

Return to the Old Paths - the Fear of the Lord

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fearing the Lord and living a life of integrity and righteousness in order to avoid the snares of death and experience revival.

Duration: 46:50

Scripture: Psalm 33:8, Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 14:27, Ecclesiastes 12:13, Isaiah 41:10, Jeremiah 6:16, Matthew 10:28

Topics: "Fear Of The Lord", "Integrity"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the necessity of returning to the old paths, particularly the fear of the Lord, as a foundation for wisdom and understanding. He argues against cultural relativism, asserting that God's timeless truths provide direction and rest for our souls, especially when faced with life's crossroads. Idleman highlights that true fear of the Lord leads to integrity, righteousness, and a life that avoids the snares of death. He encourages believers to embrace this fear not as a dread but as a source of comfort and strength, reminding them that it is essential for living a life aligned with God's will. Ultimately, he calls for repentance and a return to a genuine relationship with God, which transforms how we live and interact with others.

Transcript

What I want to do tonight and possibly next Wednesday, if I do tie in fasting and even to continue, is just a quick series entitled Return to the Old Paths. We can put that slide up if we have it. Return to the Old Paths.

And on Wednesday nights I decided to call it Timeless Truths. Because there are truths that are timeless. The culture will tell you that's not the case, that things shift.

You have to be relevant now. The big word out there is relativism. It's been out for a while now.

It means what's good for you, what's right for you, might not be right for me. And things are relative, but which we know is not true. Could you imagine living life like that? What's true this month or this year and the next year though, it might not be true.

And how do you build a legal system? How do you govern a nation? How do you do anything if you don't have God's timeless truths? So return to the old paths. Let me just read from Jeremiah where this comes from. The NIV Jeremiah 6.16. I don't think we have this on the screen though.

This is what the Lord says. I think you want to know what the Lord says, right? So this is what the Lord says. You can never go wrong following what the Lord says.

Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths, the old paths. Ask where the good way is and walk in it and you will find rest for your souls.

Isn't that interesting? He's saying when you're at a crossroads, anyone at a crossroads? When you're at a crossroads and you don't know what direction to go, what direction to take, God says look, look out and ask for the ancient path, the ancient paths, the ancient roads. Meaning which way do I go when I'm at a crossroad? And God says ask for it and ask for the old paths. You know what those are, right? Where God set in motion thousands of years ago, that timeless truth is still in motion today.

It's choosing that right path. And he said you will find rest for your souls when you choose the right path. Now something that's always been interesting to me every time I read it is the last sentence of this.

But you said we will not walk in it. You think it wouldn't have ended with that, right? You think they would have chose the right path, but through Jeremiah God said, but you said people, you will not walk in it. You will not take that direction.

You will not walk in it. So we have a choice before us. What path do we take? What path do we choose? So it's interesting, the idea we use this word a lot, return.

Return is the act of coming back from straying away and repositioning yourself. So God says when you get to a crossroads, you can return, return to the old path, get on the right path. Do you ever take the wrong one and halfway through you realize this is not the right path? This is not the direction I should have gone.

God says readjust, reposition yourself and return to the right path. Proverbs 9.10 says this, remind us, I'm sorry, Proverbs 9.10 reminds us that the fear of the Lord is where wisdom and understanding come from. It's where they originate.

So here's the first path that we're going to talk about tonight. Returning to the fear of the Lord. That's not very appealing, is it, to most people, to the culture, maybe to some in the church.

The fear of the Lord. Why do you talk about that? Because it is the only path on which you will never get lost. Because I've learned, you know, that you either fear the Lord or you fear man.

Right? We fear God's way and we do God's way or we fear the opinions of others or what people are going to think and we choose the wrong path. So Proverbs 9.10, the fear of the Lord is where wisdom and understanding originate. So you won't know wisdom, you won't have wisdom to make right decisions unless the fear of the Lord is that foundation.

That's the foundation you build your house on, fearing God. So what does that look like? Well, I'm glad you asked. I'm going to look at the King James Version of the Bible.

Remember we talked about the different translations? On Sunday I'm going to use a different translation. Tonight it's the King James, the King James Version of the Bible, Proverbs 8.13. The fear of the Lord is to, here's what it is, it's to hate evil. It's to hate pride, it's to hate arrogance, and to hate the evil way.

And then it says, and the froward mouth do I hate. See why we have new translations now? The froward mouth, isn't that interesting? That really means the difficult mouth. The mouthy person.

The person that is always shooting off their mouth and critical. The fear of the Lord doesn't like that person. We don't like that tone that they use.

So here's the first thing, what is this? It's the mindset. It's the mindset to fear the Lord we have to hate evil, we hate pride, and we hate arrogancy. Now, I've noticed that it's real easy to point out pride and arrogancy in others.

Right? But God says, look in the heart first, look in our own hearts. So I hate the pride I see in my heart. And who doesn't have it, right? The person who says they don't have pride and arrogancy is the person you have to watch out for.

Because we all have to work on that. There's something in the sinful DNA of man that loves self-exaltation. They love to be right.

They want their opinions to be heard. Have you ever heard that person say, well, I'm just opinionated? Okay, that's not a good character trait. You can have opinions, but strong opinions and having that pushiness.

And so the fear of the Lord will humble you, it will put things in perspective. There's the power of the made-up mind. Making our mind up to fear God and the things that God wants us to fear.

Matthew 10, 28. And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Jesus in one sentence right there says, fear God, and he talked about hell.

The two things the church doesn't want to talk about, he just got it right out front. He said stop fearing man and start fearing God who can not only kill your body, but can cast both body and soul in hell. So this, we have to remember to fear the right thing.

That's why I said earlier, we either fear God, right? We either fear God or we fear man. We either want to do the will of God or the will of man. And here's why the fear of the Lord is so important.

When we don't fear something, we often mock it. We take it lightly or we are indifferent to it, right? If you don't fear something, you're not going to treat it with respect. You're going to disdain it.

You're going to mock it. So what happens in churches, when they minimize the fear of the Lord, when they actually don't talk about the fear of the Lord. Do you know churches that don't talk about the fear of the Lord? They're out there.

They don't talk about any of that stuff. When you do that, you minimize who God is. You minimize His character.

You minimize His nature. You minimize His attributes. This person, the Godhead, who we should be fearing and have an awe and respect for changes the way we live.

When you minimize that and you don't talk about it, you become indifferent to the Lord, and it changes the way you live. Watch how those people who don't fear the Lord live. Anything goes, right? Holiness? Pfft.

Obedying God's Word? Pfft. No way. It's all about love, brother, and mercy, and license.

So it will affect everything in your life. Ecclesiastes 12.13. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

It's interesting, too. You'll hear often churches that don't talk about the fear of the Lord. They also will minimize the commandments.

They'll say, that was the Old Testament. And there's no place you can find in Scripture that says the Ten Commandments or the commandments of God are now null and void because Jesus came. He fulfilled the law.

He was the embodiment of the law. Every jot, every tittle, He fulfilled. But that doesn't mean now that they aren't important.

The moral laws that God has set forth are just as important then as they are now. Actually, Paul says that the Ten Commandments were given to us as a schoolmaster to teach us how depraved we are, how much we need God. Can you look at the Ten Commandments? And then when Jesus even brings it to the forefront and says, even if you murder in your mind, you've committed murder.

Even if you've lusted in your heart, you've committed adultery. So who says, I've never lied, I've never thought those kind of thoughts? Who can say that? So you look at these and you're like, who can live up to that? I can't. So Jesus doesn't come, bear the burden, and then say, well, don't worry about those things now.

We actually still want to fulfill God's commandments. And then what about Psalm 33, 8? Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the earth fear the Lord.

Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. See, it's repositioning the mind, isn't it? Because you get off track on fearing God, but the Bible brings us back on track. That there should be an awe and a fear and a reverence for God.

I don't know, it might be old school, but when I walk into church, I want to feel the awe of God. I want to feel the awesomeness of God. It's not just this come casually and no big deal and flippantly.

There should be an awe and a respect and a reverence for the house of God. That's why it says this here. Let the whole earth fear the Lord.

Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. Proverbs 14, 27, the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death. The Bible, when it talks about the snares of death, it's like there's traps the devil puts out, our own flesh puts out.

There's traps, there's snares. A snare would catch an animal. Have you ever seen old movies or different things where if you step into a bear trap or coyote trap or something and you get snared by that and the animal would lose its life? So the Bible says that the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.

It refreshes, it replenishes, it renews, and it actually helps me avoid the snares of death. Because when I fear the Lord, I'm not going to step down that path that has a lot of snares, correct? When we minimize that, so I think this is just a wonderful opportunity to refocus ourselves back on the fear of the Lord and how that should change our lives. What does that mean to us? I don't know about you, but I need to be

refreshed often.

I need to be replenished. I need to be restored. And when I remember the goodness of God, and I have a fear and an awe and a respect for Him, it changes everything.

But sometimes we use that word fear wrongly. We think of, have you ever feared? Like North Koreans fear their government, right? I guess more and more Americans are fearing theirs too. I'm not sure, but most North Koreans fear their government.

Or in the Middle East, that's not exactly the same type of fear. This is fear of dread of what's going to happen to me. Now that's okay if an unbeliever has this fear of God and they turn their life over to God because of that.

But as believers, we don't have that kind of fear of walking around under an abusive, authoritative God. We actually walk in tremendous freedom because we fear and respect who He is. We respect His sovereignty, that He holds everything in the palm of His hand.

Every situation, every circumstance that you're going through, even your children, He holds all of that. We fear Him, and there's a freedom there. I don't know about you, but I sleep much better at night knowing that God is in control, that I fear God not worried about my front door being locked, or the glock under the bed, or that you have to live in this fear of man, fear of this trepidation of what's going to happen.

But God says, just fear me, and that will replenish you. That will restore your soul. You'll depart from the snares of death.

Here's how it works too. If you're walking down the path of life, the enemy puts out snares and traps, and the fear of the Lord, you avoid those because you're living like God called you to live. Anything from addiction, to bondage, to sin, to all these different things, you're walking down a better path for your life, and you avoid those snares.

It doesn't mean life is carefree or easy. It never means that, and I think people get confused. I think it was Ray Comfort who said, like the preacher promises a bed of roses when you come to Christ, but the Bible paints a picture that we're living in a bed of thorns.

We get sometimes this picture of this carefree life, lots of money, perfect health, kids all graduate, upper class, and they all have master's degree, and all these things, and we have this idea of life. But really, the Christian life is fearing God, and there are challenges that come alongside of us. There are legal battles.

There are health battles. There are marriage issues. There are relational challenges, but we fear God, and we trust in Him, and we allow Him to direct us.

I've never seen God let a person down. I've seen a lot of people let themselves down, get ahead of God, but at the end of the day, God will never let you down. It's important that we fear Him.

Again, Proverbs 14, 27, Fear the Lord, it is the fountain of life. It's a fountain of life that keeps us away from the snares of death. I just read this week, actually, I think Thursday, 2 Chronicles, or today's Wednesday, so that'd be Monday, 2 Chronicles 17.

So they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them. They went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people, and the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the land that were

around Judah. It's interesting, there's a king called Jehoshaphat, and he was in trouble, and he called on God, and the book of the law, the Old Testament, was read, and he said, my goodness, we've got to get this out to the people.

Send the Levites, send the priests out to the people. Have them just read the Bible, just read the book of the law. That's another reason why I say on Sundays, that's why they want to remove this from the schools, right, from the courthouses, from every aspect of society.

Get this out of our way. Why? Because it brings the fear of the Lord in this place. When an atheist or an unbeliever walks into court and they see the Ten Commandments, do they want to see that, or do they want to see some quote from Gandhi? You know, positive thinking, just good quotes, nice quotes.

I don't want to see the Ten Commandments. I don't want to see that. Why? Because this brings fear on the land.

Why do you think our schools are battlegrounds? You hear about the stabbing today? 17 students stabbed. Pennsylvania, I think it was. Folks, it's not going to get any different.

When you remove the authority, when you remove the fear of God, when you remove the only source of life, the only gauge of truth, when you remove that, this is what we have. So it was interesting, and I just thought of our own nation, the king had the priests go throughout all the land reading the law of God to the people. See, that's all you have to do.

You don't have to pep rally it up. You don't have to get real loud. You just have what thus saith the Lord.

And fear fell upon the entire group, the entire kingdom here of people all around the area of Judea, or Judah, however you want to pronounce that. And the same thing had happened in church. That's often what a revival is, the fear of the Lord.

See, when revival happens, when a church is revived, when God visits his people in a powerful way, will thou not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? It's never this carefree comedy club. God never falls on a comedy club. And when people aren't taking holiness seriously, and they're just bored to death, and it's more of a social gathering, he falls on a prepared people where the fear of the Lord is very evident.

Why do people pray and spend time praying? Because they fear the Lord. Why do they worship? Why do they make God a priority? Because they fear the Lord. Why do they surrender their life? Fully surrender everything.

God, take it all. Because they fear the Lord. So the fear of the Lord falls on a prepared people when their hearts are right.

So let's take inventory really quick. Psalm 15. Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle? Who may dwell in your holy hill? This is just imagery here of asking the question, who is going to be in God's presence? Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord or stand in his holy place? It's this idea of holiness.

Who's going to draw close to the Lord? Who's going to know him? Well, I'll tell you who. He who walks uprightly and works righteousness. Now, let's do a quick test on this.

There's a saying out there that integrity is one of several paths, but it is the path on which you will never get lost. So that's what this first point is. Walks uprightly and works righteousness.

So here's the first step in fearing the Lord. Look at your walk. Are you a man or a woman of integrity? Or are you shady? Come on, we know what that means.

Don't act like that. What does that mean? It's tax season. You know what it means.

Right? How many miles did you, what? 12,000 miles you put in your vehicle? Yeah, that sounds good. How many write-offs did you have? Ah, how many can I ask for? Right? Walking integrity. Cutting the books.

Altering the books. Doctoring the books. Disclosures and hiding things and not walking in integrity.

God says walk in integrity is the first step to fearing the Lord. Your word is your word. I mean, I've seen such a big difference.

I remember my dad in construction. You guys probably won't even believe this. But 30 years ago, it was a handshake.

I didn't see contracts for years until it got official, working with the city of Palmdale or the city of Lancaster, you had to have a contract. But before that, I was like, for that price, I'll be here. A man's word was good enough.

That's all you had. You didn't have contracts, disclosures, bylaws, and different things to follow. You had your word.

And what I've noticed is actually it hasn't strengthened integrity, it's lessened it. Because now they try to look for loopholes in the contract. So if you want to go back to fearing the Lord, let your word mean something.

Let your no be no and your yes be yes. Don't overcommit, don't undercommit. Walk in integrity.

Don't say I'm sick if I'm not. Don't say I can't make it if you can't. Just walk in integrity.

Now that's a struggle for a lot of people, right? Most of us. It's something that can be difficult. So here's how we build that relationship with the Lord.

Walk uprightly. It's not this kind of, you know, who's gonna see me being sneaky, right? I'm a Christian, I'm a closet Christian, I'm a sneaky Christian, and I'm gonna undercut here and try to, you know, we try to get money out. We complain sometimes at the bank or things and we try to change situations.

God just says walk uprightly. And work righteousness. What is righteousness? A right heart, integrity.

And that word integrity is interesting. The root word of the word integrity is when you say something has integrity. This building has integrity because of the foundation.

It's a foundation of integrity. It's something solid and strong. So God says you know me when you get back to this place of integrity.

So my challenge to you is if you haven't been walking in this area or have been slipping, repent. And say God, the fear of the Lord causes me to repent in this area. What about at work? Do we ever cut things, do things wrong at work? You know, I mean, it's almost eight hours.

Can I just put down eight hours? I know I got 30 more minutes, but nobody will know. Right, and we get in the habit of that. Or I don't think the work will know that I'm gonna borrow all this paper and pens and maybe the vehicle today.

I mean, gas card and you know, we try. And it just says just walk in integrity. It's getting convicting now, so I'm gonna change directions.

Here's what else a person does. It's hard though because your flesh is whispering to you every chance it gets. Every chance it gets, cut this corner.

Make more money here. Do this. And we run around trying to cut corners and it doesn't work.

And speaks the truth in his heart. So a person who fears the Lord and wants his closeness with God will speak the truth in his heart. They're a truth speaker.

Now there's a lot of, sometimes people say, well I'm not a liar. Well okay, but you're a manipulator. Well I didn't lie.

Well you told half of the truth. See, that's still lying. A person of integrity that this is talking about just speaks the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

So help me God. They are a truth teller. Now if your spouse says, do I look overweight in this dress, right? That's not applying in this thing.

That's, honey, it's fine. You look fine. This is a truth.

He speaks the truth in his heart. In other words, it's already coming out of the heart. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

It's already planted in there. It's almost, this thought here is, you don't have to, what is the truth? It just comes out. The truth comes out.

It's who you are. And again, repentance needs to take place if this is an area you need to work on. This is a hard area too because when a person isn't a truth teller and they don't want to admit it, then they stay stuck in the lying state.

I've known people over the years I've had to talk with and hey, you lay it out. Just not honest. You're not upfront in this area.

Listen, we caught you. Oh no, no, no. I think you got wrong information.

That's not me. You're gonna stay stuck and stupid if you don't change this behavior. Repentance, getting a person who lies to repent is very challenging because they built their whole life off lies.

So they have this wonderful castle or this city they built on their lies or half-truths I guess we should call. And for that all to come crumbling down is very difficult. But that is not pleasing to God.

He speaks the truth in his heart. He who does not backbite with his tongue. Wow.

It's a tall order, isn't it? We're not putting others down. And that's also in our DNA. Did you know that it just naturally comes out to put others down? And you too, Shane, as a pastor, yeah.

It just comes out naturally. So what has to happen? Supernaturally, something else has to happen, right? Something supernatural has to take over, that being the power of the Holy Spirit. So here's who can know God.

He who does not backbite with his tongue nor does evil to his neighbor. This is, well, who's my neighbor, Jesus would say. Well, anybody who's not a total enemy.

So this person is, because we have people in our, that's where the word click comes from, right? We stick in our own little, come on, fill in the blank, click, right? But really, Jesus said, everybody's our neighbor. So don't do evil to your neighbor. Don't ignore them.

Reach out to all people. Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend. So this person can be trusted.

He's not two-faced. He's not going to turn on them. Do you notice people just turn on you? It's like, you were nice a month ago.

What happened? What happened to you? Well, Jesus knows how you feel because he's on a donkey one day and they're saying, Hosanna, Hosanna, the son of David. And then within a week, they're saying, crucify him. Because the heart was wrong.

They were fickle. They were being pulled away by the Pharisees. And here's a person, God says, in whose eyes a vile person is despised.

And it's okay to hate. This is where the saying comes from, I think, one verse, where hate the sin but love the sinner. Right, we are to hate sin, the vileness, the wretchedness, the wickedness.

We are to hate that because if you love God, how can you love sin? If you truly love God, you hate the sin that destroys people. You hate a vile person, not the person themselves because we are called to love them, but I hate the vileness, the sin that is so debilitating in the life of a person. You hate that.

But if you don't and you love the sin, then it's probably a good chance that you don't love God because those can't exist in the same body. Whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord. So a person who's walking uprightly honors those who fear the Lord.

He who swears to his own hurt and does not change. Uh-oh, I could stay there for a while. Do you know what that means? Right after where I underlined it.

He who swears to his own hurt and he does not change. I'm gonna sum it up for you. Keep your word.

I'll be there. Be there. And we see that a lot in the church.

I will sign up for children's ministry. Well, where'd you go next week? Oh, um, mm. That's why it says swears to your own hurt.

See, it's easy to say I'll help, but it hurts when you have to do it. So you swear to your own hurt. You know what? I said it.

So this, two things will happen here. You'll be very careful when committing. Right? Think it through.

That's one reason I don't commit to a lot of things. Because you have to think it through. You have to pray about it.

Right now, it's still on the table. I've got a speaking engagement in Washington State and Minnesota and possibly flying to Washington, D.C. this summer with a group. And I haven't committed to any of those yet because I want to, because if I commit it, it's hard to just, oh, mm.

I know there's 600 people waiting to hear, but I just don't feel like going this week. You can't do that. Same thing, though, in a smaller scale.

If we say I'll be there, you'll be there. If you say you're gonna get there early, get there early. Become a man and woman of character that people can count on.

Now, we all struggle with this. But swearing to your own hurt, I've seen this, again, 30 years ago, right? You wouldn't see this a lot. A man, he was there, he was there.

Now, it's like it's fashionable to be a half hour late, whatever that means, right? Just fashionable. Well, we said seven. How is that fashionable? How is that relevant? You said seven, or you said eight, or whatever.

It's swearing to your own hurt. I'll be there. I'll back you.

I'll donate. I'll give you the money to help you with your car. I'll help you move, right? I'll serve.

I'll commit to being an usher or a greeter or a children's ministry. I'll commit to that. But then when it comes to the commitment, we have tons of commitments, but the schedule's always empty.

Now, please don't understand. I'm not using this as an opportunity to scold anyone. I know people get sick.

I know cars break down. I know plans change. We're very flexible.

But I also know that we don't swear to our own hurt very often. We try to find things. Here's what happens.

I think personally. Yes, I'll be there. I'll do that.

You can count on me. We have good intentions. It sounds good.

I'll do that. You can count on me. But then as the week goes by and that day is coming, it's like, oh, why did I do that? I don't feel like doing that.

See, it's hurting. Now it's hurting. It was easy to say it, but now it's hurting.

So in other words, what Jesus said, let your yes be yes and your no be no. Be a person whose word means something. My dad taught me that a long time ago.

If you don't have your word, son, you have nothing. You really have nothing because you become a charlatan. You become somebody nobody can count on.

You're a counterfeit. That's one good thing I do remember about my father is if he said it, it was gonna happen. It was going to happen.

So remember that as you're going through life. Keep your commitments. Choose carefully.

And then when you say it or you make it, do it. Fulfill it. And God honors that.

See, look at this. This type of person God honors. If you're speaking the truth from your heart, you're living a life of integrity.

You're keeping your word. You're fulfilling. You're building your neighbor up.

You're not backbiting. That is a blessed person. God is blessing that person's life in a powerful way.

He who does not put his money out as usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent, he who does these things shall never be moved. And it's funny. He ties in at the end the issue of money.

This is a biggie. And really, he's saying here, be wise with your finances. Be wise with your finances.

What that meant even back then, we see it now, money as usury. Have you ever heard of co-signing? Anybody got in trouble co-signing? I did. I think I was 22.

Good credit. I co-signed for a friend. Oh, three months late on the payments.

Guess who's getting the phone calls? That just ruined our relationship. Ruined my finances. Ruined my credit.

I think it was a Honda Civic or something. And God says, be wise. Be wise.

Be a wise steward. You know, some of you are smiling, right? But we want to help our kids out. And it's okay to do that.

My dad did something for me many years ago. I think it was my first Ford truck ever bought. I saved up \$8,000, and he matched \$8,000.

He said, I'm not signing anything. You got to earn it. You earn it, you save it, I'll match it.

And I want to do that with my kids someday, hopefully. But it's this idea of being wise stewards with the money. Because remember, this isn't our money.

I know that shocks some people. But that bank account, that's not yours. I work.

It's God's. We are stewards, I believe, of what God has given us. We're blessed in this nation.

We're blessed. Many people have wonderful savings, wonderful retirement. You are a steward of the resources that God has given you.

Because when you go, and you're buried six feet under where I am, guess what I'm taking with me? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. And hopefully it was stewarded correctly.

And does not take a bribe against the innocent. It's hard to really fathom that now, but this happened all the time in the Old Testament, primarily, is you would have judges, you would have leaders of the people, and they would actually take a pouch of silver, and they would be bribed to change the judgment, to alter the truth, to get people out of a pickle, out of the situation. Right? We see that a little bit today.

Like, I know somebody in the courthouse. I know somebody at that legal department. I know somebody.

I've got connections. So just be careful. Sometimes it's fine.

Sometimes you have connections, and it helps somebody. I'm all for that. But be careful that it's not against integrity.

That it's still right. Somebody's not getting hurt in the process. And we can change our minds sometimes.

Right? Money starts to come into play. Friendship starts to come into play. And we begin to change our mind on certain things.

So this type of person will never be moved. What does that mean? Like Jesus said, Oh, the storms are coming. Right? The storms are coming.

He who does these things shall never be moved, though that storm will not knock him off. Who builds his house on the rock. Though the storms come, the rain beats upon that house, it will not fall, because it's founded on Christ and his commandments.

So again, recap. A person who has integrity. They're firm.

They're honest. They're upright. They speak the truth.

They avoid backbiting, which is malicious talk about someone who is not present. Been guilty of that before? See, it's one thing to do it, and you say, You know, I should have done that. But if this is a lifestyle, if it's a pattern of doing it, then this is a scary spot to be.

Because the heart's not right. I've slipped. Right? We all slip.

You know, we put down churches sometimes. Or that pastor, or that pastor, or this. And we start to, we catch ourselves backbiting.

It's good to catch yourself and repent, and then God honors that. He doesn't reproach. You encourage others, versus beat them up.

You love the sinner, but hate the vile sin. You respect those who fear the Lord. You swear to your own hurt.

You keep your word, and you do not change. And you use financial wisdom, and you're not influenced by wealth. That's the person who fears the Lord.

They live in such a way, because, well, let me tell you, I've given you this analogy before. When I was in construction, I loved to just dig trenches out where there was nothing. But I was not very, I didn't like it when there was something written on the street.

Have you ever seen, in white, USA? It says USA big, or it says it on the street poles. USA, and you're wondering, oh, these guys are patriotic. Really, it just means underground service alert.

And you have to, people go and identify, right, Brant? You do that. You mark for AVEC water. And when I would get somewhere, I'm like, oh, man.

Six inch HP, and it's written in yellow, means high pressure gas line. And then next to it, there's 12,000 volts from Southern California Edison. And then over two more feet is a fiber optics line from Verizon that's \$1,000 an hour if I break it.

So I've gotta cross this whole thing. And now my day has just been, went from no stress to very stressful. Right, you start real gentle, and you cut the concrete, and you pot holes, and I've gotta find it first with the shovel, and then, you know, it's just a massive project with a headache.

But I feared those things. I feared those things. You ever hit a six inch high pressure gas main? You can blow up the block.

Same thing with, I've seen big backhoe teeth just charred and crisp from the electrical charge of it hitting there on certain high voltage areas. People have died doing it. And so, but see, that kind of fear changes the way I approach the job.

It changes the way I live. I'm careful. I'm cautious.

I respect those things. I don't just take a tractor and start digging down six feet, right, and wrecking everything. So the fear of the Lord changes how you live.

You don't just go wrecking things. Right, the wrecking ball, wrecking Ralph. Your kids like that movie, Wrecking Ralph.

That's not good. Unless you're wrecking with the gospel, right, and preaching things. But it changes how you live, how you treat your spouse.

Listen, when you fear God and the Bible says love your spouse, as Christ loved the church, man, you'll change how you live. And you start to read the Bible more, get that law into your heart. It changes the way you live.

And that's a good thing. It's not walking around. I mean, I don't walk around like, here comes lightning bolts, right, or hell stones the size of a hundred pound dumbbell.

We just walk in true freedom and genuine love of the Lord. But we respect, we reverence who He is, what He stands for, and the truth He set in motion that changes the way we live. That's the fear of the Lord.

And walking in that fear. Actually, it's funny. This is the only fear that brings comfort.

Think about that. You can fear what's going on in the news, right? Most people are. They look at the news and they go, we're going to hell in a hell basket.

And there's fear, or there's fear shootings, or out in the community and there's fear, and there's fear, and there's fear. But this kind of fear brings tremendous comfort. Because you're fearing the one who has all of that in the palm of His hands.

And you rest in that. You sleep in that. You're kids, no matter what happens, you rest in the sovereignty and the fear of the Lord.

If you're walking in that, so that can bring tremendous peace, I mean, people who go to bed at night fear the Lord. The people who don't sleep well are not fearing the Lord. They're fearing everything else.

That's why they can't sleep well. That's why they're worried about the government, or this, or that, or North Korea, or they're just, they're gripped in fear and anxiety. But God says, fear me and it will bring tremendous comfort.

Isaiah 41.10, I'm going to leave you with this. Fear thou not. God is saying this to Isaiah to tell the people, and it's applicable for us today.

Fear thou not, in other words, don't fear, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, don't be confused, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, and I will uphold you with my right hand of righteousness.

See, that promise you can take to the bank. Don't trust your stocks. It's going like this, right? Dow Jones is down five, oh my, what's gonna, well, just, I trust in the one who never, there's never ups and downs.

He's consistent. He is integrity. He is the foundation.

So he says, don't fear. I am with you. Don't be dismayed.

I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you.

I will withhold you. I will hold you with my right hand, which the right hand is a position of power and authority. God has us.

But Shane, sometimes I don't feel like it right. That's why you don't trust your feelings. You go back to fearing God.

I mean, whenever I'm in trouble, these kind of scriptures really put fear in check because you don't have a spirit of fear. What the Bible means by that is you've been given the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a spirit of fear.

Actually, the Holy Spirit will make you fearless. That's why people can be bold and fearless and die for their faith. So who gives us that spirit of fear? It's the work of the devil.

It's the work of our own thoughts. So fear comes in and it crowds out faith. So God says, no, no.

Turn that back. Remember who I am. Fear not.

Don't be dismayed. Don't be... No, dismayed is it's confused. Have you ever been confused? Fear brings confusion.

It does. I don't know what to do. What should we do? I don't know.

I don't know. We make stupid decisions. We make bad financial decisions.

We make bad relational decisions. We say things we shouldn't. We look back and go, why did I do that? He says, don't be dismayed.

Don't be confused. I've got this. Just trust me.

Just let me walk you through. But Lord, I need answers now. Just trust me.

Just trust me. Do not fear. Do not be dismayed.

I've got you. I will hold you. Let's just focus on that tonight.

I'm gonna close in prayer and Brent and Jim will come back up. We're gonna be in the back, back here. If you need prayer at all, there's a few of us back here in the back corner that would love to pray for you.

Especially maybe if there is fear because that is real, isn't it? People are gripped by fear and anxiety. Never before have I seen so many people gripped by fear and anxiety in our nation. What's gonna happen with our finances? What's happening with my health? What's happening? And fear has gripped us.

Do you see what's going on in the nation at all? In the different states, in the different things? This is not going in a good direction. I try to be very positive, but there's a Civil War type mentality brewing. And people are getting upset and fearful.

That's why the school shootings will increase. Pray against it. That's why violence, because people are fearful.

And we need to take our thoughts captive and bring them back to Little House on the Prairie, right? Leave it to Beaver and all the right media things. I remember when I was a little kid, I wasn't scared of anything, right? Except going outside when it was dark. But now there's so much fear.

Our kids are scared because the parents are scared. And we're not supposed to transfer that down into the little kids. So we'll be back in the corner if you need to pray for fear over your house.

And I believe we can pray against that. Cast that out. Demonic influence in your life.

It will come back if there's a stronghold there and you open that door. Hopefully I can teach on that in the future. But let's just focus on not fearing man tonight and get back to fearing God.

Is there any areas where it's integrity? Moral purity. We didn't even touch much on that. Moral purity.

Holiness. Our bodies are holy temples for God. And doing things in the body that we shouldn't be doing because we don't fear God.

So this could be a wonderful time for repentance tonight. Getting us back on track. Because when you get back on track and when you're renewed and you're restored, you drive home excited.

You drive home saying, thank you God, praise you God. I fear you again. I've been rebuilt.

I've been restored and replenished in my spiritual life. Because I fear you. Thank you God for your grace and your mercy.

Because he doesn't just sit here and beat you up. He shows us the word of God. He shows us where we're not lining up and he says come back.

Come back to the old path. If you're lost, if you've been wandering, come back to the old path. The path on which you will never get lost.

I've never met a person I've never read about in a book ever that at the end of their life they said, I shouldn't have followed God. I shouldn't have chosen that path. Never.

You always hear the opposite. One of the things that's hard for me is actually pastoring is I do talk to a lot of people and families when death is close. When it's knocking at the door, hospice has been called or at the hospital and just seeing people realize they've wasted their entire life.

They didn't fear the Lord. They didn't choose the right path. I can't even imagine that.

Can you imagine laying there knowing that you just wasted your whole life? Because you chose the wrong path. The enemy told you it was the right path. God says it's the wrong path from the get go and here's how to get on the right path.

Fear me. Return to the old paths. The path on which you will never get lost and you will find rest for your soul.

But the people said we will not. That just always sticks out to me. God just says, are we that arrogant? Are we that misled? But let that be the encouragement for you tonight.

Get back on the right path of integrity, following God and you'll watch him do amazing things.

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