

The Discipline of Discernment - 21

by Jack Hibbs

Discernment is the ability to distinguish between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, and to render a correct and accurate judgment regarding an issue.

Duration: 1:02:18

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Topics: "Discipline"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of making wise decisions and not being foolish, especially as we grow older. He then introduces Romans 12 as a key verse about discernment and worship. The speaker highlights the need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds in order to know and prove the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. He encourages believers to not be surprised by trials but to rejoice in participating in the sufferings of Christ, knowing that His glory will be revealed. The speaker concludes by discussing three ways to have God's will done in our lives: allowing ourselves to be taught by Him, seeking His guidance through His Word and the Holy Spirit, and prioritizing doing the will of God above all else, just as Jesus did.

Transcript

Bless your word to our hearts now. Fill us, Lord, with your Holy Spirit. Fill us with your strength.

Fill us with your insight. And Father, what a topic tonight. What a great, great topic.

Discernment. The discipline of discernment. Lord, it is more needed now than any other time in church history.

And that sounds like a great statement, but it is true. We are living in dark days. We are living in perilous times.

We are living at the age, at the end of the era of the church. And soon, maybe tonight, your coming will be. The trumpet will blow, and the dead in Christ will rise, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet you in the air.

Maybe tonight. But Lord, if not tonight, then we need discernment. So, Father, bless now, we pray in Jesus' name, and all God's people said, Amen.

Grab your Bibles and turn tonight to the 21st message and 31 message series, The Disciplines of Life. We are now number 21, The Discipline of Discernment. The Discipline of Discernment.

Go to Matthew, chapter 28, as our theme verse for this entire series. Matthew 28, verse 18. You know it well.

Jesus said, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. We'll hear a lot about that tonight.

And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Now move to the right, keep going to the book of Ephesians, where we have our verse for our topic tonight. The Discipline of Discernment, Ephesians 5, 17.

Paul said to the church at Ephesus, Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. That is the verse for tonight regarding discernment. And you say, well, Jack, what is discernment? And I thought you would ask so, as I want to do every week, as much as possible.

I want to give you the definition of discernment. The word discernment means that you would have in your possession the faculty of mind by which you are able to distinguish one thing from another, from light and from darkness, as with truth from falsehood. It means to be able to divide with the ability of judgment or to judge rightly.

It means to render a correct and accurate judgment regarding an issue. It means to have the power to know and to perceive the difference between two things. Discernment.

Noah Webster says that the errors of youth are often proceeded from the lack of discernment. Very, very important. Discernment is to know what you should do in any given state.

Church, listen, let's set it up like this. If you're sick or you get sick, is it from God or is it from Satan? Financial issues, is it from God or is it from Satan? When you have a job decision to make, you're presented with a challenge. Is it from God or is it from Satan? When you have things going on in your mind, maybe you pray and you hear an impulse.

Is that impulse Satan trying to trick you or is it God leading you and speaking to you? How do you know? How can you know for sure? That's why over and over again the Bible, listen, the Bible over and over again informs you and I that we are to wait to wait upon the Lord. Wait upon God. It's the hardest thing for us to do.

By the way, Satan has no sensitivity regarding that area when it comes to answering you and I with deception. Now, listen, Satan is very good at waiting to spring his tricks on you and I. But when it comes to you, perhaps praying or you perhaps seeking God, maybe you're going to determine tonight to get up and move out for the glory of God. Satan will not hesitate one moment to try to discourage you.

He's very smart. But God has given you and I the ability to discern. And many young people tonight, you need to listen because you need to be discerning like never before in your life.

You need this more than anything. There's nothing worse though than seeing a young man or a young woman be silly about their decisions. What's worse than that is to see an older person silly about their

decisions.

It's a very tragic thing to see. But listen, also this, you can't separate this verse. It's almost a second theme verse.

It's Romans chapter 12. You guys all know this verse. It's a great verse about discernment.

Romans 12 beginning at verse 1. Paul said, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. That word can also be translated worship. It's your reasonable worship.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove. That's the key. How do you know what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God? Notice that we know right now from the life, God's plan.

God literally has a plan for your life. That number one, it is good. It's acceptable, meaning you should receive it.

You should hang on to it. You should grab it. You should be, listen, groping for God's will.

I tell you, I think I speak for all Christians. There is a sense where the Holy Spirit within us causes you and I to pursue God's will. And we will go to great lengths to find it.

And listen, some of you young people tonight that are growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, one of the great things is what I would say is a struggle in your soul. It's a disruption. It is an earthquake, a seismos in your consciousness.

And you would think, how can I be a Christian and have so much difficulty in this area? You say, what is that area? It's knowing the will of God. The Holy Spirit does that in your life. It's awesome.

Some of you are just saying, I, I got to know what God is saying to me about this or that or the other thing. That's a great place to be. You may be in a great struggle, but that's a soul struggle.

It's almost as though you're going faster and faster and faster and faster. And you know, when Chewy and Obi-Wan Kenobi hits warp speed, remember what happens on the on the window of the spaceship when they hit warp speed, everything just turns bright and just when the Christian is pursuing the will of God, all the flesh and stuff goes flying by and you're grasping onto the will of God. There's nothing like it in the world.

It's the greatest thing. And in that, by the way, I might add is the key to this deep, awesome thing called the death to self, the death to our flesh. It's a wonderful experience to know the will of God.

We know this, that in Genesis chapter 2, God tells Adam and Eve, he says to them that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you're not to eat of it. Because if you do eat of it, that's the day that you'll die. And somebody will say, well, why did God put that tree in that garden in the first place? Oh, you have to have that tree there.

Don't be so naive. God put that tree there and then he turns to his perfect creation and he says, now look, everything's just right on. Don't mess with that tree.

Why did he do that? Because you cannot have true love and true relationship, true experience one with another without choice. If you remove choice, you have a dictatorial rule. If you remove choice, you have things like rape rather than love.

And our God is not like that. And the tree was there and he says, now don't do that. And the whole thing was, do we love God more than that tree? And everything was fine and Satan came along and he put those thoughts into Eve's head and he says, listen, go eat that tree.

She says, no way. The day that we eat of it, we're going to die. And what did Satan say? He said, listen, God doesn't want you to eat that tree.

Notice this, superseding God's authority and usurping Satan's authority over man. He says, God knows that the day that you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will know good from evil. And he doesn't want you to know that because the day that you do that, you will be like God's.

And as soon as she heard that, next verse says that Eve said, man, I want it. Listen, she chose in that moment to love her desires more than the will of God. And that's the issue tonight in your life and mine is to love what I want more than the will of God.

Then I'm going to wind up experiencing a life of death. That is the age old lesson from Eden to this moment. To be discerning.

And so we need to be very wise. So mark it down. Number one is this church.

The discipline of discernment is number one. Why do I want his will for my life? You might be here tonight saying, what do I want his will? Why do I want God's will in my life? Well, number one, we can learn something from these examples in Jesus, Matthew 16 one. Then the Pharisees and the Sadducees came and they were testing Jesus and asked him how he would show them a sign from heaven.

And Jesus answered and said to them, when it is evening, you say it will be fair weather for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today for the sky is red and threatening. Hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.

Jesus is challenging us right now that the will of God, first of all, we understand allows us to be guided. I want you to write that down because he knows how to guide my life. That's why I want God's will done in my life.

I want God's will done in my life because he and he alone knows how to guide my life. He knows how to lead me. The Bible tells us in the Old Testament.

This is a great verse. He says, don't be like the donkey where I've got to put a bridle and bit in his mouth and pull him and jerk him around to get him to go. He says, I want to lead you with my right hand.

That's what God wants to do in your life. And I want to promise you right now, you will always have a problem following God if you want to hold on to the reins. And I understand, especially young people.

Listen, I don't get paid extra for telling you this. And your parents didn't tell me to say this. The sooner you give up and follow God's leading, the more blessed of a life you'll have hands down.

I came to Christ at the year at 19 years of age. I was bummed that I waited so long all the way through since that time of my conversion. My goal in life is to let God lead to get out of the way.

Now, listen, discernment exposes the spirit of error from the spirit of truth to discern is to know which way should I go? Is that light or is that darkness? Is this good for me or bad for me? Is this what God wants or is this what Satan wants in my life? But discernment exposes error and reveals truth. Matthew 24, 11, Jesus, as many false prophets shall arise and will deceive many. Now, I want you to hear this.

How are you going to know what's true and false in these last days? Jesus said in the end right before his coming, that's Matthew 24. That's the apocalyptic revelation. That's by the way, you and I are living in these days that Jesus was talking about 2000 years ago.

He said one of the great signs is many, not a few, many false prophets will arise and they will deceive many. But listen, you and I literally do not have to be fooled. In fact, let's be honest, very carefully.

Listen, are you guys listening? The Bible says that such deception would be coming upon the earth and it's coming. Miracles. Listen, miracles.

There's going to be a time coming where people will be doing miracles that will cause your jaw to drop and it will be of a demonic power. And right now we sit here because we're comfortable and we say, yep, but I'm not going to fall for it. Let me put it in perspective.

What if your child is definitely ill and there's some man that comes to town with his entourage and you hear that people are getting healed, their eyes are being opened, their legs are growing, uh, you know, whatever. And your child is sick, but this guy is preaching some other gospel. Are you hearing me? And in your desperation for the love of your child, you go to this guy who's preaching another gospel, a different Jesus, and he performs a miracle and heals your child's fever.

Jesus said there's going to be times coming that are so demonically charged that if it were possible, it would deceive the very elect. Now I want to underline that many people quote that verse, but they don't hear it rightly. Did you hear what he said? Jesus said, what if it were possible, guess what? Thank you.

It's not possible. He says, if it were possible, that means to the elect, the deception is going to be so profound in the last days that it's going to be this close to deceiving God's own people. The great thing is why aren't they deceived? Because they know the word of God and the spirit of God is in them.

And they're able to discern the days from good and bad light and dark left or right up or down. Oh, we stress over and over again to read the Bible, know the Bible. The greatest thing that you can do to gear up.

Imagine for a moment, I would issue tonight this decree. We're all going to war. Imagine me saying, we're going to go to war.

I want you to suit up. I want you to get ready. And in 10 days we go to war and I would issue this announcement.

You've got to read your Bible every day and get ready and pack it in your heart and be loaded with the Bible. Imagine if I were to say that, because in 10 days we go to war and you're going to need the Bible and you do that. And in 10 days or the 11th day, hell as it were visits earth.

Who would survive those who have hidden his word in their hearts? It's not the church you attend. It's not how many times you've been baptized. Come forward.

It doesn't have anything to do with how much money you've given. It has to do if you have his word in your heart so that you can discern the days to guide your life. And second Timothy three, one, the Bible says, but know this, that in the last days, perilous times will come.

The word perilous means times that will wear down the saints for men will be lovers of themselves. Lovers of money, boasters, proud blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving slanders. Phew.

Without self-control, brutal despises of good. And on he goes. I think we're living in days like that.

And the Bible says it's going to get worse. You see, Jack, you're really bumming me out. No, I'm not.

I'm getting you ready. See, I thought you said Jesus come back tonight. He could come back tonight, but if he doesn't come back tonight, we have to face tomorrow.

And that just sounded like tomorrow, but we live in dangerous days, but your faith doesn't have to fail. Discernment, knowing the way that God would like to lead us and guide us in your life personally as a church corporately. What an amazing thing.

For example, this East wing expansion, God creates the problem that is, he brings a bunch of people here and young families and their marriages get all excited and happy and healthy. And they start, uh, having babies all over the place around here. And so we need more room for babies.

So God creates the problem and God never creates the problem without first providing the answer. And so Lord, we need your help. God, you did this.

It's your thing. And really that's how we've all been praying. Lord, you did it.

You fix it. It's your, and so what happens? We pray, we seek his face, we worship and he provides. And so the, the faith of the believers strengthened, he guides, he leads, he provides in Hebrews 5, 14, the Bible says, but solid food belongs to those who are full age.

He's talking about spiritual depth. That is those who by reason of use have their senses exercise to what discern both good and evil. You say, wait a minute.

I thought, I thought God said, don't eat of the tree Eve, because if you do, you know, good and evil. Yes, that's true. She already bit the tree.

I mean, bit the fruit that's that's happened. God, isn't this great. God doesn't leave us alone.

I know Jack, your first mother bit the avocado or whatever. It couldn't have been an avocado. Those are wonderful.

It had to be a grapefruit or something. She, she bit it and ruined the race. Okay, fine.

But here's, I'm not gonna leave you guys abandoned. My Holy spirit will lead you and guide you. Listen to my spirit who will use the word of God.

By the end of this message, you'll see how God leads us and guides us and teaches us. He uses his word in the spirit of God will draw it up and lead you and I on the path that we should go. He guides us, but we'll be able to discern.

This is a promise. Hebrews 5, 14 is a promise. Christian.

Listen, you don't have to make a dumb evil decision. Wait on the Lord. Seek his face.

Pursue him. Stop falling for the stuff that we all are tempted by. And that is to have a quick microwave Presto's fantastic ready now.

Wait, and he will answer. He will guide you. And by the way, that word in Hebrews about discern is to make a judicial estimation.

A critical decision. He says, I'll give you that. Secondly, under this point is why do you and I want his will for our lives is because of this, because he wants you and I to have fulfillment.

Every one of us, we want to have a fulfilled life. That's what we pursue. Have you ever been really hungry? I know you've been, of course we have been really hungry.

And now when I was young, um, and didn't care, I was a sucker for, I've always been a sucker for ice cold milk, even now still. I love it, but I could get a bag of potato chips and eat the whole bag with ice with a carton of milk, but it's perfect for me. It's like, but that is so bad for your blood.

It's not good for your body. And the next day you wake up, if not sooner, you'll be feeling very lethargic and sick. You've just, you, your liver goes nuts.

It's horrible for you. But if you eat good stuff, have you noticed if you eat the right proteins, you're nice and you're full and you don't need to go, you don't need a snack because you're full. Good.

Why? Because you've eaten the right stuff. Your blood's happy. Your liver is singing.

Everything's great. And that's important because listen, fulfillment causes deep satisfaction of life. There are people who, you know, this, there are people in Hollywood with unbelievable amounts of money.

You think their life was fulfilled. They're not fulfilled. You know, I had a chance to meet not too long ago.

I was invited to a pray at a, at a function in someone's home. I won't say the guy's name, but next door, his next door neighbor was Jackie Chan. And Pat Boone was there.

You know, Pat Boone's about 180 years old, I think. And I had a chance to meet Pat Boone. And you know what? Honestly, I don't know how old he is, but when I was a kid, he was old.

And let me tell you something. That dude is nuts for Jesus. And that guy was bouncing around that house.

Like he was 16 years old and everything out of every other word out of his mouth was Jesus. And he was not cussing. He was praising God.

And there's something about the Lord in your life, alive and real in your soul that causes you to have a spring in your step in life. And there's a man that's made great decisions in life. He's waited upon the Lord.

And that house that we were in, the man that hosted this event was a billionaire with a B and he's loved Jesus all his life. He grew up in the church and everything this man's put his hands to do. God has blessed him.

He owns amazing amounts of companies and it's all about Jesus. And the first thought on her mind is how can somebody so rich love Jesus? Because the guy loved Jesus first and God saw him faithful enough to bless him. The guys it's bizarre.

It's like he's not even aware of what he owns. It's all about getting the word of God out to the world. Well, listen, you don't have to be rich to be fulfilled.

It's Christ that makes you fulfilled. It's having him truly alive in your heart. And tonight you might sit here and say, well, that is so ethereal.

You know, what are you talking about? Let me tell you something. Seek God and watch him fill your life. It is an amazing thing in John chapter one, verse 12 about fulfillment.

The Bible says, but as many as received him to them, gave he power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of the will, nor the will of man, but of God, it was God's will. Are you a Christian? Listen, let's do this. We haven't done this in a while.

How many of you are Christians tonight? Raise your hands. Okay. Put your hands down.

If you raised your hand, it is the will of God that you've come to Christ and he doesn't make mistakes. And you can, you can get up and go today. I mean, after the message, you get up and go that you can go live a life fulfilled.

It's not some crazy dream. It's a fact, you know, this verse, you're tired of hearing it. A fulfilled life is promised to the believer.

Jeremiah 29, 11, for this is God's word for, I know the thoughts that I think toward you raise your hand again, excuse me, hand again. You, the believer, I keep your hand up. I know the thoughts that I think toward you says the Lord thoughts of peace, not of evil to give you a future and a hope that's to every one of you who could raise your hand tonight.

God says so a fulfilled life. Also this note, this, why do you and I want to have God's will in our lives? Because he alone can make things matter. So much of what you and I can pursue in life comes to nothing.

If we're not careful, it's almost like when you buy, so I've got to have this, I've got to have this and you buy this thing. And then it's sitting on your table and you're looking at it. And then a day or two goes by and you look at it.

What did I get that thing? It doesn't matter. Most often in life, we're surprised about the things that matter. I'm getting very excited about the young people in America today because they're waking up.

I think we're on the cusp of how it was during the hippie days and the drug days. Remember hate Ashbery, San Francisco, Berkeley. I mean, it's still like that today up there, but doped up free sex.

It's funny. Free sex, make love, not war, all this stuff. And, um, that those kids preach that message by the way, remember is at the same time when the declaration was, God is dead.

And the kids are the ones that woke up. They say, wait a minute, all this free sex isn't free. It's really messing me up.

And I don't want to be stoned anymore. And what happened? The Jesus movement was born. Hippies came to church, stoned, stoned, no shoes, walking into church, searching, getting healed in the, in the moment saved.

Amazing made history around the world. I think we're right on the brink of that happening. And again, the young people today are saying, you know what my, my parents in this materialistic world, it doesn't work.

And I've cited to you before an MTV poll where the youth of the world said, number one thing on their list. I want to have a family. What's the most important thing to you? They said, I want to have a family.

I think God's waking kids up. Things matter when they come from God, knowing God's will fortifies us in the darkest of hours, in the darkest of times, knowing God's will. You guys know I'm a revolutionary American history freak, love that stuff.

And the resolve that some of these guys, the resolve that George Washington had in the face of darkness, when you read his writings, it came from prayer, seeking God, knowing the word of God. When you visit George Washington's burial place in Mount Vernon, there's four of his favorite scriptures in granite there from the Bible. God's word comes and fortifies us in the darkest hours.

Philippians one 29 says, for to you, it has been granted on behalf of Christ to not only believe in him, but to also suffer for his sake. Did you know that things matter? I know this sounds strange. You said, what does it do? Things matter because when we suffer, that's how we really begin to appreciate things.

And it's a good thing. I know this sounds crazy. Suffering is a good thing.

None of us would sign up for it. I know that. But for the Christian, when you've suffered, listen, I'm going to tell you a little secret.

I'd rather be around Christians who have suffered. There's two types of Christians I'd like to be around. Brand new believers.

They're the best. Why? Because they have, you know, no one's ever, no one has to tell a new believer, turn off your TV. They can't put the Bible down.

And all they want to do is talk. They want to ask a thousand million questions. They are the best.

And then to be around a Christian who has suffered. Why? Because there's the depth, the depth. The worst thing is to be somebody in the gray zone in between.

There's no depth. There's no zeal. There's just religion.

And that's chapter nine, verse 16. The Bible says, for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. That was the promise given to Paul, the apostle of this conversion.

Paul, I want you to follow me. Yes, Lord. And oh, by the way, you're going to suffer many things for joining up.

And what happens? You come to the end of Paul's life and Paul says, all this stuff. It's nothing compared to the glory that's about to be revealed. And all of my life's acquisitions, I count as nothing that I might win Christ.

What an amazing thing. Point number two this evening. Are you guys okay? You're real quiet.

You all right? The discipline of discernment. Point number two is what does God's will look like in my life? What does it look like? How do I know? I'm really excited about this part. We got to make it to the third point for sure, but I really like this point.

What does God's will look like in my life? And you would say for your life, number one is that I discover the purpose of my life. And that's not kind of silly. I mean, what's the purpose of my life? And yet, you know what? You can go right now to Barnes and Nobles or Borders, and there are volumes of books written about how you can find out your purpose for living.

Number one bestselling book a while back was *The Purpose Driven Life*. And the world bought it. All around the world.

You know why? Listen, you know why? Psychologists will tell you why it sold so great. Because of the one word, purpose. Purpose.

People live their lives and they're asking the question, why am I here? People are searching. I was told, I don't know. I don't know the numbers on this for real.

I was just told this by a friend of mine in Hawaii, pastors of church. He's been there for years. He said, it's very difficult to pastor a church here.

And I said, okay, tell me why. And he said, well, one of the great reasons is that people come to Hawaii because it's the end all for them. It's the perfect environment.

It's everything's pristine. It's, it's a comfortable paradise and they're going to find themselves. And there's, there's all these self-awareness things.

That's why you can turn on your TV tomorrow morning and you see these exercise people. Where are they? They're on the shores of Hawaii. Why? Because the whole mystique is I'm doing this thing on the shore with the coconuts and the, because it speaks about nirvana, but the person walks away no matter how buff they are, no matter how healthy they are still wondering why was I born? Why, why, what is the meaning of life? People without Christ, they can't discern that though.

They're asking, they don't know which way to go. And the believer, you Christian, you have the discernment to know the reason why God has placed you here. You can know that you, you are to know that.

It's amazing to me to realize that no matter what you and I are actually fulfilling our purpose or a purpose, I should say at any given time as a human being, you didn't have to be a Christian. You are fulfilling a purpose. That's not good enough, is it? You want to fulfill the purpose for why you were created.

And that's for each and every one of us to find out. This is an amazing thing for life's journey. A lot of people are talking today, Christianity is history, Christianity is over.

Well, forget about the term Christianity. Let's talk about Jesus in you. Let's talk about you walking with the true and living God.

It is a journey. It is an experience that you can know God and he'll never lead you astray. He'll lead you and guide you if you'll just stop and say, Lord, what class do I take? What school do I go to? Who do I marry? What do I do with this kid of mine? Or what do I do with this wife of mine or this husband of mine? Seek him, watch the answers come and find purpose.

Matthew seven, verse 20 and 21. It's terrifying. These verses should haunt you.

Therefore, by their fruits, you will know them. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. Wow.

Well, who does he who does the will of my father in heaven? That's how important it is for you and I to know his will. What does it look like? Well, what are you doing? What does God's will look like in my life? Well, what are you doing now? You guys are already a couple of miles ahead because you're here on a Wednesday night. You're seeking God.

You don't have to come in the middle of the week. It's winter. What was it's down to 74 today.

Suffering for God here, but you're seeking him. And Jesus said, the one who enters heaven is the one that does my will. That Matthew seven, 21 is enough to keep you and I busy for the rest of our lives.

I could say goodnight and God bless and leave right now. Honestly, right? In John four, 34, the Bible says, Jesus said to them, my food, my food, my food is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work. That's it.

John four, 34 is your now mine us together. That's our life verse. My food, my nourishment, my strength, my hope, my meaning, my everything is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish that work.

That's for every Christian. So no, no jackets, letters of red. It's Jesus.

He's the one talking. No, it's for every one of us. He's our model.

He's our example. I don't know. I'm just insert this.

It's a venture off my notes and probably get into trouble now. But for me personally, I, I go through these mental, emotional, spiritual gymnastics in my soul, in my head, when it comes to that challenge that Jesus said right there, to do what he's called me to do and to finish the work. I know right now that I am in the middle of the will of God.

And I pray that tomorrow I will be I know yesterday I was, I want to live like that every day. I'm terrified with the thought of being outside of that. He's a Jackie making this up.

I'm too weak. I'm too frail. I'm too in need of him to be anywhere else.

And I know that there's this dialogue between you and I know no, you're the pastor, you're up on the podium. And you don't go through the things that we go through. Yes, listen, we go through more things.

How can we relate to you if we don't go through the things that you all go through the attacks, the pressures, the things? Yeah, but you know what, you're up there on Sunday and Wednesday, and you're just having a great time. Teaching is the easiest part of my calling. This is the easiest part.

And the whole thing is Lord, I just want to finish. Listen, let me tell you something. I challenge you go look for go look for let's just use this terminology for a second.

Go look at careers. I don't think being a pastor is a career, but we'll just throw it in that camp. Go look at careers and see how many people start out as an engineer and end as an engineer.

How many people start out as firemen and end as firemen? How many people start out as doctors and end as doctors? You're going to find 98, 99, 100% of them. How many people start out as pastors and finish as pastors, you will find that is the most dangerous job on the planet. Not dangerous as in getting shot in the head or run over by a rhinoceros.

Nothing like that. I'm not talking about that. Not in this country.

Not yet. What I'm saying is because of spiritual dynamic and in an age that you and I live in, somebody could think up some thing in their head and launch it out onto the internet about you or about me and our lives are ruined that fast. Did I share with you guys what happened with Josh McDowell and I? Well, too bad you weren't here.

So you missed it. I'll just say this. Some lunatic fabricated a story, floated it on the internet, used my name to attack Josh McDowell.

Josh McDowell gets ahold of me all upset. I said, what are you talking about? It was internet fraud. Somebody can take a picture of you and not even know it.

And Mickey Mouse it on their Photoshop and ship it to the world and ruin your life. We live in dangerous times. All I want to do is finish my calling.

And that should be the biggest burden on your heart as a Christian is to maintain, keep, strengthen, and build your faith all the way through to the end. And you need to be discerning to do that because there's, there's, uh, I was gonna say tricksters, but that's not a word, isn't it? There's yeah, it is tricksters. There's tricksters out there.

There's people who want to deceive and mess with your life and get you off some path. Jesus said, there's a bunch of them. And John six 38, Jesus said, for I have come down from heaven to do not my own will, but the will of him who sent me, that should be the cry.

Lord, I'm here to do your will every day. I want you to get up tomorrow morning and say, God, live your will through my life. I mean, don't raise your hand.

Is your life boring? Are you Christian? Yep. Is your Christianity boring? Yep. Your fault.

Because all you need to do is say, Lord, use me to fulfill your will today in my life. And let me tell you, put your mouthpiece in and strap your helmet on because it is going to be an e-ticket for those of you who are old, e-ticket, nothing like an e-ticket. Also this, what does God's will look like in my life is that I discover the plan for my life.

He actually has a very specific plan for my life. Jesus said in John 18:37, when he was questioned by Pilate, Pilate said, are you the king? And Jesus says, you've rightly said that I was the king for this cause. I was born for this cause.

I've come into the world that I should bear witness to the truth and everyone that's you and I, everyone who is of the truth. Here's my voice. Ah, that's key.

Lord, I need to discern about what to do about my job, or maybe I've lost my job. And should I go this way or should I go that way? By the way, I've told you before, I need to tell you again, if you're looking for a job and you're seeking the Lord, the great probability is that when you get a job offer, you will get two at almost the exact same time, two job offers. You say, why didn't God just give me one? Because now I got to pray.

Which one? That's the way he works with his kids. I'll give, you know, there's Johnny, he's praying for a job. So God gives you two to pick from.

Why? Why does he do that to us? So that we'd slow down, fall down, pray, and he'll speak to us. And then your natural action reaction is, well, how's he going to speak to us? That's why daily Bible reading is paramount to life. I don't know.

I tell you, you want to get pumped up, especially again, young people listen up. How do you know when God's speaking, listen, you need a real good, cool problem. You need a nice problem that throws you on your face before God.

You're crying out to him and you pick up your word. And I don't know, I don't get how he's got, he can do this stuff. How does he do this all around the world with billions of people every day? They'll pick up the Bible.

God, I need to hear from you, Lord. Oh, anyway, what's my daily Bible reading? My daily Bible reading is, um, and you start reading it and there'll be that verse in your daily Bible reading that answers your life's problem that day. And then you, you just go, God, you're too much.

Do you know what I'm talking about? Can somebody say amen? He is amazing. That way. He's great.

That way. I love it to discover the plan for my life. God's got it.

He has, according to the book of Ephesians, a specific plan chapter two, he's got a plan for your life. So tailor-made for you personally that nobody else can do it. It is a work that he's established before the world was ever created.

And it's been waiting like in a box where we're approaching Christmas and you'll have a gift with your name on it. And if it's a good gift, it'd be something you can use. That'd be meaningful, purposeful.

And so you're wondering, you shake it kind of tear. Oh, honey, I tore the papers torn. All right.

That gift, if it's the right gift is so specific for your life. And God has done that. He has got a plan for your life that there may be other Bobs in the world, but there's no Bob like you.

And there's no gift for any other Bob, but for you, Bob. And I tell you, if your name's Bob tonight, you better be getting this. Listen, when you pray for you, I mean this.

So don't pray for me. I pray for other people. I didn't say don't pray for other people, but you're supposed to pray for yourself too.

Some people think I'm no, that's I'm, I'm, I'm too right on to pray for me. That's ridiculous. Our father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

Give us. Yes. So listen, when you pray for all of the world and you pray for me first, and then you pray for everybody else, when you pray for you, I want you to think about this.

I want you to pray for yourself prophetically. What do I mean by that? When you, when I mean prophetically, I mean like this Romans eight 27, it says, now he who searches the hearts, that's God knows what the mind of the spirit is. That is a reference to the Holy spirit dwelling in you.

The Holy spirit lives inside you, right? You got that? He knows what you need. So look, look at that verse up there. Now he who searches the hearts knows notice it's your heart knows what the mind of the capital S spirit is because he who the spirit makes intercession for who saints you according to the will of God.

When you pray, Lord, I need direction. I need discernment. I need an answer.

Lord, help me, Lord, guide me, Lord, lead me. The spirit of God is praying through you speaking to the father. How cool is that? When you pray, understand that, think of it as praying prophetically.

What do you mean by that? When you pray like that, you know, in fact, here's a bonus verse. It's not on the screen. It just came in my head just like that.

John 15 seven have my word. He's saying my word. If my word abides in your heart, you may ask what you will and it shall be done unto you for hearing is my father glorified answer.

Pray the Bible. I don't know how to pray. Open up your Bible and pray Bible.

I'm dead serious about that. I'm telling you it's amazing. Also this you and I discover the power in my life, the power in your life.

What does God's will look like in my life? It's his power. Listen, the power to start your Christian walk, the power to endure your Christian life and the power to finish. And first Peter 4 12.

Listen to this. Peter's so sweet. He says, Dear friends, dear brothers, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are now suffering as though something strange were happening to you, but rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

If you are, listen, insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed for the spirit of glory and of God rest upon you. What a great thing. The power of God.

What does God's will look like in my life? God's power, not mine, not yours, his power. It's a sweet thing. Third and final point.

We got five minutes to wrap this one up. How can I have his will done in my life? Well, listen, three ways. Number one, allowing.

Write it down. By yielding, allowing, letting him, allowing myself to be taught by him. This sounds so simple and it's such a big deal.

Did you know that people suffer unnecessarily because they're not teachable? You know, if you're not teachable, it's because you have an arrogant spirit. You're proud. There's nothing worse than to see somebody that's unteachable because they think they know everything and they can't be taught.

So how do you know? How was that me? I don't know. Do you criticize everything that comes your way that will instruct you? Then you're proud. Make sure you have a teachable spirit.

How can I have God's will done in my life? Number one, make sure allow yourself to be taught by God. John 14, 26, the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name. Jesus said he will what teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

What a tremendous verse. John 16, 12. Jesus said, I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

However, when he the spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak of his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak. Isn't that interesting? And he will tell you things to come. He will glorify me for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you.

That's the art of God teaching you and I. And listen, Jesus said this amazing spiritual family that you and I belong in. I think you'll understand this. You know, there's some people that say, man, you know, family, family, and I'm all for family.

God's for family invented the family, but some people take a little too far. You get a little goofy with it. Like the family don't get in between the family.

Well, listen, what Jesus said about family. And by the way, this freaked people out when he said this in Mark 3 33, it says this, and he answered them and said, or saying, who is my mother or my brothers or brethren? This is when Jesus was ministering and Mary came with his brothers and sisters. You said, what read Matthew 13 55.

Read it later. It gives you the names of Jesus's step brothers and mentions the fact that he has at least two sisters. Cause it says sisters, plural.

What does that mean? The Bible teaches that Joseph and Mary must have had kids after Jesus was born. I know that blows some of your, your theology, but it's Bible. So watch this.

Jesus is teaching and Mary comes with the family and they said, Jesus, your family's here. Your mom's here and your brothers. And he looked around about on them and sad about him who said about him, those that were listening in those that were gathered in the teaching.

And he said, look, behold my mother and my brethren for who so ever shall do the will of God. The same is my brother and my sister and my mother. And what do you say? What's he saying? If blood is thicker than water, spirit is thicker than blood.

The family of God, we are kindred spirits. The moment that we're born again and we brought it, we're brought in the family of God. Jesus is the one that's in my family is the one that does my will and the will of my father.

Also this by determining to obey him, no matter what, excuse me. We determined tonight to obey him. We're almost done.

John 17, eight and verse 14 as well. Jesus said, for I have given them the words which you have given me. He's praying to his father.

This is what's known as the high priestly prayer of Jesus. And they have received them, that is the words he's talking about the disciples and have known surely that I've come from you. And they have believed that you sent me.

Verse 14, I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world just as I am not of this world or of the world. Amazing. Jesus is saying that you and I are to be determined to obey God no matter what.

I read this today. This is so encouraging. Listen to this.

Martin Luther. There's a record in one of his journals. Check this out.

Martin Luther said that Satan visited him on several occasions, Satan himself. That'd be pretty freaky. And during one of those demonic moments, Luther heard Satan recount all of Luther's sins that day.

And Luther said to Satan, is that all? And again, he heard Satan speak to him. And again, Luther responded louder. Is that all? And again and again, this happened until Luther said enough.

And with that, he shouted this next verse. Isn't that awesome? He shouted this next verse. It's first John one, seven, the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, his son cleanses us from all sins.

If you ever get a chance to see in Germany, there's a there's a room where Martin Luther was there seeking God. And he was the father of the Reformation period. And Satan appeared him and Martin Luther picked up his inkwell and threw it at the wall.

And the stain is still on the wall in Germany. I love that. Satan says, you know what, Luther? Is that it? Oh, you know what? And this, this and this too.

Is that all you got? Don't you love it? And Satan, because the Bible says Satan is the accuser of the brethren day and night. Isn't that weird? God allows him to appear before God day and night. Somebody give me your name.

Give me a name. Carolyn, Carolyn. Satan goes up there.

Carolyn, you know what? She had this thought today and she's doing this and she did that. And she went over 55 and she all this. And he didn't.

And Carolyn, for now, I can say, is that all because the blood of Jesus Christ, he can't. It cleanses. Absolutely.

We're at a time, but very quickly, the next thing is this, or the final thing is this, by keeping his will as the focus of my existence. You want to keep God's will as the focal point of your existence in life to pursue God. There's no greater example of this than what Jesus has set for us.

Jesus said in John 8, 29, I do all things that please him. Isn't that your heart's desire? Let's be honest down deep inside. Is that not your heart's desire? I just want to do if I just want to do all things that please him.

Man, on and on, I can encourage you to do a study on the will of God or the will of the father or God's will. The Bible tells us this, I'll give you a couple more verses and we'll end right here. First Thessalonians 4, 3, for this is the will of God.

Your sanctification, that is God, it's God's will that you be taken out of this world and set in a place of walking in this world, but not of the world. Okay, keep, we'll keep going. That you may abstain from sexual immorality.

Come on Sundays after Christmas, we're talking all about that. That each of you should know how to possess his own vessel and sanctification and honor, yielding your life to what God wants done, not what you want to do, not in passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. And then finally here, we end where we began Ephesians 5, 17.

But before we read Ephesians 5, 17, let's look at the context of it. Look at verse 15, Ephesians 5, 15, start there. So then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.

Boy, that's a big one of verse 16. We should print that out and put it right over our TV sets and computers and stuff, right? Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is and do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation. Why get drunk? You'll get stupid for a minute, do dumb things, and then you'll wake up.

That's what it means. Why do you waste your effort for? It's dumb. Why be sometimes possessed when you can be possessed with the Holy Spirit? Look at the result of it.

Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing, and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Well, who does that? People who are bent on knowing the will of God because they have learned how to discern the path and the way that they should live. And it's available to every one of us right now, has been and shall be.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for your truth. And Lord, right now there is that need, no doubt, that here in this body of believers and a gathering this size, there are so many different needs and issues on our hearts that, Lord, collectively right now, right where we're at, we just release those to you right now.

Father, we bring them to you. We ask you, Father, to give us discernment, proper judgment, accurate analysis of the issues before us. Be it relationships, be it jobs, be it finances, whatever it may be, decision making.

We bring them to you now, Father, this body cries out to you in silence. And we pray, Father, in Jesus name, that there'd be a new heart within us, a revived heart within us. If it's not there now, that you would renew our hearts to be crying out to you, that we'd teach our kids how to cry out to you.

And Father, that we would learn to not go it alone in life. That's a prideful moment if we do that. Our shoulders are not big enough.

Our legs are not strong enough. Lord, may we not put on some show. May we fall down before you and say, God, we need you to answer us.

We need you to speak to us. Lord, we lay out your word before us. We pray and ask you, Father God.

And Lord, I just want to pray right now on behalf of this church collectively. Father, you have given unto us, Lord, exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think. And Father, yet knowing that you are the God that inhabits eternity, we don't want to be limited by our own sense of place or value.

We ask you, Lord, in Jesus name, keep us hand to mouth, urgent before you, crying out to you. And Father, we pray that you'd give us the lost of this region. Lord, cause the unbeliever to wake up tomorrow or during this night in panic, in fear, knowing that they must find Jesus.

And may they find him here. We're asking you, Lord God, to inhabit, Lord, this place, the parking lot, Lord, every room, every inch of this property. Father, when people drive down the freeway or out here on Eucalyptus or the avenues that are around us, Father, may you just pour out your spirit in an amazing, miraculous way to draw them into your truth.

And Father, may your truth always reside here. May your Holy Spirit have free reign here, Father. And Lord, may you find us together a people usable.

And Father, we pray right now that for our kids and for our jobs and for our husbands, for our wives, Lord, that you would do great and amazing things. Father, that you would move in our midst, speak to us, show us, Lord, what you want us to do next. And Lord, let us all as men and women realize that our jobs are simply tent making things, that the real issue is service to Christ.

This is an amazing age in which we live in. Unemployment soaring through the roof, people are hurting, and Christians are needed more now than ever before. Lord, with clothing and food, let us be content.

And let us serve you, Father, until you come again, until you dispatch your son for us. And we pray it's tonight. May Jesus come again for us.

Until that time comes, Father, may we be busy about our father's business, doing your will and discerning what the will of the Lord is. In Jesus' name and all God's people said, Amen. Church, let's stand together as we close.

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