

The Bar Is Being Raised

by Robert B. Thompson

The sermon emphasizes the need for spiritual elevation and holiness as God raises the standards for His people in the coming year.

Duration: 55:14

Scripture: 1 John 2:15

Topics: "Holy Living", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living according to the Word of God rather than being influenced by the negative aspects of American culture. He cautions against engaging in activities such as watching inappropriate movies or engaging in hypocritical behavior. The preacher encourages the congregation to pray and take action when they see something wrong, and assures them that he and his wife are open to addressing any concerns. He also highlights the need to avoid jealousy and fits of rage, citing biblical passages that speak to the consequences of not producing good fruit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Turn to Matthew 3, Matthew 3 verses 10 through 12. Matthew 3 verses 10 through 12. You can read it with me off of the screen.

And here we go. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. And in connection with that, let's look at Malachi chapter 3, Malachi chapter 3 verses 1 through 4. And you can follow along.

Well, in fact, if you want to, it's up on the screen. You can read it together with me. Here we go.

See, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly, the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant whom you desire will come, says the Lord Almighty.

But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness. And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord as in days gone by, as in former years. All right, we're going back now to Matthew 3. Now, driving down to the New Years that we had at the church.

And by the way, we appreciate the work of John and Stephanie. They worked hard to us a good New Years and we did praise the Lord. Driving down, I felt, with Audrey and I mentioned to her, I could feel spiritual oppression, very strong.

I could feel it very strong. And I thought, oh boy, what does this betoken? And again, driving down this morning, I felt the same thing even more strongly. And what's going on is this year, the Lord is going to come to his people and he's raising the bar.

I'm using a reference now to track where you jump over a bar. He's raising the bar. And what has sufficed or has worked to the present hour has been good and has brought us to this place where we all are in our lives.

But it is not going to suffice for the coming year. And you and I are going to be challenged by the Lord, if we're listening to him, to move ahead in holiness and consecration. Now, we can't judge ourselves by what the rest of the country is doing or any other church.

Hopefully many, many churches are feeling the same call. But we cannot risk setting our standards by that which other people are doing. We have to set our standard by the Bible and what the Lord is telling us.

So, the things that we have gotten by with, the Lord is going to speak to you and me and it is going to be a baptism of fire. And you'll notice here what he said, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. That's not the same thing.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, we're accustomed to being in Pentecost. But the baptism with fire, we're not that accustomed to it. We're not.

And you say, well, what does it mean? He explains it in the subsequent words. He says his winnowing fork is in his hand. Now, this refers to a custom which is still practiced in India and in other countries where they thresh out and beat grain out of the heads of wheat.

And then they get big piles of it, but there's still chaff in it. There's still pieces of husk in it and things that cannot be ground into flour. So, they take a fork and they throw it up in the air and the wind, the wind blows the chaff.

The grain is heavier than the chaff. And the grain falls down and the chaff is blown away. Now, that's what you're going to feel like in this coming year.

The Lord's going to pitchfork you up into the air and probably use people to, other people to do the job. So, don't get sore at people. When people offend you, just go to the Lord.

Don't look at the tools that God uses. You'll just get bitter. No, you just, when you're hurt, you go to Jesus and pray.

Or you're just going to get bitter. And this process won't do you any good if you look at whoever's hurting you, the pastor, your boss, or other people in the church, or your relatives, or whoever it is that is stressing you. Go to Jesus and say, Lord, why am I, why is my rest in you being disturbed? What is there in me that can be harmed? Remember Joel 3, it says, they shall fall on the sword and not be wounded.

What is there in my personality that caused me to get so shook up when people did these things? And you'll find, in many cases, there's something, it's not in them, it's in you. They're probably doing what they're doing blindly without meaning to harm you. In most instances, they're not meaning to harm you.

They're just acting out of their own pain and confusion. In most instances, this is true. And so, instead of looking at the tool that God used to point out the idol in your personality, go to the Lord, and pretty soon, you'll find out what it is that's stressing you so much.

And then you can pray, and Christ will deliver you. He will deliver you. He will deliver you.

You cannot reform yourself. It's good to practice self-control, and it's a good thing and a necessary thing to do what you can do. But these things that are in us are spiritual, and they do not lend themselves readily to our self-control.

They have to be addressed in the spirit realm by prayer, as well as your own effort. And I'll speak about that in a minute, I guess. The way that you really get delivered from these hardcore things that you never thought were deliverable.

You never thought it was possible to be delivered. And the Lord wants you to be delivered, and insists on your being delivered, because it is His floor. It is His threshing floor.

It's not the church or the denomination. It's the Lord's threshing floor. And the threshing in the Bible stands for judgment.

And so, this year, I am persuaded, if I'm hearing correctly, will be a year of judgment on sin. For Christians, don't go looking at the liberals in the government. It has nothing to do with it.

It's us. We're the ones that are going to have to humble ourselves, and pray, and seek God's face. Not all those liberals in Congress or anything else.

When we get ourselves taken care of, then God can talk to the world. But He's not going to talk to the world when the church is practicing so much sin and worldliness. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor, gathering His wheat into the barn, and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

That is fire that cannot be extinguished. There's no way to extinguish it. It's going to burn until God's will is done in your life.

So, you're going to have to hang in there. Because it's going to require all of your consecration and sincerity. You know, we have so much hypocrisy in the Christian churches.

And I don't like to call God's people hypocrites, because the people in the world are hypocrites. So, they have no business pointing the finger at the church. So, I'm just talking about us guys down home here in River City, and us Christians.

There is so much hypocrisy. We hear straight preaching, but we don't do it. We hear the preachers say, don't watch the sitcoms, because they're nasty.

Don't watch these late, late talk shows. They're nasty, but we do it. Don't go to R-rated movies, but we do it.

Don't tear off in groups, in the young people, but they do it. And so, that is called hypocrisy. And then we come to church, and we say, oh, we worship and everything, but we're not doing what is preached.

And what is preached is not my personal ideas, but the Word of God. And when it isn't the Word of God, you come and tell me, and I'll change. I'm not up here to preach my ideas, but God's Word.

And the Lord is calling today for a people who are living it, who are walking it, and not just talking it. Amen. So, I want to repeat something I said New Year's Eve, because it's still on my heart.

I talked about three things. Three things. It was very brief and to the point.

First of all, the message of this church has to do with the Kingdom of God. Now, we are pioneering that doctrine, because the churches that we've been to, now hopefully there's other churches preaching the Kingdom of God, but what we hear in other churches is not the Kingdom of God. What we hear is, when you die, you're going to go to heaven and live in a mansion forever.

Or, when you're raptured, you're going to go to heaven and live in a mansion forever, and walk on a street of gold, and how happy you will be. That is not the message of what you do find in the Bible, is that God's Kingdom is coming to the earth. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth.

Now, how is it that the Lord is going to appear with his saints? And the Bible teaches this in the Old Testament and the New. The Lord is going to appear with his saints. When Christ who is our life appears, you will appear with him, and we are going to set up, we are going to crown Jesus King in the holy place in Jerusalem, and the saints are going to judge the world under Jesus Christ, and this is taught plainly in the Old Testament and the New.

So, I wish that every minister of the gospel would preach the Kingdom, because preaching that we're going to go away bye-bye, to lay around in mansions does the world no good, and it does God no good, and preaching that we're going to appear with Jesus and bring his will into the earth does everybody good, but it does mean, it does mean, it does mean that we cannot wait until we die and go to heaven. That's not how you enter the Kingdom. You enter the Kingdom today, and it begins by being born again, and it's very challenging, and it has to do with the victory over sin.

Let me show you that. Let's take a crack at Galatians 5, 19-21. Well, you say, you're taking away my hope of heaven.

No, I'm not taking away your hope of heaven. I'm telling you, you may get a little rest there, but your job is to bring God's will into the earth. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth.

Who said that? Jesus. I didn't make it up. That's what we're supposed to be praying for, not to go to heaven, but that God's kingdom will come into the earth.

The earth doesn't need it, does it? Oh, no. No, the earth doesn't need God's will being done here, does it? Boy, we're facing some things this year with an increasingly powerful UN, and all the other things that

eventually are going to result in great distress for us. Now look here.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious. Now, he's not talking about the unsaved here. He's talking to the church at Galatia.

He's not writing to the unsaved. They can't enter the Kingdom by straightening up their life. He's talking to the people.

He says, if you're led of the Spirit, you're not under the law of Moses. But we have to be led of the Spirit to come out from the law of Moses. Amen.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious. Now check out your own life. Check it out.

Check it out. Sexual immorality. Now I'm going to talk about that in a minute, because that is the main problem in the churches today, as well as in our nation.

It's first on the list. And if you had eyes to see, and I had eyes to see, the demons of lust that are in the United States of America, that are now protected by law, so they've come from every place. Haiti, Africa, South America, and every place where they've been.

They're flooding into the United States to express their spiritual nature, and that's why we have to say to the young people, as I said, New Year's Eve, you can't date until you're ready to get married. Whatever you do, you do in groups. Oh, Brother Thompson, I'll die.

No you won't. You'll have a happier marriage, and I'll explain that in a minute. But one of the problems is, see it used to be, many years ago, you could go out on a date, maybe go to the movies and come home.

You can't do that anymore, because the boy's going to insist on sexual intercourse. He's going to insist on that. And if you don't do that, you don't love me, and I'm not going out with you anymore.

And here's the girl, she wants to be popular. It ain't like it used to be. And so we're going to give you a simple rule to protect yourself from messing yourself up for the rest of your life.

We're in your corner. We're not trying to take away the goodies from you. We're trying to keep you from messing yourself up.

Amen. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. Amen.

Having said that, we shall proceed aboo. We're preaching, now look what it says. First of all, no, sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery, the first three, the first three, have to do with immorality.

Head up the list. You say, well, I'm too old, I'm 65. I saw a man on television, he looked like my grandfather, and he had been arrested there for molesting teenage girls.

So don't tell me, because you're over 60 or 70, you better listen to me. Okay? And if you're 10 or older, you better listen to me. Because age doesn't enter in.

I'm too young, I'm too old. No, you're a candidate today. And the demons are looking for ways to express themselves.

That's the problem. If it was just up to us, it wouldn't be a problem. Then we go to idolatry.

We Americans have more idols than a preacher has notes in his Bible. We've got more idols. Professional sports is an idol in America.

Money is an idol in America. Sexual lust is an idol in America. Witchcraft is an idol in America.

Man, and entertainment is an idol in America. It used to be that once a month people would get in the hay wagon and go to a square dance, once a month. We don't need that much entertainment.

We're sick with it. Surfeited with it. Amen.

It's an idol. An idol. Oh, if I don't go to the movies a couple of times a week, I'm really going through the Great Tribulation.

And R-rated at that. And Christian young people at that. And their parents know about it.

And they're scared to death to say anything, for fear the youngster will do something drastic. Alright. Witchcraft.

Well, we know the grounds that Satanism has accomplished. But you even find the spirit of it in the Pentecostal churches, where we have a lust to give personal words over people and be somebody's guru. That's witchcraft.

We're not supposed to be wizards that peep and mutter. What you have to say should be said out boldly in the presence of two or three witnesses. Not go into somebody privately giving a word or seeking a word.

Amen. It gets you into trouble when you do that. You get into bondage to the person who is willing to give you a word.

And the first thing you know, you're going to be in big problems. I've said it before. New millennium already.

Hatred. Hatred is endemic in the Christian churches. Bitterness.

People won't talk to each other. When you have hatred in your heart, you're already whipped. You're already out of the kingdom.

There's no hatred in the kingdom of God. 1 John says, he that hates his brother is a murderer. And you know, murderer has eternal life.

But the Christian churches are filled with hatred, bitterness, unforgiveness. Well, not this year. That's chaff.

How many know that's chaff? That's chaff. That is not wheat. You can't grind that in a flour.

Discord. Picking faults in the church. Let me tell you, if you can find one single fault in this here church, go to one that doesn't have any.

Every church has faults. Every pastor has faults. Believe me.

If you're looking for a perfect pastor, get a lantern, go around like Diogenes, and when people ask you what you're looking for, say a perfect pastor. Well, you won't find any. You'll have a beard that'll catch fire

in your lantern before you'll ever find a person struggling to overcome like you.

Amen. Discord. It is the easiest thing in the world to sow discord in a church.

And why is that true? Because you're getting so much help from upstairs. That's Satan's main business. He's an accuser.

Well, you say, I saw something wrong. What should you do? Pray. If action is needed, call up Audrey and me.

We've never yet hung up on anybody. If they have something, we search it out, and if action is needed, action shall be taken. And if it is not taken, you tell me about it, and it'll be took.

That's the way you avoid discord. Or I'll tell you why it isn't took. All right.

Jealousy. Envyng someone. They've got something in the Lord you don't have.

Somebody got promoted above you. Somebody's got a better looking girlfriend. Whatever it is.

Jealousy. It does not belong in the heaven. That's what it said.

Fits of rage. How many here enjoy their fits of rage? They drive their fists through the drywall, and they figure, what a good boy am I? It's Satan. Satan.

S-A-T-A-N. Jesus doesn't have fits of rage. He didn't put his fist through the drywall.

And you say, well, I'm not like Jesus. Well, 1 John tells you in two places you're supposed to be like Jesus. It says, as he is, so are we in this world.

And again, it says, let him walk as he walks. So Jesus is our example, and that doesn't mean we ought to try, but a little bit at a time we can do it. Listen, you'll never be an overcomer unless you believe it's possible.

And if you want to believe it's possible, read in the New Testament. I'll tell you it's possible. Sin shall not have dominion over you.

It says in Romans 6. And then people come along, as long as I'm in this world, nobody's perfect and all that. That's the devil. That's not the Bible.

The Bible says that we're more than overcomers. More than overcomers. That means we overcome with room to spare.

But you've got to believe it, like healing, or the baptism, or salvation. You've got to believe it or it's never going to happen. It's there.

It's on the table. God put it on the table. The victorious life in Christ, it's on the table.

But it's up to you to eat it. Nobody's going to feed you. Now, where are we? Selfish ambition.

You know, there's more trouble caused in families and in the world at large by personal ambition. Selfish ambition. People that, all they can think about is me, me, me.

People come to me, they've got a beef about their husband, they've got a beef about their wife, they've got a beef, and when you listen to it and you extract it all down, the problem is they're unhappy. That's the bottom line. They're unhappy.

They don't think of their wife or their husband who may be having a terrible time. I'm hurting. For goodness sake.

That's a characteristic of spiritual immaturity. The more we grow in Christ, the more we're concerned about other people, not about ourselves. I tell you, wars start because of personal ambition.

In the nations and at home. Selfish ambition. You're not thinking of the other guy.

Well, he offended me. They offended me. This relative offended me.

That relative offended me. Me, me, me, me, mommy. I'm offended.

Me, me, me. I'm not having my own way. I'm offended.

Me, me, me. That's the way it is. That's the way it is.

You're not thinking, well say they offended you. All right, maybe they have problems that you need to pray about. Maybe they're weak in the Lord.

Maybe they're hurting from something. We try to put yourself into the other. That's good preaching.

There's nothing wrong with that. Selfish ambition. Boy, if I don't get what I want, everybody around me is going to hurt.

I'm telling you that. They're going to know about it because I, king, me, am not happy. Like people say, this church is not fulfilling my needs.

And you read about the early martyrs in England that went, just because they were Protestant. Now I picture them just being burned at the stake. Who was it? Latimer? Who was it that said, we're going to, brother, we're going to light a fire that'll never go out in England.

And here they are. They're piling faggots around. Finally the fire's coming up.

And you know what they're saying? This church is not meeting my needs. No, they didn't say that. I'm just making that up.

You all look so serious at me. I've got to be careful. I have a droll sense of humor.

Dissensions and factions. I mean, what Pentecostal church is there that doesn't have people arguing because they're not pleased? I'm not pleased. The pastor's too hard.

The pastor's too easy. The pastor isn't on my hobby. Dissensions.

The Lord doesn't have dissensions or factions. Factions means you're dividing up the church. You've got your little group around you and they all believe what you believe.

And you pump them up with what you believe and everything. And then come to the church and wonder why God doesn't bless you. It's because it's a faction.

We've been here about 25 years now and I refuse from the start to get in anybody's party unless everybody in the church is invited. We'll not promote factionalism. We're all one body, one family, and there's no super group in the church.

The body of Christ. Can you say amen to that? Amen. All right.

Now, an envy. Who do you envy this morning? We're going to have communion. Get up here with your elements and tell the Lord all about it and he'll deliver you.

A lot of times when we're doing a burn on people, it's because we envy what they're doing and we wish we could do it and we don't dare. So we envy them. They get mad and are forever on their case.

Drunkenness. And I'm descriptive. And I'll say this to the young people.

You want to do yourself a favor. Never touch alcohol of any kind. Beer, wine.

I don't care where it is. If you're in a church that serves wine in the communion, you can politely excuse yourself or do whatever you want. But don't touch alcohol.

You remember in the Old Testament, the Nazirite vow. Now, the Nazirites were consecrated Israelites. They couldn't even eat so much as raisins.

And I'm not telling you don't eat raisins. I eat raisins myself all the time. But the point was when they were under that vow to God, nothing that comes from the vine.

Nothing. Well, that includes hops and beer and whiskey and everything else. Don't try it to see what it's like.

It kills brain cells. And God knows you need all you got. And all alcohol kills brain cells.

I read that in the Reader's Digest, so it must be true. It kills brain cells. Well, they drink wine in Italy, and they drink wine in Greece, and I know all that.

But we're Nazirites. I was at a meeting once. It was a small home meeting.

And somebody was prophesying. And when he prophesied, I said, there's something wrong here. And I knew instantly what it was.

He had wine with his evening meal, comes to church and tries to pray. He wasn't drunk. But you see, wine acts on the central nervous system like the Holy Spirit.

And that's why in the Book of Acts, they said, these men are drunk. And they said, no, we're not. It's only nine o'clock in the morning.

But you see, the response of the people, I said, they're all plastered in the Book of Acts. They said, no, we're not. It's only nine o'clock in the morning.

We don't get drunk at nine o'clock in the morning. My point is, they both work on the central nervous system. And if you have any alcohol in you, you cannot respond to the Spirit of God as you should, because it's fighting against what's in your nervous system.

So, we don't drink. I'm not laying down a bunch of laws to you. Audra and I came out of that, as I said, Friday night.

We came out of old time Pentecost. In old time Pentecost, you couldn't even take an aspirin, because you believed in divine healing. All the women wore buns, black dresses down their ankles, no cosmetics.

It all landed on the women for some reason. If you came to church without your hair in a bun, you're a Jezebel. Well, I'm not into that.

Don't do this, and don't do that. That's not where I'm coming from. We're preaching the kingdom.

And in order to enter the kingdom, you have to be at your tops for Jesus. So, the question is not, can I do this and still go to heaven? That's not the question. The question is, in doing this, am I really up there for Jesus? That's the question.

And if you do anything that isn't up there for Jesus, even if it's a glass of beer, or a little drugs, or whatever it is, much less an R-rated movie, or even watching a sitcom of these crazy talk shows, there's nothing edifying that. You're not up there for Jesus. Right at that moment, the phone might be ringing, it doesn't matter how, somebody needs prayer, and here you're watching.

See, it isn't that you can't watch talk shows, you can't go to the movies, now you can't do this, you can't, that's not the issue. The issue is, we're trying to enter the kingdom of God, we're in a nation that is going downhill morally with unbelievable speed, and to stay up and free in Jesus, whether we're in school, we're in church, or at home, requires that we not be doing things that are not first class spiritually. That's the issue.

It isn't whether you wear lipstick or not. That used to be the issue. That is not the issue.

The issue is, can you look up to Jesus and say, right at this moment, Lord, I'm right with you, I'm ready to minister, I'm ready to fight the battle. And if there's any point in your life God has called us to offer our body a living sacrifice, and he doesn't mean 15 other things. The bar is being raised.

What I'm telling you is scriptural. No, it's too rich for my blood. Well, you gotta say, I did my best to tell you, because there's gonna be consequences.

This year, we may lose people out of the church this year. Stars that right now are at the right hand of God, next year at this time, may have been cast to the earth, because they're careless, they didn't do, they thought, oh, that's Brother Thompson, we've heard him for 15 years. I'm speaking in the name of Jesus.

The bar is being raised, and what went by before is not gonna work. I'm doing the best I can to keep, we can't afford to, Audre and I, to do anything less, because there's people depending on us, not only in this church, but other places they call, they need help, their families are falling apart, their kids are going nuts, coming home with their girlfriend. All right, now, drunkenness, I talked about alcohol, orgies.

Now, I'm gonna boil that down to parties, and you know my position is that parties are for kids, fellowship is for adults. Now, how can you tell the difference? If, when you're in this group, if it's always correct to pray, always correct to speak in tongues, always correct to talk about the Lord, you're in fellowship. If talking about the Lord, talking in tongues, singing hymns, is a big drag on the market, you're in a party.

That's how you tell the difference. Well, if I can't go to parties, what will I ever do? Suppose we have persecution in this country like they do in others, and you have to die for the gospel, what are you going to do then? Deny Jesus? Other Christian young people today are faced with just that very thing. And the like.

I warn you. Now, if you want to know who he's warning, go back to Galatians chapter 1, 1 and 2, he's talking to the saints in Galatia, he's not talking about the unsaved, he's not talking about the Jews, as some teach, anything they don't like is for the Jews. It must be anti-Semitic.

But notice what it says. You can read it clearly. Those who live like this will not go to heaven when they die.

Can you say amen? Well, you better watch. The issue is not heaven. The issue is the kingdom of God.

I don't know what they do in heaven. All I read about is that there's war there and loud voices. The issue is the kingdom.

You don't wait until you die to enter the kingdom. You enter the kingdom now, that's why the message is so practical. You're not waiting to die and go anywhere.

You're trying to, you've been born again, not so you can go to heaven, so you can enter the kingdom. How many know John 3, verse 3? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot, what? Enter the kingdom of God. Not go to heaven.

You're born again to enter the kingdom. And the minute you're born again, you stop growing, right? You don't do anything after that. I've been born again.

25 years ago, I was born again. Birth kind of implies growth, doesn't it? Yeah. Well, almost always it does.

I mean, usually you think of birth, you think of growth, right? You don't think it's born. Tra-la, it's born. Hallelujah, it's born.

Okay, so it's born. Now what do we do? Well, that's the way it is in the kingdom. You're born in order to see and enter the kingdom.

John 3, verse 5. Cannot see or enter the kingdom, yet to be born of God. Begin to desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow. And what you grow in is the ability to resist these things.

Because if you do them, you cannot enter the kingdom of God, even if you're born again. Because these, because we know that they even had the Holy Spirit. Because in the book of Galatians, he said, did you receive the Spirit by faith or by the works of the law? So we know they were not the Spirit.

But he's telling them, if you do these things, you will not inherit the kingdom. But I've been born again. You will not inherit the kingdom.

That's the issue. That's the issue. So we're pioneering that doctrine.

It's to be restored to the church in our day. It was the original gospel. It's being restored to the church in our day.

The gospel preached by Jesus, John the Baptist, and the Apostle Paul is being restored in our day. That's the first thing I talked about Friday evening. The second thing I talked about Friday evening was that the

adults in the church are going to be attacked by Satan.

Now this morning, we sang war songs. And I love them. I love them.

Can't do without them. And we sing crush, crush, crush, crush. Well, that's biblical.

In Romans 16, 20, it says, my God shall crush Satan under your feet shortly. That's biblical. Okay.

But then, if we could only go out and fight the devil with our fists or with a sword or with a gun, it would be easy. But that isn't how it works. He plays with our mind.

He plays with our mind very gently. He plants suggestions. And very often they lead into lust.

It's one of the major devils in our country today is sexual lust. And it leads into that. It plays with our mind.

And we begin to reason. Satan can't touch us except as we consent. He can't make you do anything.

You have to consent. So he plays with our mind. The first thing you notice is a little pornography.

A little pornography. Hell and damnation, a little pornography. A little poison.

You're a member of the kingdom of God, you're going to look at pornography? Forget it. You're kidding yourself. That is Satan's pure and simple.

Many a pastor, many an adult today, in this coming year, is going to fall. The stars are going to fall. God's right hand, because of lust and pornography.

It's going to happen. No, I'm too old. No, you're not too old.

It's going to happen. It's more and more acceptable in our society. Lust.

Perversion. Oh no. And then I don't want to dwell on that.

I want to talk a little bit to the young people who are the delight of my soul. Because I want to tell you what to do about this. Now we have a simple rule in this church.

I know it is not typical for our culture. Understood. I know it is not typical of numerous evangelical churches.

Understood. I understand. Nonetheless, what I'm telling you is, the rule in our church is that you do not pair off under any circumstances until you're ready to get married. Now, when you're ready to get married, you hopefully, one or the other or both of the families involved is a Christian.

If neither family is a Christian, the girl's family and the boy's family is a Christian, that's very difficult. You've got nothing going for you, hardly. In that case, you come and a family in the church will adopt you temporarily.

And Stan and Lisa are good at that. Audrey and I are a little on the old side. We could serve as your grandfather.

But you need to come into a family with your boyfriend or your girlfriend and get used to the family. You don't go off by yourself in a car or in the house in a bedroom with the door closed or whatever. You're

going to be with it.

If you don't mean to marry the person, don't fool because what you're doing is, well, I'll try this one and I'll try that one. I'll try the next one. Guess what you're going to do when you get married? Try this one and then that one and then the next one.

That's the way we do in our culture. We've got high schools with pregnant teenage girls. And what kind of an economic mess is a pregnant high school girl just to go on welfare or work and have her and even if he does, he's still in high school, so he has no money coming in.

So in about two years, you're so sick of this guy, you could spit. And then you find you really find somebody that you really think might make a go and would be acceptable to your family. And then where are you? Then where are you? Completely messed up.

What I'm trying to tell you is I'm not trying to take away your candy. I'm trying to tell you how to keep from if you have a boyfriend or a girlfriend, take them home to your family. So what you do, you do as a family.

Say, well, that's the biggest drag I ever heard. That's because you've been influenced by our culture. Abortion by the millions.

Why do people get a bore most of the time? Because they didn't want to have a baby. They just want to have their fun and no baby. So they get not always, but this is the majority of the cases.

If the baby's inconvenient. And so they are charged with murder before God's throne. Think about that.

They're nowhere near being an overcomer. They're the farthest thing in the world from being an overcomer. You see how serious it is? So you get your boyfriend or your girlfriend and you bring them home to your parents.

And you sit in your front room and if you want to watch TV or talk or play dominoes or whatever you want to do, you come into the family. You've got to live with them for the rest of your life. So you don't go ahead and get married and then try to somehow get them reconciled to your parents.

Now, I know this is not always possible. I understand that. I understand people's problems, okay? I'm just trying to keep you out of bondage.

So when you are old enough and the man is old enough to be economically responsible to support you with food and a roof over your head and clothes on your back, when that is true, then you discuss it with your parents because they're not against you. Oh, I don't want them to get married. What I'm hoping is my daughter will be an old maid.

Don't let her get married. That isn't where your parents are coming from. And you can't see it.

See, you can't see it because your hormones are acting. And so you go to your parents and they make a judicious thing. Most parents are not going to say, away with that person.

Don't even consider such. I know like the father that was 80 years old and his son was 60 and they were living together and he sent his son to the store to buy bread and he bought mayonnaise and comes home. And his father is 80 years old and says, you can't trust a kid to do anything.

Well, that's the way mothers and fathers are. They never think you're grown up, but you can say, well, after you're 18 or 19 or the boy's 21 or 22 and he has a job or he's got, he's trying to get a job. It looks industrious.

It looks like it's going to be something that'll work. And you come home and you greet your parents and you have some fun together and go on a picnic and do some fun things. Where the devil gets in is where you get away, just the two of you somewhere, trying to figure things out for yourself.

You, you lose the wisdom and the understanding of your parents. So what I'm trying to tell you is against our culture, but our culture doesn't have, do we do? We don't dare tell them no. You know, some of them's contraceptive devices, give them clean needles.

That's the best they can do. And so you're in here with a bad trip on drugs or pregnant, or you've got AIDS or hepatitis B or something else. And you say, why didn't somebody tell me? Hallelujah.

The standards, the bar is being lifted by many of us who have got away with stuff and time passed. It's over. It's over.

And you can fool the church people. We, we listen to your line. How do we know it may be true? It may not be true.

We don't know. But you can't fool the Lord. And he said, he, he said, he will clear his threshing floor.

He will do it. And so my responsibility is to tell you what I believe God is saying to me. What God is saying to me is that there is a certain amount of hypocrisy in every church, including our own, and God doesn't want that.

He doesn't want you doing things. When you, when, once we tell you the standard of this church is that you do not pair off until you're, until you've made up your mind. Yes, this is the person I'm going to marry.

I will never divorce this person. We're to, we know we're going to have problems, all people do, but we're going to hang in there for life. And when you're ready to make that decision, and not before, what you do is do in a group and save yourself agony.

Because you tried this one and after two years it didn't work and he left or she left and then your heart broken and then you find somebody you really like and here you've been messing around. You say to yourself, well why did I mess with this other person? I don't go in any place. See, I'm trying to give you a little wisdom.

Wait until it's going to go someplace. That doesn't mean you can't go to Magic Mountain or wherever you want to, you can, but go in a group. Go in a group.

Then when you're old enough to be financially responsible, which is an important part of marriage, a very important part of marriage, then you get together with your parents if at all possible. Tell them what you have in mind. That's what just happened in Alabama and I think that's very nice and a good illustration to us, those that know what I'm talking about.

So anyway, that's where we are today. That's the burden on my heart, very very strong, that God is raising the bar. The Lord, I can feel, I can feel the spiritual oppression and so Satan's going to be all over the place looking for people he can trip up and it isn't going to work to say, well I know that's what the pastor

says, but this is what I'm going to do because when you do, you're going to walk out from under the spiritual covering of the church and then you're fair game for the devil.

You're fair game. Once you do things, unless of course, I tell you things that are not in the Bible. Let's finish up with 1 John 2, 15 through 17.

1 John 2, 15 through 17 and then we're through here. I just want to show you that what I'm telling you is in the Bible. Our American culture in the present hour is not a good example for us, unfortunately.

I wish it were, but it isn't. 1 John 2, 15 through 17. Okay, and this covers the sitcoms and the talk shows and everything else I've been talking about.

You ought to be very careful about movies. It used to be in the Pentecost, you did not go to the movies and I don't say that. What I would rather say is, and with the VCRs too, make sure the whole family approves of this.

And if the family approves of the children watching our rated movies or VCRs, then the family's got a problem. They're out from under the covering of the church. They're talking it but not walking it.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father's not in him. Amen? I didn't write it.

I didn't write it. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

I want to emphasize that as I'm closing here. You do God's will, you live forever. And I'm not talking about eternity.

I mean, you will live in the presence of God for eternity. You will be a long turner. But if you don't, you're displeasing your heavenly creator and you can't do that without paying the piper.

Shall we stand? We'll have Andy or whoever's in charge of the communion.

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