

Power From on High - Part 2

by Michael L. Brown

Michael L. Brown emphasizes the importance of continual cleansing, quick repentance, and living a life that pleases God amidst the challenges of sin in the world.

Duration: 45:02

Scripture: Psalm 95:1-2, Psalm 95:7-8, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:1

Topics: "Holy Living", "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a holy and righteous life as a child of God. He warns against being entertained by sinful habits and urges listeners to deal with recurring sinful patterns ruthlessly. The speaker shares a personal story from his high school days during the Woodstock era, highlighting the prevalent anti-establishment and rebellious mindset of the time. He encourages listeners to read the book of Ephesians, particularly chapters 4 and 5, to understand what a consecrated life looks like. The speaker also emphasizes the need to take any recurrence of sinful habits seriously and make efforts to purge sin from one's life.

Transcript

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. The truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar.

His word is not in us. Here's the wonderful, awesome thing I want you to consider. First John 1-7.

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. I have a question for you. If you are walking in the light, why do you need cleansing from sin? If you are walking in the light, why do you need to be washed? Because your feet get dirty.

No matter how closely you walk to Jesus, you will never be 100%, 24 hours of every day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, totally, absolutely, completely sin-free. And if you think you are, then you have the sin of self-righteousness. It's one thing when we talk in the revival about being free from sin, we're talking about not being under the slavery of sin, not sinning habitually, free to do the will of God, slaves of righteousness.

But has anybody here sinned so far in 1998? Anybody sinned since you've been in Pensacola? Before a revival meeting? Understand the difference between being bathed and having your feet washed. You don't need to get saved again every time you bow. You don't need to get baptized again every time you think a wrong thought.

You're saved, you're cleansed, you're washed, you're pronounced righteous in the sight of God. Now if you're truly saved, you're going to live differently. If six months later you're still sleeping around, robbing banks and getting high, just do one simple thing, quit calling yourself saved, because you're not.

And the gates of heaven will be shut against such a one. Otherwise, heaven would not be heaven. And the blood of Jesus wouldn't change anything.

But you've got to recognize in this world, there's pollution. It's not an excuse for sin. If you're looking for an excuse for sin, I question if you're saved.

If you're looking for an excuse for sin, I question whether you really know Jesus. If you're trying to see, how can I find the way to sin and get away with it, then how can you say Jesus is your Lord? God is your Father. Heaven is your home.

The Holy Spirit dwells within you. Something's wrong with that picture. Amen? But in this world, there's pollution.

In this world, you get your feet dirty. I could ask men in here, how many of you are living sexually pure lives? Raise your hand. Are you living in adultery with another woman? No.

Are you living in sexual fantasy? No. Are you downloading pornography on the internet? No. Are you watching unclean movies, reading pornography? No.

Have you had a lustful thought in the last month? Maybe. Maybe that's how. Maybe somebody glanced at something and looked away, but maybe there was that split second.

A slight disobedience. Your feet got dirty. Lord, wash me.

Cleanse me. And you keep going. You don't go into the office and get saved again.

God puts his finger on an area of your life that's been habitual junk and unclean. Yes, run to these offices and get right. Probably the number one group of people coming forward each night consists of believers that have not been living close to the Lord.

And then the number two group would be the backsliders, and the number three group, those who are brand new first-time converts. And they'll all be mixed here at the altars every night. But here and there, somebody will be coming up, just because every time they think something wrong, I've got to go to the altar again, I've got to go through this process again.

Lord, I'm sorry for that. I turn, and you keep going. Lord, I spoke evil.

I judged that person. Those words I spoke were not kind. Forgive me.

Cleanse me. And you keep going. You keep going.

In fact, you can have your feet washed continually through the day. Repentance and cleansing are continual processes through the day, through our lives. Number five.

Understand the difference between weakness and wickedness. Understand the difference between weakness and wickedness. I want to be careful here.

I've only addressed this subject a few times in settings like this. So I want to be very careful when I speak about this. Understanding the difference between weakness and wickedness.

There are some people who simply do not care. If you find in your heart, so what? What are you going to tell me I can't watch pornography? Oh, you're going to put your standards on me. That's wickedness.

Do what I want. I'm a salesman. If I want to tell a story to make a sale, I'll tell a story to make a sale.

You're not going to tell me how to make a living. That's wickedness. The salesman says, you know, I'm trying to be godly and do what's right.

Oh, exaggeration slipped out. God, I'm going to call that person and tell them I exaggerated and did it right and live right. That's wickedness.

Lord, I can't believe it. I saw that joke on television. All right, Lord, that's it.

I've got to get rid of the TV. That's wickedness. One thing is an attitude which is indifferent to sin or embraces sin.

Another is an attitude that hates sin but struggles. Now listen. To the weak, God says, be strong.

There is a place of overcoming obedience and victory in the war. I don't know who said this before, Jerry Bridges, but it was the author Jerry Bridges who made the distinction between victory and defeat and said, maybe instead of thinking just of victory and defeat in the Christian's life, we should think of obedience and disobedience. You know, you make a whole lot of excuses saying, I'm just defeated.

He said, maybe we should look at it as, I'm disobedient. Don't put it on somebody else. Put it on yourself.

But in point of fact, God will look at you differently if you are earnestly crying out to change and in the process of altering your whole lifestyle and along the way you slip up. You get saved at these altars. You truly cry out to God.

You know, you throw your needles out. December 17th of 1971, I took all the drugs in my home. I took the needles and I just threw them over a bridge.

Got rid of it. No more heroin. No more cocaine.

Goodbye. Maybe you do that. Maybe you say, Lord, I'll never have to have a cigarette again.

And I'll never do this again. And one week later you come under stress and you smoke a cigarette. God, I can't believe it.

Hey, God also sees the fact that for the last 20 years you've been a heroin addict and you're not anymore. And the last 20 years you've been smoking three packs a day and you're not anymore. And the last 20 years you've been sleeping around with whoever you want and now you're keeping your body pure.

He sees that. You smoke that cigarette and you feel convicted over it and he gives you grace and helps you. Hey, you never smoked another cigarette.

There was a little weakness there. Before that time, before you were converted, there was wickedness. God sees the difference.

And the proof is, if you are growing and moving forward and putting sin behind you, then there's not wickedness. If you are embracing sin and walking in it and hardening yourself to the conviction of God, that's a terrible danger sign. To the weak, God says, be strong.

To the wicked, he says, repent. Do you understand the difference? It is not an excuse. It has to do with understanding God's attitude towards something.

Number six. Now, up to now, these have been the nice things. The pleasant things.

Now that we have helped you not be condemned, now I can get a little bit more ruthless. Is that okay? Is everybody ready? Everybody realize that if you're saved, you're not condemned? There's no condemnation in Jesus? Amen? Okay, good. Number six.

A lifetime of problems just evaporated in an hour. Number six. Be careful to please the Lord.

Be quick to respond to his voice. Be quick to repent. Be careful to please the Lord.

You want to overcome condemnation once you understand what it is and what it is not. And there are also things that you must do in your own life so that you can know the smile and favor of God. Be quick to respond to his voice.

Be quick to repent. Psalm 95 starts off with wonderful words. You know, pray, sing to the Lord.

Joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Yes, hallelujah. Oh, he's our God, he's our shepherd.

And it ends with judgment. Right in the middle is the turning point. Right in the middle of that psalm.

Today, if you hear his voice, don't harden your heart. You harden your heart once, it's easier to harden it the next time. You harden your heart once, you're not as sensitive the next time around.

You don't hear as clearly. Your perspective is skewed. Today, if you hear his voice, you may not hear his voice tomorrow.

Let me share something that may bring a little sobriety to some of you. I got saved in 71. I started preaching in 73 when I was 18.

All I wanted to do was preach and minister. Started college that same year. A few years into college, Nancy and I got married.

A year and a half after that, a little less than that, we had our first child just as I was graduating from college. A lot of things had happened, married, family now. I was getting more and more into studies.

And instead of studies being a tool by which I could better serve God, they were, little by little, becoming an idol in my life. And I remember so distinctly in the summer of 1977, as I was getting out of college, I felt the Lord challenge me, preach the word. And I knew what it meant.

I knew it meant resistance and rejection and misunderstanding. I knew it meant unpopular stance. I knew what the Spirit was saying to me.

And I knew that he was making it clear to me what I had to do with my life. And I wrestled with it because I thought, well, I'm supposed to go primarily into scholarship and not into the ministry of this kind. Because my heart had changed over the years in college.

Less and less time intimate with God and more and more time just filling my head with things that should have been head and heart together, but instead it would be a separation. And I preached a good message called Preach the Word. Instead of taking it to my own heart, I preached it to others.

Be careful of that if you're in ministry. God speaks to you about something, you just get up and share it with others instead of digesting it first. And after I preached it, I kind of lost sight of it, and then I went on with my graduate studies.

I got my master's degree, had all these grants from New York University. I was finishing up my Ph.D. work, taking my last classes. I was working on beginning my doctoral dissertation and so on, the top of my class and all this.

Five years went by. Five years. And God spoke to me again.

Five years. You say, well, during that five years, wasn't the gentle voice of the Lord reminding you, reminding you? Nope. Nope.

If it was, I didn't hear it. So there was a process of time in my life where little by little by little by little by little by little I turned from some of the areas of God's calling in my life, and little by little by little by little by little I gave myself to something else, and it spoke to me. And I knew what he was saying, and I didn't hear it.

I believe God would have had me go on with my studies because he's called me to do certain things. He's called me to work in scholarly circles. He's called me to teach in certain levels.

He's called me to certain positions. And the understanding I gained from my studies, it's all valuable. And my ministry to the Jewish people and debating rabbis and so on.

But it became an idol. And I had to die to that idol so I could fulfill what God called me to do. And if it meant lecturing in a seminary one week and then preaching to unreached people in India the next week, wonderful.

And if it meant being rejected and spat on for the gospel instead of being applauded after delivering a scholarly paper, wonderful. But it was five years before God began to deal with me about that again. Summer of 77 to early 1982.

And when he began to deal with me, I could not believe it. Five years seemed a lot longer then. You know, a lot of years had gone by since then, but it seemed like a long stretch of life.

And I could not believe it. I could not believe it. Boy, how could it be that I was not right in the center of your will with my heart and soul and mind and strength? Five years as a believer, active in the Lord, serving him, bearing fruit.

But five years not heeding his voice in a specific area. That puts the fear of God into you. God may deal with you about a certain sin.

Put that down. You know, out of the blue, someone starts to preach on it. Out of the blue, someone comes to talk to you about something.

Out of the blue, you put on the radio, it's being dealt with. God's saying, I'm telling you again, deal with it. Friend, be quick to respond.

Be quick to hear his voice. Don't let hardness creep in. Hardness in the heart of a believer is one of the ugliest things.

There's a strength and a firmness in God where we will not be moved. But there's a sinful hardness, an insensitivity. If you notice there are things in your life now that God convicted you of in the past, but there's no conviction anymore.

Danger, danger, danger. If you know there are standards that you once held when you were intimate with God, and now that you're not as close to them, you don't hold to those standards anymore, don't think you've grown and matured and got wiser. Examine the distinct possibility that you've maxed with.

Be careful to please the Lord. In every area of your life, strive to please Him. Is that bondage for a child of God? Is that a negative thing to live to please Jesus? Is it a negative thing to live your life so as to bear fruit for God? Is it a negative thing to live your life so that the Father is smiling on you? Is that negative, or is that the privilege of all privileges? And what better life to live than a life that pleases Him? How could you possibly be more personally blessed long term than by pleasing Him? Be careful.

Look for spots. Look for blemishes. And when they occur, be quick to deal with them.

Be like a woman's got her wedding dress. She knows she's getting married, but she's going to make sure that thing is kept clean and nice. I can't believe the stain.

We've got to get the stain out. Why? Because it's wedding day. Not because, oh no, if there's a stain, I'll be condemned.

No, no, no. That thought doesn't answer. Oh no, there's a stain, but I'm getting married.

That thought doesn't answer. Because we're getting married, I can't believe there's a stain. Got to deal with it.

Got to fix it. That's how you live before the Lord. Be careful to please Him.

Paul writes at length that if you want to do some devotional reading today, get on your knees along with God. Read the book of Ephesians. If that's a big chunk to read in one stretch, read chapters four and five.

Just on your knees before the Lord. As you get to the end of the fourth chapter and through the fifth chapter, and if you keep going to the sixth, you really see what a consecrated life looks like. There was something I did in my early years in the Lord that I would love to recover on a regular basis in my life.

I'm not just going to put it on myself in a way that's legalistic. But I would love to recover this in my life. I memorized a lot of scripture.

Even early on in the Lord, I had memorized thousands of verses. When I would pray at night, I would go over verses. I'd be praying in tongues late at night, and God gave me grace.

My mind was fried with drugs. But when God saved me, my mind got cleared up. After I got the drugs out of my system, it took about a month for my head to get clear.

Then I started reading the Word seriously, because I'd been very undisciplined before I was saved. I was 16, 17, 18. I had a six-month stretch where God gave me the grace and discipline to memorize 20 verses every single day.

In six months, I'd memorized 3,600 verses or something. I was constantly just moving in the Word. Of course, that's a good foundation to build on for the rest of your life and a wonderful blessing.

You continue to build on that through the years. But I'd go to sleep at night. Before I'd go to sleep, the Word was just running through my head, running through my heart.

I would just pray through key passages. I'd pray out loud from memory, but it's just as good with the Bible open in front of you. It doesn't have to be memorized.

To do this, I'd pray through 1 Corinthians 13 and the qualities of love, that these would be worked out in my life. I'd pray through 2 Peter 1 and the qualities that we would add to our own lives and pray over each one that God would work this more deeply in my heart and my character. Then I'd pray over myself from head to toe, that the thoughts that I thought would be pleasing to the Lord, the things I heard would glorify Him.

There was this comprehensive bringing of my life before God that I could just be a pleasing sacrifice. I seek to live like that through the years, but that prayerful process of doing that, I don't know how long I did it for, but it was something that helped build other foundations in my life. If you struggle, just as an aside here, if you struggle with getting deeper in the Word, if you struggle with devotional life, try reading the Word on your knees and praying over what you read as you do it.

It'll be a great help to you. Keep reading. Do your rapid reading where you're just going through the Word and reading a few chapters at a time.

But also take some passages, maybe go back over one of those, or something else you're reading through. Maybe it's just one book, and you read it through. You're in leadership, you're young, and you're just reading through 1 and 2 Timothy, and through Titus, and you're on your knees, and, Lord, it seems impossible.

I don't understand what you mean there, Father. Lord, it's been five years, and I keep making those same mistakes in ministry. You pray the thing through.

You talk to the Lord over it. There's a depth, there's a richness that comes out of it. Look at your whole life like that.

Let it be fine-tuned. Be careful to please Him. Let your life be sweet-sounding in the ears of God as opposed to being disharmonious and disjointed, noise.

Number seven, take any recurrence of sinful habits seriously. Take any recurrence of sinful habits seriously. Demonstrate your commitment to live right before God.

Make efforts to purge sin out of your life. You know, when you are maybe gaining a little weight, you say, wait, wait a second. You know, this outfit doesn't fit the way it used to.

Boy, this thing used to be real loose on me. Now it's kind of snug. That's a warning sign.

And you look at it, and you say, okay, I've got to do something about that. I'm going to have to cut this out of my... You know, this is clear. Something's wrong.

You know, since I've been involved in revival, I've found it very difficult to exercise regularly like I would like to, and that's helped me to put a little weight on. I've taken just a little bit of it off. But this morning, when I was putting a shirt on, I went and took an old shirt that was kind of tight when I first got down to revival and put it on, and it was tighter, just to remind myself I've got a long ways to go.

You know, to say, okay, be encouraged. You're going in the right direction, but don't be too encouraged. You have to have warning signs in your own life.

You say, man, you know, it's not just one time that I lost my temper. In a year, I've lost my temper four times seriously in the last month. Danger sign.

Danger sign. You say, well, I thought you said I'm not condemned. I'm telling you, because you are a child of God, be careful to please Him.

Because you are a child of God, don't play games with sin, because a child of God, contrary to what some may teach, I remain as convinced as ever through the Word, a child of God can ultimately turn his or her back on God and forfeit their salvation and ultimately be condemned. And that's why the Word is so full of warnings to believers as to how to live and the consequences of sin. That's why Jesus said, if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.

He's talking metaphorically there to tell us how urgently important it is. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It's better to go to heaven named than to go to hell with both hands.

In other words, your sin could cost you heaven. Paul warns, I mentioned the passages before, 1 Corinthians 6, don't be deceived, the wicked do not inherit the kingdom of God. You live like this, like this, like this, you're an adulterer, you're homosexual, you're greedy, you're a drunkard, you're not getting in the kingdom of God.

Period. He says that's how some of you were. But now you're washed, now you're justified, sanctified by the blood of Jesus, by the Spirit of God.

The work's been done. You are not that person anymore. But you need to flee sin.

You need to flee uncleanness because you are a child of God. If you see something recurring in your life, danger. Boy, I was flipping the channels, I had no idea this thing came out of the hotel.

It was like, and I shut it in so I couldn't believe it. That's one thing. Be careful next time.

That's another thing to say, man, I can't wait to get away on these business trips so I can watch that stuff. Danger. Danger.

You are just about to take a step from which you may not return for a long time. Danger. Take any pattern, any recurrence of sinful habits seriously.

When you see warning signs, that may be the time, man, I've got to separate myself from fasting and prayer. I need to seriously get help. Something is wrong here.

Take it seriously, friend. Hebrews warns us over and over that we must continue steadfast in faith to the end. It warns us, do not allow yourself to have a sinful and unbelieving heart in departing from the living God.

If hardness is set in, take that seriously and repent before God and stay on your knees until you're free. And be ruthless with yourself. I would rather go too far for the sake of holiness than give sin a foothold in my life.

Open the door because I'm too casual with sin. I would rather God says to me, when you get to heaven, you're a little too strict in these areas. You know, it wouldn't have been a problem if you had watched Bambi.

You know, it wasn't wrong, you know. You didn't want to watch anything, you know, because it was Hollywood. You know, you didn't have to be quite that strict.

You know, he looks at one of his daughters and he says, you know what, you didn't quite have to wear, you know, your dress down touching the floor. You know, those ankle length ones were really fine. You know, you didn't have to, you're a little too strict.

I would rather that God said something like that to me than he said, you fool. Was it worth forfeiting heaven, you know, to watch all those sexually unclean movies? You know, looks at someone that used to be his daughter but now is a seductress walking around and, you know, the most ungodly outfit possible so that men will lust after her and go to bed with her. Was it worth it? The object of lust and to have a little sexual pleasure, was it worth it? I would rather God says you're a little too strict.

If you're going to make a mistake, you know, if there's an earthquake here and the ground is breaking and people are falling in, I'd rather run all the way to the end of the building even if I was perfectly safe over here. You know, I'd rather run than stand and say, I wonder if I'm going to get sucked into the hole and there I go. You know, for some believers, it's a strange mentality.

How far out can I go without being drowned? How much poison can I drink without dying? Well, that movie's not that bad. You know, it's, you know, it's, the main plot, the sexual scenes are not part of the main plot and I, I can do all I want. What are you doing? As a child of God, a blood-washed saint.

If Jesus had to die for the sins that you are watching, then you don't want to watch that. I'm talking about being entertained by it. It's one thing if you're watching a war documentary and yes, there was sin in the war and you're watching a war documentary.

It's another thing if you're being entertained by violence. Watch your life and if there's any pattern of recurring sinful habits, deal with it ruthlessly. Let the alarms go off.

I remember back to my high school days and see, when I got saved, we, I'll just tell you the story. Can I tell you a quick story? Is that alright? How many say I can't? Tough. When I got saved, it was, it was the, you

know, the scene in the late 60s, the early 70s, the Woodstock era, you know, cast off authority, age of Aquarius, do your own thing, you know, anti-establishment, riots on the college campuses.

That was the, the backdrop. So, in our high school, we had some quote radicals. We had one lady whose boyfriend was a Black Panther.

He wasn't in the school, but she was. She was a white girl. He had a white mother and a black father and he had this huge afro, even though his skin was kind of light complexion, you know, he was, he was one of the cooler guys.

And, our school started to crack down because kids were out in the hallways too much and there was too much disruption. So they said, to even go to the bathroom in the hallway, you need a pass now. You know, if you're going to, if you're going to get up during class and walk down the hallway to go to the bathroom, you need a pass from the teacher and, you know, we've got to cut down.

So, some of the students really got upset with it. And this was my drug days and all this and we were just living loose, sinful lives, playing in my rock band with my friends and this, the party life was it. So we decided we were going to protest.

There are too many rules. There are a bunch of others too, but it was that, you know, passes for the hallway thing that got to everybody. So we decided to protest.

And, we all gathered. The whole school, the whole student body, everybody gathered in the, in the corner of the school, you know, down the hallways. We're not going to class today and I'm looking around and there are a lot of people that we called straight, you know, that were just, you know, regular good students and all that.

I'm thinking, man, they're joining in on this too. Wow. So the assistant principal comes walking out.

He says, okay, that's what everybody in the class, you know, the ballrooms, everybody in the class. And everybody just scatters. What? I couldn't believe it.

You know, they just, once the authority came out, you know, they were, they were good kids. And we went to class. So he knew who some of the ringleaders were so he calls out one guy and says, you, you, you, you, you, you, into my office.

So I yell out, stupid me, if they go to the office, we all go to the office. So next thing, you know, all the rowdies and the radicals and the druggies and the, we all start pouring into the, there are too many for the assistant principal's office. So they open up the auditorium.

And they're now having this big meeting in the auditorium. I don't know how many people there, but it was a decent amount. I remember the, the one guy whose boyfriend was the Black Panther, she'd stand up and make a point, you know, and hold a fist up, you know, that was the symbol.

Like, yeah, this whole battle with the establishment, with authority. So the next day, the principal calls the whole student body together in the gymnasium. And he addresses us over these issues.

And he says, if you can put together your demands, what you feel you should have in a school setting here, because we want it like our own wing, you know, we want to do our own thing. He said, if you can, if you can put together your demands and lay them out and circulate them through the school by the end of

the day, we'll work with you. Knowing, of course, there's no way we're going to be able to do that.

But we had some friends in the psychology department, some of the counselors, and they were a little radical too. So they helped us. They let us use their copy machine and everything.

And we put, you know, we wrote out these demands. We want a school like this and a school like this and a school like this. And we had this art teacher who was, who was really out there.

And he had some lawsuits that he threatened the school and they always kind of had to bend his way otherwise he was going to, you know, take him to court on some things. So they had to treat him carefully. So anyway, we get our demands out through the whole school and they say, okay, you can, beginning next year, you know, you can have your own wing of the school and your own experimental educational program.

It's the truth before dogs. So I started 11th grade, 1970, and we began what was called SAFE school. How's the name of it? SAFE.

SAFE. It stood for Student and Faculty Education because it would be a learning experience for all of us together. We had four of the most radical teachers in the school.

In fact, we called them by first names. That was part of the thing. We were going to call them by first names and the art teacher said, now look, if your education is you go out in the field and you get high and you meditate out there in the field and that's your education and you would like an A for your classes, I'll give you an A. I'm not exaggerating.

Truth before God. We had classes, I remember, you know, existentialism. We had a class in witchcraft and the occult.

Whatever we wanted to have, we had it. You know, we had some, you know, American history class and, you know, logic class and things like that. But it was pretty, you know, you could, any student could say, I'd just like to pass fail grade, just pass it.

And my last two years of high school, this is doctor, professor. My last two years of high school, the only numbered grade that I got was for band and orchestra. Everything else, I just passed.

I was just given passing grades and everything. And we had graffiti on the walls. You know, the rest of the school was nice and clean and we had graffiti, psychedelic graffiti on the windows.

We had four classrooms in the back of the school and we had six, between 60 and 70 students, the most stupid sinful students in the whole place. That's who we were. You know, the girls that slept around the most, the guys that were the craziest, all the druggies, and then a few who were just, they didn't do any of those things but they were very progressive.

They would like to go out in the field and receive revelation from the energy coming through the plants. I remember that conversation well after I got saved talking to this guy. Everybody else would be in school from like 8.30 to, you know, the three, we'd be there from 9 to 12 daily.

Honestly. I'd go into school, you know, get in there, we'd go get, you know, some pot, we'd get high, we'd hang around. Sometimes I'd go to a class.

We'd get home at 12, you know, sleep in the afternoon and party with friends that afternoon and night. That's how we lived. And then I got saved about two months into the process.

That's how I could memorize so much scripture. I had a lot of time on my hands. No, actually I could do it in an hour a day.

I could do my memorization but, you know, now I've got this schedule where everywhere I look there's people to witness to. We're just sitting around hanging out, witness. Everybody wants to talk about spiritual things.

When I first started hearing about prophecy and bottomless pits and beasts with seven heads, I was like, wow, do I have something to talk to these people about. I got saved, you know, two of my friends got saved right before me in that school. We all got saved together.

But you've got to understand, this was a sinful environment. You understand? We just all did whatever we wanted to do and, you know, the dress and the behavior and there were no standards. That's how we lived.

Now I'm saved. Now I'm in the Lord. My friends are saved.

We're living. And I so distinctly remember that God had changed me so deeply that during one, when I had one sinful thought towards one young woman in the school, I immediately went into a fast because I so quickly wanted to purge myself from it. I told you that whole story just to say, you know, that there was a sinful and we're just doing our own thing.

If that story is not doing your own thing, nothing is. And I remember just the cleansing of God and that sense of holiness so deep that when that thought hit, you know, because, you know, anyway, you just thought what you wanted to think before. You're just unclean.

When I saw this thing just jump up, I said, no good. Lord, I want to please you. I want to be holy in your sight.

You see, there's got to be an attitude like that in our lives towards sin. Hating it, like it says in Jude, hating even the garment stained by sinful flesh. I don't mean that a thousand times a day, oh, Lord, I repent.

I'm so sorry, Lord. I repent. Oh, Lord, I repent.

Oh, Lord, I repent. Lord, I repent. Lord, I repent.

I repent for bothering me. You know, I don't mean to get hung up on that and certainly not to be rebuking Satan like 900 times a day. But to be looking at your life and you say, oh, there's an ugly stain.

Turn from it quickly. The thing that really set me free, because the big thing to me was the needle. Heroin, speed, other drugs I would shoot.

I would shoot any drug I could. Corrupt and foolish lifestyle. And for me to say I will never put a needle in my arm again, I will never shoot heroin again.

It seems so silly. I can't relate to thinking like this. It's been so many years, but I could not see ever saying those words.

To stop it for a little while was one thing. To say I'll never do it again, I couldn't see it. And when the love of God and joy of God really touched me December 17th of 1971, I said, what in the world am I doing? Here God has cleansed me and washed me and given me these white robes and I'm going out playing in the mud and just that easily.

And this has been a process of God dealing with me for a few weeks to get me to this point. When that point hit, after the conviction for weeks showing me how unclean my soul was, when the love of God just flooded through, I said, that's it, I'll never put a needle in my arm again. That's the end of the story.

That simple. From that moment on. Some of you need to so embrace the love and the goodness and the kindness of God that those things that you're up and down in and out with, you just say, Lord, never again.

In other words, my choice, my will before you is to never do that again. So look, look, look at that! Your choice, your will. That's what he's looking at right now.

Because many of us won't surrender to things. We won't say, never again. Deal with it before God.

I just feel the spirit prompting some of you. I wasn't going to use this last illustration about my own life and drugs. But I feel the spirit prompting some of you before you're out of here.

You're going to have to say, Lord, never again. Lord, I'll never watch a movie like that again. Lord, I'll never do something like that again out of wedlock.

Lord, I'll never put this in my body again. Lord, you know what it is and he's dealing with you. Deal with it before God because there's grace here and the love of God is here to set you free.

Last point and we're done. Number eight. I told you earlier that you need to take God as his word.

Here's the flip side to it. Refuse to believe the devil's lies. Refuse to believe the devil's lies.

One of the first questions I remember one of our daughters asking us about spiritual things. Daddy, how do I know when it's the Lord when it's my own mind? How do I know when it's the devil? Of course, the one answer is I've been wondering about that for a long time too. Then the other answer is no, here's how you can distinguish and here's how to tell.

But it's not always totally easy. You know, our minds can be active. You know, and demonic spirits can influence our thinking and trigger stuff and other suggestions coming from the world can do it.

And then the word can be we can be reminded that the Holy Spirit can speak. But anything that is contrary to what the word of God says is either your own flesh or the devil. It's not the Holy Spirit speaking.

No matter how it feels. I have that witness here but it's contrary to what's written in the word. I have this deep sense but it's contrary to the truth of the word.

Refuse to believe the devil's lies. For years it was a regular thing right before I would preach. Moments before I would preach I'd hear the voice of the enemy nothing's going to happen tonight.

You're going to get up without you knowing you're going to make a public fool of yourself. And I'm talking about you know, a major meeting where people are coming with like a night meeting and revival you know the setting I'd normally be preaching in. That kind of thing and nothing, God's not going to move tonight.

And where that would hit and it would hit with a sense of reality but I became accustomed to it like alright, everything's right on target there's that lie and God's about to move. You know, Steve always says when he got saved the devil came to him and said, you're not saved. And then it struck him that before he was saved the devil never told him you're not saved.

So once he realized he said, say that again. Say that, that must mean I am saved. Say that again.

Refuse to believe the devil's lies. It doesn't matter how it feels when it comes. It doesn't matter if it seems to come as an angel of light.

It doesn't matter if it comes through false teaching. If it's contrary to the word of God, refuse to believe it. When you walk out of here and the devil says that teaching was for everybody but you.

You are a reject. You are the only one condemned in the whole crowd. Refuse to believe it.

But I can't get it out of my mind. Then just ignore it. It's not going to kill you.

Just ignore it. Soon enough it will go away. In particular if you remind God of His promises, get it in your heart and get it in your mind.

I live a condemnation free life. I often feel the pressure of the Holy Spirit working in me to draw me in. I often examine my life and feel miserable about areas I wish would be much more consecrated, much more much more devoted.

I look at the Word and I allow the Spirit of God to preach it through the written Word to rebuke me, to challenge me. I welcome that, that I live a condemnation free life. And every child of God should live a condemnation free life.

You are not hell bound. You are no longer guilty in His sight. When you stand before Him He will not say depart from me.

I never knew you. If you are truly His child washed in His blood living for Him. Welcome the conviction.

Welcome the reproof. Welcome the pruning. Welcome the purging.

Welcome the refining. It is only to make you more fruitful. It is only to make you more beautiful.

It is only to make you more like Him. And resist with everything in you anything that steals your relationship with God that chips away at it. Make it the number one priority to walk in intimacy with Him, to enjoy Him, to serve Him and to bring joy to Him.

And the devil is hell bound period. Thankfully he is not going to take us with him. Amen? So let's stand to our feet.

Ward could you come up? Ward Simpson assists us in the ministry. One of the students in our school will be here to answer questions that you may have about the school or things that you want to get to our ministry. I need to make a quick exit as we often have to do on Saturdays.

But I want to pray with you for the blessing of God to be on you. Chew on these things. Digest these things.

Could be out of the whole teaching there is one little thing the Holy Spirit has been trying to say to you. Take hold of it. Alright? Let God make you shining jewels in His crown.

Amen? Father

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