looking forward into time, knowing that Peter would no doubt deny Him, He was saying, Peter, when you make your choice to make a change, when you make your comeback, if you will, when you are converted, He said, then you will strengthen the brethren. So when I use the word conversion, understand I'm talking about a reasonable decision to want to do what's right. Here's what I mean.

Let's say we come forward this week. Some of you have come forward. Many of you came forward the other night.

I don't know what you told the Lord. I know what I tell the Lord. I don't know your heart, but certainly you and God do.

But let's say you come forward and you say, OK, God, I've not been faithful to my Bible the way that I need to be faithful to my Bible. Not only have I not been faithful in reading it, I've not been faithful in heeding it. Not only have I not been faithful in reading or heeding, but I've not been faithful in memorization.

And Scripture memory is a lost art in the day and age in which we live, but I believe it's Scriptural. You should hide the Word of God in your heart. Why? That you would not sin against God.

And so, let's say you make a decision, OK? I'm going to memorize the Bible. Or, not all the Bible. I'm going to memorize much of the Bible.

I'm going to heed to the Word of God. I'm going to read the Word of God. I'm going to study.

I'm going to have a devotion. That's stuff that we know. That's stuff you learn in Bible college.

That's stuff you learn in high school. That's stuff your moms and dads teach you. So we know that.

OK, let's say that there's something that we don't need to put in our life. Let's say there's something we need to take out of our life. Let's say there's a habit that's unscriptural.

Let's say that there's a habit of gossip, or maybe there's a habit of lying, or maybe there's a habit that we won't get into all the ramifications. You know certainly what the Spirit of God lays His finger upon. But you come forward and you say, OK, dear God, I am making a choice.

I am making a conscious effort that I am going to either, number one, put this in my life, or, number two, take this from my life. That's what I mean by the word converting. We make choices every day.

But we're always making choices like that. We make choices to do right. We make choices to do wrong.

You know, it took me a long time to figure out in evangelism that you can preach, preach, preach, but people are going to do what people want to do. People are going to do what they want to do, when they want to do it, with whom they want to do it, why they want to do it, and where they want to do it, because they're people. You see, we make decisions every single day of our life.

You make a decision to get up whenever you want to hit the S-N-O-O-Z-E button, or the snooze, if you will, when that thing's going, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, and you don't want to get up, you make a decision to either turn it off and stay in bed, or get up immediately, and get your clothes on, get ready, and go out today. So we always make decisions. That's what I'm talking about with the word convert.

You know, here's Demas, he did that. Demas made a decision sometime in his life that he was going to walk around with the Apostle Paul. Demas made a decision sometime in his life that he was going to do what was right, he was going to hunker down, he was going to be a preacher, if you will, he was going to not let anything deviate him, he was not going to let anything discourage him, divert him from the path of righteousness, from the highway of holiness, and he made a conscious decision to do what was right.

I see that all the time. You see people in a revival meeting, they come forward, they make a decision, here's what bothers me. You go back the next year, or two years later, and those same people that made a decision for Christ are no longer keeping that decision.

Or you go back and you can't even find them in church anymore. I know you go and knock on the door and you can't find them. You know, you see them peeking through the blinds, you know they're in there, but they're not going to come out because they know who you are.

And I mean, you can't get them to come to the house of God, you can't get them to come to church, but yet at one time they were faithful people to the meeting. I mean, man, they loved the evangelist the most when he came to town. And man, they pat him on the back and they prayed for him, carried him out golfing, whatever it was, and now you can't even find them.

Why is it that people can make choices, that people can have these conversion experiences and then completely go back on everything that they told God that they would do? Well, secondly, I give you this, not only the conversion, but the climax. You see, every time you make a decision for Christ and every time I make a decision for Christ, there's always what I refer to a sweet spot. There's always a sweet time, if you will.

For example, we'll go back to the Bible illustration because it's easy to illustrate. Somebody says, okay, I'm going to begin to read my Bible the way that I should. I've not been reading the Word of God, I'm going to read it.

I've not been obeying the Word of God, I'm going to obey it. I've not been memorizing the Word of God, simply I'm going to memorize it. So what do they do? They begin to either stay up later at night to get some extra study, or they take a little part out of their day so they can get some extra study.

Maybe they just lose a little extra sleep in the morning and they get up a little bit earlier, allow the alarm clock to go off, and they begin to study. And they begin to feed themselves on the Word of God. And they begin to feast upon the Word of God.

And they begin to memorize and devour Scripture. And you know what? There is always that climactic point every time you make a decision. Somebody says, man, I'm going to let the Lord help me put this thing on the altar.

I'm going to kick this habit. I'm going to get rid of this habit. And I'll be honest with you, for a little while, man, it seems sweet.

You know, I call them camp experiences. You know what happens. You've been to camp, but most of you have worked at camp for several years.

You know what happens? These kids come here, especially during Junior Missions Week. I mean, these kids don't know anything about God. They don't know anything about the Bible.

They don't know anything about holiness. They don't know anything about heaven. They don't know anything about hell.

That's a slang word to them. All they know is a Hollywood God and some kind of Charlton Heston Moses. That's about all they know.

But yet, they come and they hear the Bible line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little. And they get the teaching and the preaching and the admonition of the Word of God. And what happens? Many of them get saved.

And then many of them begin to grow throughout that week. And they learn more about the Bible. And they're like little spiritual weeds.

And they're all excited. And you know what happens? When they first came here, they didn't even want to be here. I mean, they're walking around, their lips all hanging down like a bunch of shoelaces.

And they're mean and cantankerous and mean. And they're wicked about things. And especially during that week, you're going to have a lot of things you have to deal with.

I mean, they got some mouths on them sometimes. I mean, they're mad about this and mad about that. And you know what happens when they leave? They get on the bus.

Big old watermelon tears well up their eyes. And they begin to weep. And they hug their counselors.

And they don't want to leave. And they're so excited. And they get on that bus.

And man, they're giving each other high fives for the Lord. And man, they're jumping around. They're memorizing Bible verses.

I call them camp experiences. You had them when you was a teenager. Man, you'd leave the camp.

You'd leave a camp like this. And you'd leave the Wilds or the Bill Rice Ranch or Triple S or Southland, something like that. Man, you'd leave that camp.

And you'd walk out of that place and you'd say, Wow, man, I'd say that was so wonderful. Why is camp so wonderful? Because you get people out of a normal atmosphere. So you pull teenagers away from the television.

You get them away from their normal friends, except they're youth group friends. And you get them away from the normal routine of life. They're out of school now.

You get them away from maybe a job that they might be having for the summer. You even get away from their family, which is good sometimes. And you kind of put them in a spiritual container.

You kind of put them in a little greenhouse. And then you bring them here and we preach to them. And we pray for them.

And we love them. And we help them. And we feed them.

And we give them games and all of these activities. And man, we got all these things for them and all these skits and all this stuff. And we all put all this stuff in here over and over and over.

And we preach and preach and preach and preach. And they get saved. And they get right with God.

And they make these decisions. And man, they leave different than they came. And they're all excited.

I call them mountain top experiences. We all have them. I mean, adults have them.

Junior age kids have them. The junior mission's going to have them. Teenagers are going to have them.

Family week's going to have them. There's always a climax whenever you begin to make decisions for Christ. You know, storytellers do the same thing.

People that write good books. I'm not a whole big reader on, you know, a lot of books. I like to read certain books that I enjoy.

But, you know, I'm not a big reader on novels and all this kind of stuff. If you are, that's fine. But you know what novels do? You know what these books do? They always start out with the introduction.

All the new books, underneath the word introduction, it says to be read. The reason it says that is because most people don't read it. They want to get to the back of the book and they want to see who shot J.R. And they want to find out who did it.

Was it the maid or was it the butler? Was it in the bathroom or was it in the church lobby with a candlestick over the monkey wrench? And they want to figure out who did it, why they did it, when they did it, where they did it, and how they did it. That's what everybody wants to know. Everybody wants to get to the back of the book.

But, before we get to the back of the book, we begin to get into the plot of things. First couple of chapters. First couple of pages.

We begin to make Frank and Susie and Johnny and Billy Bob and all these people. We begin to meet the characters. We begin to meet the cast, if you will.

And we begin to learn about this person. We begin to learn about this person. You know what they're doing? They're building.

And I mean, they're building and they're building and then we get into the plot a little bit and things get a little bit thicker and things get a little bit thicker. Then all of a sudden it starts getting exciting, buddy. I mean, they're taking you up the hill.

And I mean, that thing's a-climbing, that thing's climbing. And I mean, you're reading. And I mean, your heart's just a-pounding and you want to stay up and you can't put the book down.

And you'd rather read it than eat. And you'd rather read it than go to sleep. I mean, you're reading and reading.

And they carry you all the way to the top. You know what they're doing? That's a climactic part of the book. Man, they know that's what sells.

And so they bring you all the way to the pinnacle. And boom, drop you off the other side, the end. And the ones I hate say, to be continued.

Those bother the devil out of me, but nonetheless. They bring you all the way to the top. They give you the climax.

They give you the pinnacle. And then it goes off. Same thing happens in the Christian life.

Man, we get these pinnacle points, if you will. Man, I'm telling you, after a week like this, man, we're filled. And I mean, we're overjoyed and the joy bells of God are ringing and things are going well.

And we can endure the cold taverns at night. And we can endure this. And we can endure all these trials and temptations.

And all of these hard, hard testings, suffering for Jesus. I can't get that. Because man, we're so filled with God.

And we're so filled with the Spirit. And we've heard preaching. And we've made decisions about our Bible.

And we made decisions that we were going to be prayers. And we made decisions that we were going to be soul winners. And filled with the Spirit.

And like I preached on the other night, to get rid of the bitterness and the divisive spirit. And man, we're so excited. It's a climax.

But let me tell you where most people forget. That's number three. The combat.

You see, we begin to make these decisions. These choices. These changes.

These conversion times. And then every time we do that, it always peaks out. And man, it is exciting.

I mean, the Bible's never been so sweet before. Like, you've never been reading the Bible. And all of a sudden, you come across something.

You've read it 55 times. And all of a sudden, it's just like the Spirit of God pulls up, grabs you, and pulls you down to the Bible. And says, look at there, son.

You've never seen that before. And I tell you, that happens whenever you have those climaxes. And God begins to speak to you.

The Spirit of God begins to lead you in all truth. All of a sudden, you enjoy praying. And it seems like God's answering your every prayer.

Meeting your every single need. And it just seems like things are going well. And you've never been so close to God.

Then all of a sudden, you realize number three, what I call the combat. And that's where most people foul up. And that's where most people mess up on the diagram.

Because every Christian normally wants it to stay on the climaxing point. You see, most Christians want to stay on the mountaintop all of their life. Man, they want to stay up there when it's so easy to spring out of bed and read the Bible.

They want to stay on the mountaintop where everything's going well in the family. And everything's going well in the marriage. And they want to stay on the mountaintop when, man, it seems like when they pray, it's always wonderful.

But I'm going to be honest with you. The Christian life is not a cakewalk. The Christian life is a warfare.

We're in a battleground. You know, this year, or this summer, what you're going to be dealing with. I don't know if Brother Mick's already got all the curriculum he was working on the other day.

We're going to be dealing with these young people with the sword of the Spirit, and the helmet of salvation, and the shield of faith, and the breastplate of righteousness, and the belt of truth, and the shoes shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, praying always. We're going to be dealing with

Ephesians chapter 6 with all of these armaments, if you will. We have this great adversary, the devil.

And the Bible says, put on the whole, not some of it, put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, having done all to stand. And I'm telling you, the devil's going to fight you this summer. The devil's going to fight you for the rest of your life.

He's going to fight you in college. He's going to fight you in your marriage. He's going to fight you in your friendships, in your relationships.

He is always going to fight you. And I'm telling you, we are in the biggest battle of our lives. Somebody says, well, I don't know if I like violence too much.

And I'll be honest with you, I don't either. But if you're going to make it in the Christian life, if you're going to truly be able to sing victory in Jesus, you're going to have to pull out the big guns, friend, and you're going to have to fight, fight, fight, because this world is after you, and the devil is after you. But I'll tell you, as I preached last year of the subject, why don't you just drop dead? The devil in the world is not your worst enemy.

Your worst enemy is sitting in the pew right beside you. And before you punch your neighbor, I'm talking about you, friend. You are your own worst enemy.

You are your own worst problem. And I'm telling you, if you don't get you under trouble, if you don't learn to combat your flesh, and if you don't learn to combat your passion, and if you don't learn to combat your desires, you can forget about singing and meaning victory in Jesus, because you're not going to have any victory in your life whatsoever. And I'm telling you, most people foul up, because they forget about the fact that we are in a warfare.

You know, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, 31, I die when? Daily. Notice he didn't say I die weekly. I die monthly or bi-yearly.

Notice he said every day of my life, I wake up and my feet hit the floor, and I look myself square down in the eyeballs, and I say, Paul, drop dead, son. You're not in control today. God's Spirit is.

And I shake hands with so many Christians who are completely overruled. They are dictated and dominated and driven and directed by the flesh. When according to the Apostle Paul, we should die to our flesh, and we should be directed, dictated, dominated every single day by the precious Spirit of God.

For the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And did not Paul say in Romans 8, In me? That is in my flesh. Well, it's what? No.

Good thing. I'm telling you, we're in a warfare. We're in a great battle for the mind.

We're in a battle for the heart. We're in a battle for the body. We're in a battle for the souls of these teenagers and these young boys and girls who will be here this summer.

And most people want to stay on the climax, but they forget about the combat, and they lay down the sword and the shield, and they put up the guns and the holsters, and they quit fighting, and they get to the place where the fighting is so rough, they're tired of fighting their flesh, they're tired of fighting their passions, and they get to the place where they completely give in, and they dry up, and many people I meet all across this country, because they have given up in the combat, they are as dry as last year's bird

nests, they have no joy, they have no peace, they have no assurance, and they wake up every morning of their life as empty as a burnt out volcano. They are completely, completely powerless because they quit fighting. You know what happens when you give up in the combat? Number four, what I call the collapse.

Now you notice, if you're drawing the diagram, if you're just writing it down, later on you can go back and connect the dots, la, la, la, la, la, alright? But nonetheless, you have to converge in time. When you make a choice to change, whenever you make that choice, you say, dear God, I'm going to do what's right, and you'll never convince me in a million years that Demas did not have a sincere heart to serve Christ. He was serving the Apostle Paul, helping him, doing everything he could, and in that he was serving Almighty God, preaching, teaching, admonishing, giving, going, whatever he had to do.

But yet there came a time in the life of Demas when things were sweet, things were fine, and because of the sweet times, because of the good times, he was sidetracked by the combat. You see, it's not always easy to read your Bible like you think it is. It's not always as easy to pray like some people make it out to be.

It's not always easy to give. It's not always easy to go. It's not always easy to have a spirit filled, be love and compassionate towards people.

It's not always easy to be kind and non-divisive. It's not always easy. It is a fight.

It is a battle. It is a continual battle. And whenever we give in to the combat, I meet so many people, and so have you, and you can name them tonight, although we will not, who have collapsed on God in their castaways.

They are the used-to-be's and the has-been's. I've met so many people. I used to be a Sunday school teacher.

I used to be a preacher. I used to be a song leader. I used to be this, and I used to be that.

What happened? They gave in to the combat. They completely collapsed. And you know what the Bible says in Proverbs 24, v. 10? If thou think in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

Now, can I remind you, Greg Locke didn't write that. David didn't even write that. The wisest man that ever walked the face of God's green earth wrote that.

Solomon. And Solomon said, when you get in the thick of things, when you get in the battlefield, which you're going to be in for the rest of your life, every single day you're going to have to fight to the day you die, or to the day we go home in the rapture. You will have to fight.

And the wisest man in all of the world says, if you give in during the adversity, if you faint, if you fall, and by the way, he said the just man falls seven times. He didn't say the just man fell once, twice, three times, or six. He said the just man fell seven times.

Seven, the number of perfection or completion. It means he kept getting up. He fell, but he got up.

He fell, but he got up. He learned from his mistakes. He learned from his past.

He let it be not a stumbling block, but a stepping stone. He fell down and got up. He fell down and he got up.

He didn't collapse, but he stayed in the fight. He stayed in the combat, and he kept on going for the glory of God, and he kept fighting, and he kept plugging away, and Solomon said, if you faint when things get rough this summer, he said, thy strength is small. And I know a lot of people that talk real big, but their strength's real small because they give up in the day of adversity.

They give up in the day when it gets tight on them, if they will. This morning, I received an encouraging email. You remember last year when I was here, I think it was last year, maybe in the first year I was here to do the staff training revival.

I preached the message, when things aren't good, God still is, out of the book of Job. And I'm telling you, if anybody ever had it bad in the Bible, it was a man by the name of Job. These health and wealth morons that get up on TV and say, when you're saved and right with God, you'll never have financial trouble, and you'll always be well, and you'll never be sick.

They must have tore the book of Job out of their Bible. There's 43 chapters of it. We find out that Job had a hard road to go.

He didn't have the bottom fall out of his boat. Both ends of the bottoms of his boat fell out, friend. But yet, my Bible said that he stayed true to God.

God honored him, and God blessed him. But I got an email this morning. A guy wrote me, and I think he goes to Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, you know, BBF school.

And he wrote me this morning, and he said, brother, I guess it was this morning, but I got it this morning. He said, brother, I just got through listening over the Internet to the message, when things aren't good, God still is. And he said, listen, I've been going through some trials.

I've been going through some hardships. I've gone through some heartaches. And he said, man, I listened to that message, and it was encouragement to me.

And he said, I just want to stay in the fight and just want to keep on going. And I'm telling you, what an encouragement to me that is. But there's a young man that wants to stay in the fight.

There's a young man that's not going to give in. There's a young man who is going to stay with it, come what may. And I say to you, we don't need any more collapsed seeds in the church of Jesus Christ.

Kemp Shatech don't need any more collapsed seeds. Your Bible college don't need any more has-beens, any more tragedies. We have enough of those already.

We should stay in the fight for the glory of God. And I'm telling you, we should fight our flesh. We should fight this world.

And it is going to be a continual battle. I mean, all of the time, we are going to have to stay there. It's not going to always be easy.

It's not always going to be fun. It's not always going to be rosy-posy. Oh, there are those climactic times, but normally the times that are climax are small, but the times that are combat are constant over and over and over and over again.

I remember when I was a kid, I suppose I was probably at this time, about this age, about seven years old. My brother's five years older than me and he's in the military. He's kind of one of these big old macho guys and he's always been good at karate and boxing and just whooping people upside the head.

But when I was seven years old, my brother, he begged my mother to let him be a boxer. He wanted to grow up and be a professional boxer. And my mama said, No, no, I want no boy of mine having a nose that is bigger than his brain.

She said, No, no, you're not going to have your face beat in. She said, You can forget that. And my mom would never let my brother be a boxer.

But you know what? Here I was seven years old. Here my brother was twelve, thirteen, something like that. And he had this ambition.

He had this desire for a couple of years. You know what he'd do in the bedroom? He'd be laying on the bed. We shared the same room for years and years.

I'm so deprived all my life, but we shared the same room. He'd lay in his bed at night. He didn't have his hands like this and he didn't have nothing on the ceiling.

He'd go, I thought, You moron, go to sleep. You're bugging the devil out of me. And he just kept doing it over and over.

He'd run down the road. You'd see him down the road. He'd be getting into the air.

I'm thinking to myself, What is this guy doing? And he was just tainted. He wanted to be a boxer so bad he could taste it. Now, there are other boxers that can taste things like Mike Tyson, like people's ears and things like that.

But nonetheless, you ever watch boxing on television? I remember when I was 14 years old, Mike Tyson was going to be doing it. I don't know who he was fighting. He was fighting some big old burly white guy who I wouldn't have dared get in the ring.

Of course, I don't know if I could run around for five minutes and make \$10 million. I might be able to do it. But anyhow, I might let him bust my nose one good time for that much money.

But nonetheless, I remember we went over to my friend's house and we got in there and they had this big screen TV and they must have invited 70 people over. This guy was a police officer. He was well known in town.

I mean, all these people started coming over. And then they were down there. Boy, they had the popcorn.

They had the Pepsi. I mean, it's just going all over the place. That place was all smoked up.

All these bunch of people in there sucking on their cigarettes. And I remember Mike Tyson got up on that screen. Bing, bing, bing.

They rang the bell and he went out there and knocked that joker out in 34 seconds. I thought to myself, that was a waste of my time and that was a waste of my money. But you ever watch boxing much? Boxing interests me.

It really does. Now, obviously, you think I'd get in the ring with anybody. You're crazy, friend.

I'm not getting in the ring with anybody, okay? I mean, they'd knock me out for sure and I'm not much of a fighter. I never have been. I suppose if I had to, I would.

But you ever watch boxing much on TV? The other night, you know, I did a little illustration. So we're going to do a little illustration right here if you would. But, you know, I was watching these guys on boxing.

Sometimes we go to these hotel rooms and we ain't got our trailer with us. And you see these nuts. I mean, they get out there just for the sake of money.

They come walking out there, you know. In the blue trunks and in the red trunks. And they got these guys.

They always got this Goliath guy. They always got this little itty bitty miniscule rat looking guy. And so they bring him out there.

And they have this little joker get up. And then he gets that big old microphone. He starts talking.

And everybody's cheering. Everybody's hollering. Everybody's yelling.

Boy, they got it on ESPN. And they got it on all the primetime pictures. NBC, ABC, Health Box Office and Fox and the rest of them.

They're all carrying it, man. They're all excited. Them guys come out there.

They got these great big old overweight gloves. And let me tell you what happens about the fourth round. I like to see it every now and then, by the way, if it's a good fight.

I don't care nothing. If it goes 14 rounds, you know. I like one that goes about six rounds.

But I mean, they're both just in it for the blood. I mean, just knocking each other out. I mean, just sweat on each other's face.

And I was watching. I don't know how long ago it was. But I was watching this boxing guy.

And this guy was in there. I mean, he's winning on this guy. You know what the trainer always did? This guy would run over here.

He'd come over here and sit. You'd see this guy. His eye must have been that big.

I mean, his eye was swollen up like a cantaloupe. And I mean, his lip was all busted up. His teeth looked like they was about to hang out.

And he couldn't hardly even keep that thing in. His coach came over. He put that thing around his neck.

He said, all right, boy. Started rubbing him in the shoulders, you know. Started beating on him like this.

Started squirting water in his face. And they said, you're going to be all right. He said, you just about got him.

He didn't just about have that guy. That guy was about to knock your stinking head off. I mean, his head was swollen up about this big.

And they got over there. And they put that stuff there. And they said, OK, you got it.

Amen. And he got this. And he wiped off his face, you know.

And he said, just get in there and beat the socks off that guy. You know what that guy did? He went in there and knocked that joker's head off his shoulders. I mean, he went in there and cleaned that dude's clog in the same round.

You know why? Because I believe, although this guy was just about down for the count, although this guy had just about had it and the lips were swollen, and the brain was swollen, I believe the reason this guy got in there and won the battle is because he had somebody behind him on the sidelines just encouraging him to go on for the glory of God. Now, please let me just say this as we move to our last point as we close. I do not excuse the fact for why people give up in the ministry or on the things of God.

Don't excuse it one bit and think it's wicked, think it's vile. For the Bible says we should be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 58. But I'm going to be honest with you.

I think the reason a lot of people give up on God, I think the reason a lot of our colleges, a lot of our camps, excuse me, a lot of our churches are full of demises is because we don't have any people in the corner that's rooting them on. You know what our problem is? We're always looking for the worst in everybody. We're always looking how we can hold up our noses and if it was to rain, we'd drown in five minutes for sure.

We're always looking for the bad things about people. But we're always looking how we can do this and how we can scheme here and how we can always look better. I remember a guy came to Ambassador one day.

He preached on finger-pointing, 45 minutes. Finger-pointing, finger-pointing, finger-pointing. I don't remember his text, but I remember his illustration.

And he said, just remember when you point your finger, you got three more pointing back at you. Simple thought, but you know what? A lot of times we do a lot of finger-pointing. And we see a brother or sister who has fallen into sin or they've fallen some way and they've fallen away and here they are and they're bloodied and they're bruised up and then the devil just beat them to death.

And we come up to them and we say, Ha ha, I told you so. I told you that was going to happen. Didn't listen to my counsel, did you? And we're the world's worst about stepping on those who are hurting.

And I want to remind you what Galatians chapter number 6 says, If a man be overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual. That should be you and that should be me. You which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.

Did it considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. And greater than Greg Locke has fallen. And greater than you has fallen as well.

I'm telling you, if we're going to have a lack, if you will, of people that are collapsing, people that are giving up and people that are giving in, we're going to have to have some people on the sidelines that are rooting them along. Some people that kind of pick them up and help them along. Hey, you're going to have some

buddies, you're going to have some friends, you're going to have some guys and you're going to have some girls this summer that I mean get to the place where they're just about ready to drag their feet.

We're going to have somebody just come along in spirit and just pick them up and help them a little bit. Pray for them. Encourage them.

Put the weapon back in their hand and say, jump back in the fight, I'm behind you all the way. I'm telling you, that's what we're going to have to have. But a lot of people, because they're in the fight and it seems like they're there by themselves and they're getting whooped by the devil and they're getting whooped by the opposition, they're getting whooped by the adversaries, they throw in the towel and they collapse.

And you know what happens when they collapse? I'll give you this lastly and we're through carnality. Notice if you've drawn it there in your notes or wherever, you will notice that you start with a choice. Lord, I'm going to do what's right.

Whenever you do that, man, it climaxes and goes through the roof. I mean, it's exciting. It's like a ride in a recreational world somewhere.

I mean, it's exciting. And then all of a sudden when you have the climax, it begins to die out because just around the corner, you realize the combat. The combat comes and you start fighting.

And at first, man, you're excited about the fight. And I mean, you're whooping and I mean, you're going in there and you're throwing the punches and throwing the blows and you're beating yourself down. And you're reading and you're praying and you're giving and you're going and you're sweating and pressing for the glory of God.

But all of a sudden, it begins to get to the place where it's too heavy. And you just can't carry the load anymore. And you quit pressing and you quit straining and you quit doing all of these things.

And you collapse and nobody's there to encourage you. Nobody's there to lift you up. And you return to the very carnality that you asked God to get you out of the beginning.

And I meet so many people that live on this vicious cycle of life. They say, Lord, help me. And they go right back to the very thing they asked God to help them.

Have you ever met people like that? Sure you have. Lord, please help me do this. And with Your strength and by Your grace, I'll implement this in my life.

And six months later, they hadn't done it. They prayed that God would help them to be a good student of the Word of God. Six months later, they hadn't read their Bible in just about that long.

It's dusty and the pages are not even tattered and torn because they've been reading through them, because they've been weeping and praying over the Word of God. Not even been reading it. And I remind you, the Bible says that you better not even make a vow if you're going to make one and break it because God takes vows and promises very seriously.

And I meet so many people that live on this vicious cycle. It's just like a chariot wheel. It goes and goes and goes.

And I meet so many people with no joy, with no peace, with no love in their hearts whatsoever. They're never going to do anything for God. All they do is spin their wheels.

They talk and talk and talk and talk and talk, but their talk and their walk never match up because they never stay in the fight. And if you want to be a collapsed seed, if you want to go back to the very same hog pen, if you will, from which you were hewn, as the Bible likes to give the illustration, as the same dog, excuse me, ladies, that returns into his vomit according to the Word of God. Hey, I'll tell you, if you're going to be something like that, it's because you gave in on the fight.

You see, if there's one point in this outline that you ought to circle, that you ought to memorize, that you ought to put bedded within your heart, it is that simple little point, combat. Because if you're ever going to stay away from the carnality, if you're ever going to stay in there and hunker down and not back up, pack up, slack up or shut up until you've been taken up by the glory of God, if you're ever going to do anything for Christ, if you're ever going to glorify Him, you are going to have to stay in the combat and fight with every single bit of strength that you have in your body. I remember this past November, I suppose it was, I was preaching in Minnesota.

I told you about that little church I preached in the other night in the garage. And I went, I had a Sunday off. I was supposed to be a certain place way on the other side of Minnesota and it was snowed over five or six feet and so we couldn't go, so I called my buddy and he said, just come preach in the garage on Sunday.

Late that night he took me down to Pillsbury and I went over to Pillsbury and I was supposed to be preaching Monday and Tuesday in chapel. It was the week before Thanksgiving this past year. And I remember they put me in the little cedar home, whatever it was.

They put me in that nice big old room where all the speakers stay and where some of the staff's in there. And I remember I went in there and I got ready for bed and I was sitting there and I was reading. And all of a sudden I heard something.

I couldn't figure out what it was. It kind of spooked me at first. It was going, just about like that, just kind of interval.

And I thought, man, they've got a gas leak in this room. They're fixing to blow me sky high, but I started to get a little nervous. So I started looking around, just about like that.

So I walked to the door and the bathroom was right across from my room where I was standing and I thought to myself, there's some guy in there using more hairspray. He'll never be able to wash out of his head. And I went in there and nobody was in there, but I kept hearing it.

So I got to looking around. Lights was out and I'd get a little eebie-jeebie, you know, I'd get a little spooky looking around. And so I looked and there's this door, about five steps, and down here there's this little light.

You know, you see the silhouette of the light coming around the side of the door. It's dark in there. And on the door you can kind of see just a little bit.

It said men's locker room and gym, something like that. And I remember I thought to myself, okay, I'm about to get into something here I probably don't want to get into. So I snuck down there, you know, and I

opened up that door.

And here's this guy laying on this working bench, you know. He must have 350 pounds on his chest. He's going... And this big old burly guy's over him saying, just one more, buddy.

Just one more, buddy. And I thought to myself, if we had some people like that in the church, if we had some people like that at Camp Chatech, hey, just one more, just keep on pressing. We need some pressuring this summer.

We need some people that are willing to sweat for the glory of God. Some people that are willing to bleed for the glory of God. Some pressure, some pressers that are good under pressure, who are willing to... and not keep going back and back and back and back and keep having to be rebuked about the same things and keep living in the same backslidden condition.

But no, they stay in and they fight. I'll give you this and we're done. There was a man by the name of Leonardo da Vinci.

Leonardo da Vinci, as you and I know, according to history, was probably one of the world's greatest painters that we have ever known anything about. He was wonderful friends with a man by the name of Michelangelo, who you know to have painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. And over in Europe many, many years ago, Mr. Leonardo da Vinci was approached by certain people to paint what you and I affectionately know as the Lord's Supper.

No doubt, the Lord's Supper historically has been the biggest billion dollar seller picture of all time. It's a wonderful picture. You study the history behind and the workings in the mind of Mr. Leonardo da Vinci, you will find out it took him almost ten years to the day to draw the picture of the Last Supper.

You've seen it in churches, you've seen it in schools, you've seen it in just all over the place. You've seen it in homes. I've seen sculptures of it, all kinds of things.

But it took him about ten years to draw it. He began to draw some of the room and some of the lighting, some of the shading that was there. He wanted to make sure that he was meticulously careful with the text that he began to read throughout 1 Corinthians and other places in the Bible.

Wanted to make sure he was scriptural. But he also wanted to make sure to give the picture more of effect. He wanted to use people as the characters of his picture to kind of get their acts of compassion and the lack thereof.

Well, the first person he drew was Jesus Christ. Pretty good place to start. He wanted to put Him in the center and circle and center everybody around the Lord.

So he went out in the streets with a hefty sum of money and he began to ask, is there anybody here that would exemplify the characters of Jesus Christ? And back in those days, Christianity was a little bit more open in the streets, if you will, if it was than it is now, and a little more accepted. And people tried to live righteous, and people tried to live holy, and they said, oh, we know of a man. We know of a man by the name of so-and-so.

You will find him. And they found him in what we would refer to as basically a rescue mission or a soup kitchen. And he was in there working, helping people.

He was a good, upstanding church man. Had a wonderful family. Loved God.

Loved the things of God. Loved the Bible. He was very compassionate, fella.

And so he approached him and he said, sir, I'll be rather candid with you. I want to pay you a large sum of money to use you to paint a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. People told me about your acts of kindness, your acts of mercy, your acts of love and compassion.

And I believe you would perfectly exemplify that which I'm trying to show in the character of Christ. Can I use you to live in my home for five weeks? You'll have to separate yourself from your family throughout the evenings, as you say here, but I'll feed you and clothe you and I'll room you and I'll give you not only a good place to stay, but a good, hefty sum of money, and I want to use you. And he said, sure, I'll be glad to do that.

And they shook hands on the deal. And for five weeks, he studied this man's character and he drew the picture of Christ. Then it was time to draw the apostle Peter.

He went and found another gentleman. He began to draw Peter. Then he began to draw Andrew.

He began to draw the other man in the picture. And then he got to the place where he was drawing the fruit. He was drawing some of the fruit there.

And again, he was drawing some of the background and some of the shades and some of the lighting and adding just a little bit more decor to the table, making sure that everyone's robe and everyone's garment was in the right place. And the last person he decided to draw was a man by the name of Judas Iscariot. He thought to himself, I'm going to have to find somebody.

I'm going to have to find somebody that is sneaky and conniving and evil and just be rather open and honest with him and pay them so that I can draw them to use as a picture of Judas Iscariot. And so he went and after all this time, he was about maybe seven to eight years into the painting by this time because there was still some touch-up work that needed to be done. He wanted to make sure that it was just perfect and just right.

And so he went out into the streets and the highways and byways and he began to talk to people. And he found just the man who he thought he'd be looking for. He found a man whose family had deserted him.

He had nobody that loved him. He was a mean man. I mean, just a wicked old cuck.

Ungodly. Curse God, curse man. The only person he loved was himself.

He was just kind of a guy that was a loner. Kind of a guy that was kind of a hermit. Kind of kept to himself.

Just kind of straggling, nasty. But yet he was a conniver. He was a man that was a thief and a man that was ungodly.

We know according to the Bible that Judas was the same way. And by the way, whenever Jesus said, one of you tonight will betray me, they did not say, Lord, is it Judas? They said, Lord, is it I? He had the same message and the same mannerisms as the rest of them and they were very surprised. And so yet we realize that he betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ for thirty pieces of silver.

He went out and hanged himself and according to the Bible, he was the son of perdition. He went straight to hell. But nonetheless, he went out and found this man after hours and days of searching.

He said, sir, I'll be rather candid with you. I'll pay you a hefty sum of money. Live in my home for five weeks.

I'll study your mannerisms and study your life as I've done many other people for this painting. And I want to use you to draw the picture of Judas' spirit. Will he accept it? And this man accepted it readily for he'd do anything for money.

He was greedy just like Judas was. For five weeks, he studied the life of this man. This mean, wicked, bitter, cantankerous man who had withdrawn himself from all the world.

Through this picture, after ten years, the picture went into circulation. Ten years after it went into circulation, history tells us that Leonardo da Vinci came down with a disease and he was just about ready to die. He was upon his deathbed.

It came out twenty years after the painting began its very first little dot. Twenty years after it was born and birthed in the heart of Leonardo da Vinci to draw the Lord's Supper. And ten years after it had been into circulation, it finally came out that the man to whom he used to paint Jesus Christ, and seven or eight years later, the man to whom he used to paint Judas Iscariot, were in fact, ladies and gentlemen, the same.

There was a man in history who gave up in the fight. And I say to you, if you don't want to be a demon, you're going to have to stay in and fight for the rest of your life.

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