

Being A Busybody Is Not Praiseworthy Conduct

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the importance of following Christ and doing good, while avoiding being a busybody or meddling in unnecessary affairs. It highlights the rebuke of Peter by Jesus in John 21 and Peter's own caution in 1 Peter against suffering as a meddler. The message encourages focusing on following Christ, doing good, and not getting entangled in irrelevant or gossip-driven matters.

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:15, John 21:22, Proverbs 26:17, Galatians 6:1, 1 John 5:3, Romans 9:20, Luke 12:13, Proverbs 18:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 1 Timothy 5:13

Topics: "Following Christ", "Avoiding Meddling"

Description

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Transcript

Go ahead and turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter. 1 Peter. Chapter 2, we're going to look at multiple sections in 1 Peter briefly here in the introduction.

You're not going to initially see where I'm going with this, so bear with me a minute as we connect some dots. Then you'll know what I'm primarily going to deal with right now. But 1 Peter, let me pray, and then we will read.

Father, Lord, I thank You for these brethren, these precious saints. Lord, I thank You for... Lord, even just thinking of all the men that came to the men's meeting yesterday. Lord, I'm just grateful for this body.

Lord, I pray You'd be with us. You'd help us to press on side by side together for You. Lord, we do want to be following You.

I pray You'd help us to do that all the more in the specific ways that You want us to be following You. And so, Lord, we just commit our lives to You every day, Lord. We're wanting to say, Lord, not my will, but Thine be done.

Lord, we're seeking first the Kingdom of God and Your righteousness. Lord, that's what's before us, I trust. If not, Lord, renew our minds again today.

And Lord, we thank You for what we heard in Job 9 about a way that a man can be right with God. Lord, what a glorious reality the Gospel is. We thank You, Father, for sending Your Son and saving us.

And so we just commit this time to You in Christ's name, Amen. 1 Peter 2. If you can get your eyes right there, and we will start reading. Verse 18.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. If someone has a master, a boss, they treat you, there's two different ways they could treat you. He says, not only to the good and the gentle, but respect even the unjust.

And then he gives a reason. For this is a gracious thing when mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. So there's times we're going to suffer and it's not going to be a just thing for how we're suffering.

But look at verse 20. For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in His steps.

Then he describes Christ's sufferings. He committed no sin. Neither was deceit found in His mouth.

When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten. So that could have been how He could have responded.

He could have threatened. He didn't do that. What did He do? He continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.

And he goes on to mention He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But I want you to focus on when Peter says what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? I mean, you know, someone says I got beaten. I'm a Christian.

I've got to get some credit. I mean, you guys got to praise me for the fact I got beaten, right? Well, no, we want to hear more specifics. Why did you get beaten? What led to the beating that happened? You might say, well, I endured in the midst of severe suffering.

I didn't deny Christ. I should have some credit. No, no, I want a little more information about your conduct that led you to be beaten.

Because if sin led you to be beaten, what's Peter saying? Is that something that should get you credit? No, it shouldn't get you credit. It shouldn't get you praise. It should actually be something that you're ashamed of.

Now, someone might say, well, I didn't sin. Well, what if they committed a sin that led them to get beaten? And when you bring it up to them, they don't even recognize what they did is sinful. Like they're just unable to recognize what it is that led them to get beaten and that it was actually sinful conduct that led to that.

Do you think there's such subtle ways that we could respond in our suffering that might fit that question? Are there? We're going to find out in a minute. There is. There is something that's on Peter's mind here

that I want us to consider.

So in a letter where people are suffering, they're going to face future suffering, Peter hits on this distinction multiple times. The question of why are you suffering? What led to you suffering? What was the conduct that you had prior to the time you got beaten? Did you get beaten because you sinned? Did you get beaten because you did righteous? Or are you the guy who thinks you did righteous, but you actually sinned and you don't recognize it? And you think you should have credit for your suffering. I mean, it kind of makes you wonder, had Peter heard some report? And why is he putting this in the letter? Had he heard some report of a believer suffering and they were getting praised? And then he heard more about the person's conduct and he realized, oh man, why did they put that in the newsletter? Why did they make a good example of him? He's actually a bad example.

Someone that shouldn't be imitated because of what he did that led him to be beaten. The people you think, oh, that was really, really zealous of him, but it probably shouldn't have done that. That probably wasn't the best approach to the situation.

I mean, could a church culture, could in a church, could you suddenly create a culture where certain things are being glorified and people get credit for something that they should actually be ashamed of? I mean, that could happen in our own church. That could happen in any church. Something becomes common that is actually a sinful response and not honoring to the Lord.

And so maybe some in Peter's day, they were unable to distinguish the difference between being beaten because you sinned or being beaten because you did righteously. And is this, did Jesus ever teach on this? Is this distinction important? Where did Christ ever say something about this? Anyone? Where did Jesus speak on this? Sermon on the Mount. Listen to these verses.

Matthew 5, blessed are those who are persecuted. And then what does he say? For righteousness sake, right? That's what, it's a righteous reason. The very next verse, he says, they will utter all kinds of evil against you.

And what does he call the evil uttered against you? It is falsely uttered against you. It's not something true. It's something that's actually false.

And so we should ask the question, is my conduct in the midst of suffering, and not just in the midst of suffering at any point, because it's not like our church is in the midst of all this suffering and persecution right now, but is my conduct actually hurtful and not praiseworthy? And do I view it wrong? Is there anything in how I conduct myself that I think I should get credit for, but I shouldn't? And if so, what actions is Peter thinking of that some in his day were taking credit for something when they should have been ashamed? When they should have been ashamed. Why is Peter even concerned with this? If you look at chapter two, verse 12, he makes it pretty clear. Verse 11, he urges them.

I mean, we're sojourners, we're exiles. He wants us to abstain from passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul. Why? He says, verse 12, I want you to keep your conduct among the Gentiles, among the lost.

Honorable. Why is it so important to be honorable, Peter? So that when they speak against you as evildoers, what will they see? They will see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. Peter is very concerned throughout the entire letter of what is your testimony? What is your testimony? Is it

something that is honorable? Or is it a testimony where you're actually suffering because of things that are actually unrighteous? That are not honoring to the Lord? So, let's go to chapter 4. We're going to find an answer here in chapter 4. So turn in your Bibles.

1 Peter 4. Well, actually, it's on the same page. 1 Peter 3. 16, he has this similar idea. Having a good conscience.

He talks about having a gentle and respectful way when you respond, so that when you're slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. Verse 17, why it's better to suffer for doing good, that's God's will, than for doing evil. So Peter's very concerned about what is leading you to suffer.

Is it for good? Is it for evil? Why are you being beaten? And then you get into chapter 4. Same thing, even in verse 19. Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will. He wants us suffering according to the will of God.

Then you can entrust your soul to a faithful Creator while doing good, right? But look at verse 12. Look at verse 12. This is where we're going to be for a minute.

1 Peter 4.12, Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you, but rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you're blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. Now look at verse 15.

This is very interesting. But let none of you suffer as... Remember earlier on, he's talking about people suffering and they take credit for something in the midst of their suffering where they maybe shouldn't be taking credit for it? He gives a list now. Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

What do you think of that list? What stands out on the list? Meddler, murderer, thief, evildoer. I mean, that's not shocking. What's shocking to me that's on the list is this word meddler.

So Peter's given this four different types of conduct that must have been relevant, right? I mean, imagine he's writing it to a church because this is relevant. He doesn't exactly say he was observing all of this. Maybe there's a fear this is happening.

Maybe it was happening, but he doesn't specifically comment on that in the letter, but he gives a specific list that if you're suffering and this is the conduct that led you to suffer, this isn't something to take credit for, right? You know, just think of the murderer. Let's take that for example. You know, there's all this political corruption.

I mean, no doubt everything's getting worse. I mean, can't we justify killing that corrupt person? Can't we justify stealing from this government and not paying our taxes and responding to them in such a way? And if we get persecuted for doing that, oh, it's okay because they're that wicked. You might understand someone trying to twist those realities and justify that type of conduct, but meddler is on the list? To me, that's surprising.

And that's what I want to look at. I want to, in my sermon, I'm titling it Don't Murder or Meddle. Be busy doing good and following Christ.

And there's no hidden message behind my sermon. This is just what stood out to me from Bible reading this week. And so store it away or apply it now in your heart to the Spirit of God if something is there for you.

But let's think, what is meddling and why? Why is it on the list? Why is it on the list? And there are difficulties with this word meddling because it's not overly used in the Greek. But if you look at the consensus of all these translators and how they render it, it can help to see a couple other Bible versions. So listen what the New King James Version renders it as.

Says this, as a busybody in other people's matters. You ever heard that term? Busybody? Busybody? Body, not buddy. Busybody, that's right.

Listen to this, Young's Literal. Or do not be an inspector into other men's matters. So this is one who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others and not to themselves.

They're trying to become an overseer of matters that don't concern them. Matters that involve someone else's responsibility, right? And I mean, look, if you have a job out there in the world and you know how it is, you have a task in that company and you're seeking to do it, is it not frustrating when others are trying to overly get involved in places in your work where they shouldn't? It doesn't help you get the job done. It actually hinders you from getting that done.

So Peter's saying if you suffer because you were a busybody and you're beaten for it, busybody, busybody, I'm sorry, bear with me. Don't rejoice that you're suffering for Christ's sake because you're not, you're not. Rather, you got involved in a matter that was none of your business.

Apparently, these people had a hard time recognizing this was happening. I say apparently because Peter mentions it here. You're sticking your nose into places where it doesn't belong, you're getting punched for it, and then you're going away wanting credit for the bruises on your face, but when people find out why the bruises are there, they realize the very thing that led to the punch in the face was not honorable.

It was actually shameful. It was not honorable to the Lord. One lexicon, it renders it this way.

One who busies himself in the affairs of others in an unwarranted matter, right? An unwarranted manner. I mean, because that's the difficulty, right? There are certain matters that do warrant my involvement in your involvement, right? It does warrant our involvement in those matters. But other times, it's not warranted.

And people might have a hard time discerning what that is. So I think there can be a struggle here. Matthew Poole, the commentator on a meddler, he says this, one that goes beyond the bounds of his own calling and invades the callings of others, pragmatically intruding into their business and making himself a judge of those things which belong not to him.

This is basically a form of sinful curiosity, right? And he's putting this term, don't be a meddler, and he's categorizing it and joining it next to murderer, thief, and evildoer. I realize evildoer is a very broad term. That should get us to pay attention for a moment to what Peter is saying.

Now, why on the list? Like I've already said, you could speculate and say, maybe it's on the list because he witnessed that happening in his day. There could be another reason. Maybe it's on the list because Peter's whole idea was he wanted to think of something extreme, murder, and then some would argue the list kind of goes down into lesser offenses where it eventually gets to meddler, right? So Peter, the idea

could have been, Peter's just saying, look, whatever your conduct is, don't do something that's extreme and get beaten for it and think that's praiseworthy.

And don't do something that maybe is considered more minor, less severe. In other words, don't have major or minor conduct that hurt your testimony in a time of suffering. You know, it's easy to look and say, well, I'm not responding in an obviously wrong way.

Guess what Peter's concerned about? Even the more subtle manifestations of not honoring God. We can't know for certain, but he didn't want them being busybodies. What does he want them doing throughout the whole letter? What's he keep saying again and again? We even saw it in some of those verses.

You know what he wants them doing constantly? Doing good. Doing good. He keeps mentioning that throughout the letter.

Now, this makes you ask the question, you know, what's Peter thinking about when he writes this to the church? I mean, how would someone during a time of persecution fall into being a meddler and then get beaten for it? And he's talking about their conduct towards unbelievers. I'm gonna think in the second half about us being busybodies around each other, but I wanna think for a moment in the context here, what's Peter thinking about? How could a Christian fall into being a meddler and get beaten for it in a time of persecution? I mean, what is he hitting on here in this letter? I mean, what do you think it is? If you know 1 Peter, what might it be? Where might they be stepping over their bounds and think it's justifiable and it's not? Anyone? Look at chapter two. Look at chapter two again.

If you've noticed 13 and on, he talks about submitting to who in verse 13, be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be the emperor as supreme or to governors sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. What's interesting, this whole thing, he's saying do good, don't do evil. He actually brings in the government saying the government has a part in actually punishing those who do evil and praising those who do good.

And then he says, this is the will of God that by doing good, verse 15, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people, live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover up for evil. But living as servants of God, honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God and honor the emperor. I mean, he's writing to citizens of a country to honor the government.

Then in verses 18 and on, he talks about servants being subject to their masters. And then starting in chapter three, he talks to wives about being subject to their husbands. And if you look at chapter three, he says likewise, wives be subject to your own husbands so that even if some do not obey the word, how are they going to be won? Without a word, Peter's saying no.

With silence, you could have won them over. You could have convinced them. So those might be part of what's on Peter's mind.

I mean, you got situations where people are submitting to a wicked government and persecution's happening and you're told to honor the government. I mean, there's a tension there. So one clear possibility of how they might have been meddling was having a wrong view of honoring the emperor.

And maybe they're meddling in politics in a certain way that was actually a bad testimony. I mean, brethren, if you look at the news, there are certain groups or churches that get on the news for something in the political realm and you don't exactly read it if the article's rightly representing them. You don't exactly

read it and go away thinking, well, that's exactly what GCC should do.

You'd rather go away thinking, I don't think that was a battle for them to have fought. And what was the reason we shouldn't be overly consumed with politics, Peter said? Verse 11 of chapter two, because we're exiles. All right, this isn't our home.

This is not our home. One historian, he says, what could have this meddling have been to the original readers? He said, maybe they were censoring the behavior of outsiders on the basis of claims to a higher morality. They're basically being self-righteous and really being demeaning to the lost world.

Maybe they're interfering with family relationships. Maybe they're instigating domestic discontent and discord. Or maybe they were having tactless attempts at conversion.

They're being overly evangelistic to a point where it wasn't actually good. You know, I remember as a new Christian going downtown to street preach and they had the whole ghost tours, you know, and they're trying to find ghosts on the walls. And I thought it was a great idea to stand on the wall in front of them where they're pointing and just start yelling at them and preaching.

Now, no one threw a rock at me, but I look back and I say, I was meddling in something there. That was really lacking discernment in what I was doing. And if I would have got a rock thrown at my head, I don't come here and get credited at a prayer meeting.

I get rebuked for being stupid and how I was going about evangelism. You see, we need discernment here to recognize. And Peter knew something about suffering before the hands of the government, right? I mean, we know him very well from Acts 5. He makes the statement there, obey God rather than man.

But what was the issue that was happening? What were the government people saying to him not to do? They're strictly forbidding them to do what? Yeah, preaching and teaching that Jesus is the Christ. And that was an issue where you're going to obey God. You're going to obey God even if you suffer.

In verse 40, it says they were beaten, right? Same idea that Peter talks about being beaten. Peter knew he had been beaten. And it says they left rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

The dishonor they suffered was actually for the name of Christ. It wasn't for their arrogance. It was for an issue that was worth taking a stand on.

And we need the help of the Lord to be able to discern what those issues are. Because our testimony as Christians, this matters. I don't know how many of you remember when the brother from China, he was kicked out of China after what, 20 years? And he came here and we had a Q&A time, right? And Justin Flores asked him a question about a well-known pastor in China.

And he brought up a Chinese proverb. What Chinese proverb did he bring up? Anyone remember what he said? Don't throw rocks at the tiger. And you know, when that question was being asked, I heard on the audio as I was re-listening to this, he was praying, whispering, Lord, help me, Lord, help me.

He wanted to know, how do I respond in a way where I'm faithful but not critical of this man who's still in prison? That guy's still in prison. You could say, who am I to even talk about this guy? I'm just bringing him up because our missionary who also got interrogated and kicked out of the country, he said the man was

too provocative. He threw rocks at the tiger.

You understand? We could throw rocks at the tiger and get beaten for it and the fault's on us. Especially, you know, finding the right line of political involvement and all of that. I mean, that's not it.

I'm not saying that's easy and I'm not up here to declare all the answers on that. I'm just saying, believer, there are certain things like that, even with the government or other situations where you've got to be careful to not be the busybody who gets punched in the face and there's no credit for it. It was your foolishness that led to that.

Same thing for the person at work. Are you submitting to your masters with all respect? Verse 18, it's incredible. And he says, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust.

And same thing for a wife with a lost husband. Right, in those areas of submission, they tend to test us. We tend to get frustrated and boil over and want to lash out.

And if you lash out and it's sinful, guess what? You've hindered your testimony among those individuals. So, that could be part of what Peter is hitting on here when he makes these statements. Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

So imagine, you're getting this letter, you're hearing this from him, it's making you examine in your life, am I suffering as a Christian in a way where I should be ashamed? Or as Peter says, let him not be ashamed. Am I able to glorify God for whatever the reason is I'm getting persecuted? You know, the dino man would not pay all of his taxes and all of that. You didn't see all of that in the news 20 years ago and think that that was honoring to God.

You looked at that and you thought, what on earth are you having to battle over that with the government? You're totally hindering your ability as a Christian to make an impact for the Gospel. So, Peter's cautioning them about not meddling before the lost, but I want to kind of transition and think about us as Christians, us as believers. Obviously, if we don't want to respond like that in a time of persecution and suffering, how much more in a time where we're not facing that is it some characteristic that we need to hone and have right in our own heart.

So turn to John 21. Turn to John 21. Let's read and start in verse 19.

Actually, we should rewrite before that. Verse 18, and again, this is right after Christ has come and really restored Peter who had denied Him three times. And you see Him kind of restoring Peter back into going and serving and feeding the sheep.

And then He says in verse 18, "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." This He said to show by what kind of death He was to glorify God." They should tell me someone how they're going to die. After saying this, He said to him, and listen to these words, "Follow Me." Don't miss that.

"Follow Me." Verse 20, take out that heading in the ESV. Christ just says, "Follow Me." What's the very next thing that happens? I mean, who does that remind you of? "Follow Me," Peter turned." Who comes to your mind in the Bible? First person I thought about was Lot's wife. You know, go get out, turn back, right? I mean, it's kind of shocking.

The heading kind of messes you up as you read the flow. After saying this, He said to him, "'Follow Me,' Peter turned." I mean, you have a clear command, "'Follow Me, Peter.' Peter turned, he saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "'Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?' When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus." Jesus just told Peter, this is what I need you to do, follow Me, and look what Peter does. Peter said, "'Lord, what about this man?' Jesus said to him," how does Christ interpret what Peter said? "'If it's My will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.'" Clearly it's a rebuke.

And he's going back to saying the exact same thing he already said. He said, "'Follow Me,' and then he ends on, "'You follow Me.'" Right? So I think this is a classic example. I know Matt Tomlinson dealt with this in part years ago at the fellowship conference, but this is the Lord Jesus discerning something in a believer's attitude, that of being a meddler, that of being someone who is being a busybody, and He's dealing with it very specifically to Peter.

And you know what this really reminds you of? Who is the one Master that you and I have got to please? Christ, right? We got to follow Christ, and what do we find in Peter? The Lord wants us doing good, right? He doesn't have on that list, be overly concerned about all these other people. He's saying to you, you follow Me, you do good, I am the one Master who you must please. And there are tons of things in our lives that are trying to get in the way of us following Christ and pleasing Him as our one Master.

And just like Christians in a time of persecution might not recognize some of the things that are hindering them from being abundantly fruitful for Christ, so can us not in a time of persecution have the same subtle things enter into our lives that are actually hindering us in a great way. And I think one of those things can be this very thing. This concern we see from Peter, what about that person over there? And so I think this happens to Peter right after he's recently restored.

And that's kind of an odd, maybe it's an odd time, maybe it's not an odd time. I mean, he's trying to get out of the rut he fell into and then this happens and he gets reproofed again. Peter is just wrongly comparing himself to one another.

He's seeking information that is only on a need-to-know basis. He does not need to know what the Lord's will is for John. But he wants to know what it is.

And he wants to know to the point where he didn't just think it, he did what? He said it to Christ. I mean, there's some things you think in your mind, you know, I wonder what's going to happen with them. There's others who actually go and ask.

And imagine doing that right after you just had a command from the Lord Jesus Christ saying, follow me. And so he's already distracted in his following of Christ because he has this preoccupation of what is going to happen with John. Does this remind you of anything else some of the disciples said a lot earlier than this? Lord, who's going to sit on the right? Who's going to sit on the left? I mean, notice it's not following right now Christ overly distracted by things they should not be.

And look at his Christ's reproof, verse 22. If it is my will that he remain, what is that to you? You know what? Peter's wanting to know the Lord's will. Christian, there are times that you and I want to know the will of God.

We want to know it for ourselves. And the Lord doesn't give us a clear answer. And there's times you want to know the will of God for other people.

And you know what? You're kind of chalked up to. Lord, whatever your will is, I don't know what it is, but I'm going to do what? Follow you and trust. I mean, the Lord might be saying that to you.

You know, if it's my will that I let this into your life, Christian, just follow me. Don't look at it as a deal breaker in following me. And so Jesus in a way is telling Peter, this is none of your business.

Your business is to follow me. Your business is to not follow John and be overly concerned about what's happening in his life. And by Peter doing that, whose will is he ultimately neglecting? He's neglecting the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Right there at that moment, he's about his own will, not the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know where the Lord's going to take us at times? Look at verse 19. He said to show by what kind of death he was going to go.

Or sorry, right there, verse 18, the end of it. He says, you will stretch out your hands, another will dress you and carry you to where you do not want to go. I mean, there's times, Christian, you're going to get carried to a place you don't want to go.

It wasn't in your plans that this was going to happen, but it was in the will and the plans of the Lord. So there's things that we've got to realize. Oh, what is it to me? I mean, look, ask yourself, what things right now that maybe at this point, you've kind of dismissed it and you thought, well, that's no way.

That might have been what people in 1 Peter were doing. They're thinking that can't apply. I'm just asking you, search me, oh God, and try my heart.

Lord, are there things in my life right now where I should actually look at that and say, what is that to me? And stop investing time, energy, thoughts, Google searches into whatever that is. Because it doesn't matter. It's irrelevant to me.

It doesn't matter for me in following Christ. It's actually getting in the way of me following Christ. I don't need to be on the end.

I need to be in with Christ and following Him. It's preventing me from even doing good. I mean, Peter keeps talking about do good.

Do good. Suffer. Do good.

I'm not actually now doing good as much as I am concerned about that, whatever that might be. And brethren, in the midst of trying to personally follow Christ, even when His will is so clearly revealed like it was as Jesus revealed it to Peter, even then, you and I can get distracted right away. I mean, the Lord literally gives you command.

Follow me. Five seconds later, you and I are already out of the picture and going in the wrong direction. That happened to Peter.

And that could happen to us. And we don't even realize it. We don't have Christ there rebuking us.

We have His Spirit convicting us, I hope. You know, it's interesting, right? Peter was concerned about the Lord's treatment of another Christian. He was concerned.

Lord, how are you treating this other Christian? And who does it sound like had an easier path? Peter or John? John. It sounds like John has an easier path. But Jesus doesn't really tell him everything, right? But the way he answers, he's not giving that information to Peter.

Look, the Lord's treatment of another Christian, even giving them an easier path, should not affect our present obedience to the Lord. We should rather look and say, you know what, this is the Lord's will for my life. I'm going to rejoice in that.

I'm not going to fight that. And we've got to individually obey the call for our life to follow Christ. We have to destroy the comparison game.

Individually in the church, even churches to churches. I mean, you know, this other church is doing this. Not that there aren't things to glean, but often all of that could even lead us to say to not be doing the good we could be doing.

And we need to look and say, you know, what is that to us? This is what the Lord has called us to do. Let's go do this faithfully. You know, you're the single person and you see another person is getting married and you say to the Lord, well, Lord, you're going to give them a spouse.

What about me? What does Jesus say to you? What is that to you? You follow me. Even if you never get married, even if this never happens, follow me. You know, other Christians could distract you from fully following the Lord.

You understand? There can be this comparison game. Reminded me of that track called Others May, You Cannot. He just beautifully describes how there's certain Christians the Lord actually takes and He kind of hides you away and He prunes you a lot and He's preparing you for something later on.

And you could be discontent with that lot in the present, not seeing what eventually God's going to bring about. Think about, I mean, in sports, right? I mean, I don't know how many of you play, if you play basketball, I mean, you're on a team with 10 players. How many players are on the court? Five.

And that coach is treating you differently than some of the other players. You know that feeling like, why am I not getting that opportunity? That same thing can happen in the church. It can happen with Christians.

And the Lord is saying, what is that to you? If I designed you to do this in this way, you do it as best as you can. Martha in Luke 10, she's judging her own sister there. You could say meddling and being a busybody, not just being faithful with what she's doing, but she's distracted by her sister.

So you can see from 1 Peter and John 21, Christ wants you and me following Him. And He wants us doing good. And He wants us to, we're going to look at our lives.

We're going to see things where we got to say, what is that to me? It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. Many of you know this well-known proverb, Proverbs 26, 17, whoever meddles in a quarrel, not his own, is like what? One who takes a passing dog, and it has the word dog, but the word, it's basically a wild stray.

You take the wild stray by the ears. And what do you think happens to the person who takes that wild stray by the ears? That, I mean, he's going to get bitten. Same thing.

I mean, we become meddlers in things that do not matter to us. You can end up getting hurt. Why do we end up meddling? Why do we end up being busybodies? Why do we have this sinful curiosity that happens? I mean, part of it is you kind of want to know everything, right? There's like this carnal curiosity that you want to have all these details.

Or maybe it's this lust to interfere by doing something. But you're not going to gain anything by getting involved and interfering. You're only going to damage relationships and do hurt.

Sometimes it's a wrong idea if we're just trying to help. Well, help what? What were those in Romans 14 you could say? They're trying to help too. What were they trying to help people do? Help people do things our way, right? There are these people in the church, their views on the days and the foods.

Yeah, they don't have the same views as me. So I'm going to get involved in that to get them doing my way. Is this my way or the highway, right? I mean, you got that type of control.

This spiritual pride about your perspectives where you feel like everyone's got to have the exact same view as you on a certain matter and you're not going to rest until that happens. And Christ is saying, look at that, you're not busy following Me. Maybe it's you want to be involved in experiencing something and God's not providentially opened the door, so you go kick the door down.

You know who did that? King Uzziah. It was not his place to offer incense in the temple and he didn't care. He got involved in business that was not his and God struck the man with leprosy even after all those years of being faithful.

What's another reason we end up meddling? The Bible says, because you don't have a job. You're not working. You're lazy.

That can lead to that. 1 Thessalonians, he talks about aspiring to live a quiet life, to mind your own affairs. 2 Thessalonians 3, he says, we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies, right? And that's what they're busy doing.

And the internet has made it all the easier to be doing that. 1 Timothy 5, 13, he talks about young widows here. Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house and not only idlers, but also, and here's something that goes hand in hand with being a busybody, gossips.

And busybodies saying what they should not say, right? And he goes on to say they should manage their home, but they're too busy managing all these other people and all these different affairs that have nothing directly connected to them. Brethren, this is like so common in our own culture right now. Being a busybody, this is very common.

The internet, the news, it just creates this culture of gossip, a culture of having instant access at your fingertips to all sorts of information that you have absolutely no reason to even know about. And it's kind of the joke that you can spend 10 hours on YouTube, or you could spend 1,000 hours on YouTube. I mean, you could spend forever on YouTube watching curious videos that interest you.

I mean, we have websites like that. They just feed the curiosity like a fire hose. There's even these Christian so-called news sites.

They're all speaking of the latest scandal in Christendom. And they have click-bait titles of new trash on John MacArthur, right? I mean, MacArthur, they're just livid against MacArthur right now. And you know what? What if you see that on your Facebook? You're going to click on that? You're going to, oh, it's dealing with something happened 20 years ago in his church.

Oh man, you know, this is my business, right? Well, if I click on that, I'm really going to get a clear perspective. I mean, they probably got both sides. It's probably not a biased news article, right? No, that's often not the case.

People are writing about local church matters from 20 years ago that don't concern them at all. And they get thousands and thousands of people reading it when they had no business knowing any of the information. The whole thing's under the banner of investigative journalism, when they're only giving one side of the story and they're leaving things out.

And you go and read that and it affects your mind. You know, I know some here who read some of the garbage on the internet about MacArthur and it affected your mind, right? It affects your mind. The way they present it and they make it sound.

Is this person doing a public service to the church by writing those articles? No, they're not. They're doing a disservice by creating disunity. And it's not praiseworthy conduct.

They're digging for dirt and it's sowing discord, right? They gotta go do good, but they're not. So you can have misguided criticism of another church in a ministry when it's none of your business to stand as the judge. I mean, I remember that as a new Christian, someone asked me about someone else and I was just quick to just throw them under the bus.

And then they said, well, give me all your specific reasons. And I realized I didn't have a whole lot of real good specific reasons I could say. I could just kind of say, well, I read this and I heard this and that came through the grapevine.

And I mean, you all of a sudden feel ashamed that you spoke so ill of that person. As one said, the busybodies have begun to infect American society with a nasty intolerance. They zeal to police the private lives of others and hammer them into standard forms.

But some, they find a real enjoyment being involved in the matters of everyone else. They love to get embroiled in controversy. And you know what? It shouldn't surprise us because Proverbs 18, eight says, the words of a whisperer are like what? Delicious morsels.

They go down into the inner parts of the body. So when you see that thumbnail, that's none of your business to click on it and you feel like you want to eat it, the Bible says that's exactly what happens. It's a juicy morsel.

It's just sitting right there. And so all you got to do is click on it. It doesn't really matter to me.

And it's a local church matter from 20 years ago. I don't want to read it. It's not going to affect my mind.

I mean, look at the end of John 21. You want to think things can't spread and go viral and affect you and start the rumor mill. I mean, John 21 is a classic example of the rumor mill.

I did not, I stopped where we were reading, but look at this. Look at it. I mean, Christ is in rebuking Peter, says to him, you know, if it's my will that he should remain until I come, what is that to you? Meaning, I'm not going to tell you Peter what I'm going to do with him.

What I'm telling you is to follow me. Well, people overheard this interaction and look what they did with it. Verse 23.

So the same spread among the brothers that this disciple was not to die. That Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die. But he said, if it's my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Isn't that incredible? Just one statement that he makes just spreads.

And there are church historians that would say even in 500 AD, after Christ died, there were still people stating this. Still people saying that he's alive and he's somewhere out there because Jesus said this. That is not helpful.

I mean, you know what? This personal rebuke of Christ to Peter, you go meddle in that and you go take it and you put just a little twist on it. 500 years later, it's still spreading around. Do you think that was helping the persecuted church when they had people going around saying, well, John is still alive and he's out there somewhere? No, they sounded crazy.

So they misunderstood Jesus' words. I mean, people say, you know, I heard it through the grapevine in the church. This is what I think about.

This is the grapevine. You see what type of fruit the grapevine might produce? You got to be careful to eat it. So brethren, I mean, are we busy doing good? Busy following Christ? What is Christ said to you when he says, follow me? Is that what your focus is in your life right now? Or how much, look, just one clear application, brethren.

How much time have you wasted on the internet consuming information that you simply did not need to know, but you went and you ate that information because it was right there at the click of your mouse. And to tie into my message from recently about Scripture memory, take all the time being a busy body and being involved in that which didn't matter you, invest all that time into Scripture memory, and you're going to come out a winner because you made that decision to put the Word of God first. And it is the will of God that you delight in his law day and night and you meditate on it.

It's not the will of God that you go and meditate on all the juicy morsel articles on the internet. And brethren, I'm preaching this to myself. That same temptation of some of those juicy morsels, I feel it.

There's time I've wasted looking into stuff. It's irrelevant to me, to my family, to the life of the church. It's like, why did I click on that thing and read? I mean, have you guys ever had that happen? You got any regrets as you're hearing some of this? You know, Christ sets a good example.

People tried to pull them in. Luke 12, don't turn there, but someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But he said to him, Man, who made me a judge or arbiter? That's the word from Job 9. Arbiter over you.

Who made me a judge? Let them end it as they began it between themselves. It's like, people wanted to pull Christ into something. He's like, that's not my business.

I'm not going to get yanked into that. Oh, if we would learn from that, brethren. Another thought here.

What about those who fail? Let's think of the reverse for a moment. You could be failing to be involved in something that does warrant your involvement, right? You can flip this thing on its head. You know, one of the definitions was you're trying to oversee others' affairs.

Well, if there's affairs that you should be overseeing, you want to be responsible to those very things and to not be busy doing what you should be doing, that's not commendable, obviously. I mean, you could get into a lot of examples there. I mean, in Galatians 6, it talks about restoring the one who strays and has fallen into sin.

If you recognize a brother or sister has gone into sin, you're called to go restore them with a spirit of gentleness. You're to be busy doing that. You're not to neglect that and say, it's going to be someone else's job.

1 John 5, you know, if anyone sees his brother in need and he closes his heart, how does the love of God abide in him? Well, I don't want to be busy. No, that's something you should be busy doing. So what good should I be doing? Is that even on my radar? Or is there this consumption of information that just is irrelevant for me? You know what? You think of this.

You know who's really busy and involved in overseeing our affairs? Christ, right? I mean, if Christ, I don't want to, meddler is not the right word, but you get what I'm saying. I mean, if He didn't get involved in our affair, we would all be in hell. And so praise the Lord.

And you don't want to accuse the Lord of something like in Romans 9. You know, you'll say, why does He find fault? Who can resist His will? And He says, but who are you, old man, to answer back to God? Well, what does moldage say to its molder? Why have you made me like this? I mean, there's certain truths about the Lord that they're so vast, they're so deep, you just kind of have to shut your mouth and say, you know what? That's a secret thing of God that I'm not going to know. And I'm not going to meddle into it. I'm not going to get into some thing where I become too philosophical and I go off into some deep end and overthink things in a way that the Bible doesn't present it.

I mean, there can be a danger there. You can meddle in the things of God in a way that's not right. And sure, there's some who aren't diving deep enough into the things of God.

I realize you've got two ditches, one on each side of the road. So brethren, who are you following? If you're not following Christ and you're here today, He invites you to leave the rumors of the world, invites you to leave the gossip and embrace His truth. And it's not some juicy morsel that's going to satisfy your sinful curiosity.

It's the bread of life that will satisfy your soul. And He's not trying to trick you. There's no fine print at the end of the article.

He says to come as you are as a burdened sinner and He will pardon and forgive you of all of that. And children, you should think of this specifically because one of the primary things I've started to see more and more in different children, even in this church, is especially the older ones. They can have this

domineering attitude where they're like the parent over all their younger siblings and all that their younger siblings do becomes their business.

Not that there aren't times the parents asking the child to report things, but they just become this controlling busybody. Christ is calling you to follow Him. Now go follow your brothers and sisters around and point everything that's wrong in their life.

What about what's wrong in your own life? Follow Christ. So you can see 1 Peter, John 21, Christ wants us following Him and doing good. This is all about following the one Master.

If that's what's before your eyes, I have one Master, I'm going to follow Him. And if that's what's daily there and you're seeking to do good and you're committing things to the Lord, the Lord's going to help prevent you from going and being involved in things that are none of your business, that are going to consume and waste your time. Be busy for Christ.

Be busy for Christ. Well, that's what I wanted to share. It stood out to me this week.

I was first thinking of John 21, just seeing Christ rebuke Peter and then just realizing, wow, Peter, the same man, years later, he writes right there in his own letter to not suffer as a busybody. That just hit me. He put that right next to murder and evildoer and a thief.

When there's certain conduct that is considered respectable, that we should abhor more than we do right now in the present. Let's pray. Father, Lord, I pray You'd help us to apply this.

Lord, however it should be applied in our lives. Lord, I realize going into this, Lord, I feel even with the church, getting these words from Peter, Lord, there's so many ways we don't see at times how this is lived out in our life, Lord, where we fall into being a gossip or a busybody. Lord, we just don't see it.

And Lord, You're able to make us see those areas, Father. You're able to make it loud and clear, those words of Your Son saying to us, what is that to You? You follow me. And so Lord, we do.

We wanna follow You. We wanna be all about doing good and honoring You. And so Lord, I pray You'd help us to do that.

Father, help it to be said of us that we are people who do good. And Lord, that if one day we face persecution and Lord, we've gotta make different decisions, Lord, even like that pastor in China, Lord, we don't wanna wrongly throw rocks at the tiger and help us to discern what's the right rock to throw or what's one wrong rock. That's a provocative act that isn't honoring to You.

Lord, I pray for that man. Lord, I think he's got seven more years there in prison. Lord, we're not in his shoes.

I'm not in his shoes. Andy wasn't in his shoes, but Lord, we pray You'd endure that Chinese man and preserve him in the midst of what he's facing. Lord, help us to be salt and light.

Lord, help us to not cross lines that we shouldn't in the area of government and work. Lord, give us discernment on what to say and what not to say. And Lord, help us in the church.

Lord, we're called to bear one another's burdens and be our brother's keeper in one way. Lord, in yet another way, we're called at times to leave one another alone in certain respects. Lord, where we stick our

nose in the things that aren't our business.

Lord, this isn't all abundantly clear on what is what at times. And so Father, I'm just asking that You would work out this truth. Lord, in my life and in these brethren's lives, Lord, You know how to apply this to where we need it.

And so Lord, I'm trusting You will do that, Father, through Your Holy Spirit. Lord, that came to convict us of sin, unrighteousness, unbelief, and the judgment. Lord, would You search our hearts and guide us and help us to be all the more following You.

Please, Lord, help us to do that. In Jesus' name, amen.

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