

# The Devil of Extremes ■ Seeking to Get You Unbalanced

by Tim Conway

---

*This sermon emphasizes the importance of being strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might, highlighting the need to put on the whole armor of God to stand against the schemes of the devil. The speaker discusses the significance of repetition in Scripture and the need to pay attention to it. The sermon encourages seeking balance in understanding biblical truths, being girt with the truth, and standing firm in the faith.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 6:10, Ephesians 6:11, Psalm 119:160, 2 Timothy 2:15, Acts 17:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Strength", "Armor of God"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might, highlighting the need to put on the whole armor of God to stand against the schemes of the devil. The speaker discusses the significance of repetition in Scripture and the need to pay attention to it. The sermon encourages seeking balance in understanding biblical truths, being girt with the truth, and standing firm in the faith.

---

## Transcript

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Ephesians 6 verse 10 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.

And having done all to stand firm, stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth." Now, one thing that I hope you all recognize as you approach Scripture, is that God uses repetition in His Word. It has significance. You probably have heard that repetition to the Jew was significant.

And that undoubtedly comes just from the way God spoke. The way God would seek to communicate with man. We take it for granted.

You know, we sing holy, holy, holy. But why that? Do we talk that way? You know, here in the West, we don't tend so much to use that kind of repetition. Now we may say something over and over and over.

We may reiterate. We may repeat ourselves if we feel like somebody didn't get it. Somebody didn't hear.

Somebody was too casual. They were ignoring us. But to simply say three words in a row like that, holy, holy, holy, typically the only reason we do that is because we're reading Scripture, we're quoting Scripture, we're quoting that concept.

We typically don't speak that way. Jesus would regularly say things like truly, truly, or verily, verily. You've got a place in Revelation that says woe, woe, woe.

Now, you know, I mentioned just recently that I read repeatedly through the book of Isaiah since coming over here to England, especially during the time we were in the quarantine, which is rereading, rereading Isaiah. You know, there's a place in Isaiah that says this. It jumps out at me every time I read it.

Let them lay hold of my protection. This is God speaking to Israel. Let them lay hold of my protection.

Let them make peace with me. Let them make peace with me. What a blessed repetition that is.

God saying to us twice, let them make peace with me. Like really driving home the point. That's so significant.

We have four gospel accounts. You ever think about that? You ever think about how much of the New Testament is taken up simply with the gospel accounts? And then you think about the gospel accounts. How much of those gospels are actually taken up with the last week of Jesus' life here on this earth before his death? How much is actually taken up with the last day or two or three of his life? I mean, there's an emphasis in Scripture.

That's significant. So when I look at Ephesians 6, I'm just saying all that to say, God hits us with repetition on purpose. And when you're reading Scripture, when you're doing your own study, look for repetition, pay attention to it, because it's significant.

And so I would ask this, anytime there's a portion of Scripture that I wanna deal with, what is it that God wants me to hear over and over? What is it that jumps out? Does anybody see anything in verses like 10 through 14 that seem very repetitious? Is there any repetition here? Stand. Or as Sonny just said, stoned. See, I'm getting the accent now.

No. No. Okay.

The new King James talks about being girt with the truth. Is that right? Girt yourself with the belt of truth. What's the new King James say? Girted your waist with truth.

Okay. The new American standard, which I know none of you have, but listen to it. Stand firm, therefore, having girted your loins with truth.

And if you've got the old King James, very similar. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth. Now, I don't like the ESVs rendering here because they really move off of the original flavor.

See, the original flavor is not simply a belt. And typically wore loose garments, basically long gowns. There's a hot environment, but they would wear these flowing kind of loose garments.

Actually, if you look at a picture of it, you go to the Middle East today, many of the men wear the same kinds of things over there. And so loose garments, long hanging gowns, kind of, those don't work well in battle. You don't want to go into battle with basic, I mean, because we don't wear them here, but you don't

want to go to battle with a dress on.

Now, I know gowns are different and it's manly over there, but you don't want to do that. You don't want things that encumber your legs and your feet. You don't want something you're going to be stepping on.

You know, there are times women say, you know, I don't really want to go riding a bike with a dress on. I told Ruby, you know, we can ride bikes to church. She said, I don't want to do that with a dress on.

Well, see, there's things you don't want to do. You don't want to go into battle with a dress on. You don't want to go with something long and hanging down.

Men, when they're in a relaxed state in the Middle East 2,000 years ago, it was very common for them to be dressed that way. But what happened? If there's going to be some kind of action, if all of a sudden they want to play sports, if all of a sudden they're going to go into battle, what would they do? They would gird up their loins. That's a very common idea found in Scripture.

Now, newer translations tend to lose that flavor. Not all of them. The old King James very much captures that reality.

This idea of girding, what they would do. Now it's true they might use a girdle, gird, girdle. It could be a belt of some type.

But basically what they did was they simply grabbed hold of the garment, the gown, and they pulled it out front of them tight so that it was tight on their backside. And they took what was loose, they ran it between their legs, they pulled it up behind them, and they took the two ends of it and they tied it together. Maybe there were some other ways they did it.

Maybe they had different kinds of belts or girdles, but you can look at... That's basically what it meant. However they did it exactly isn't the thing. Different cultures always have little different ideas about how they did it.

But what was very fundamental about this is they didn't want that thing there where they could trip on it entangled in their legs. Now this is foundational for battle in Paul's day. First thing the soldier did when he went to meet the enemy.

Remember, this is what this is about. Cosmic powers. This is about spiritual forces of darkness.

We are up against the devil. And what Paul is telling us is gird your loins. Get yourself girded.

Well, let's think about that. What's this about? Listen to this. These are all King James Version renderings.

But just listen. Psalm 18, thou hast girded me with strength. Just think about how that's used.

You see, these are the concepts that Paul would have had from the Old Testament running through his mind when it came to this concept of being girt or girded. Notice how it's used. Thou hast girded me with strength.

That's almost like the idea of being clothed with or being encompassed with, being covered with. That's a common use of the term in the Old Testament in the King James Bible. Or this, Psalm 30, thou hast girded me with gladness.

Or it's actually said of God in Psalm 65, God is girded with power. Or you think about the excellent wife from Proverbs 31. Specifically says of her, she girdeth her loins with strength.

So when you think about loins, you know, you're thinking about the midsection, girded. And yet strength, it doesn't mean that she's just strong in the midsection. It means that there's a strength about her.

It doesn't necessarily even mean physical all the time. But it's almost the idea of being robed or being clothed with, being encompassed with. When you come over to the New Testament, there's a different, it's a little bit different flavor.

The New Testament, it's more of a readiness. The Old Testament, to be clothed with or encompassed with. But in the New Testament, it begins to bear more on that idea of not just being wrapped or girdled with, which is part of the concept of being girt.

But in the New Testament, it's more of that idea that you gird yourself to be ready. There's a readiness aspect. Listen to this.

Again, this is a King James rendering in Luke 12. "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning." You know what the Lord Jesus was speaking about there? The second coming. And He's saying, be ready.

You know, one of the ways that you would speak in that day about being ready? We don't use it today. If I was gonna say, you know, brother, you need to be ready for that. I wouldn't say gird your loins because we don't talk that way.

But that's how they talked then. Jesus is saying, be ready for when I return. Have your loins girt about and have your lights shining.

That means be ready. Or think about this. First Peter chapter one, verse 13.

Again, the King James rendering is this. "Gird up the loins of your mind." Now think about that. Gird up the loins of your mind.

Does your mind have loins? Apparently. I mean, again, we're getting an analogy here. But think with me.

When Paul says that we need to gird ourselves, we need to gird our loins with truth. And Peter says, gird the loins of your mind. You get a feeling that they're talking about the same thing? Where do you, I mean, gird your loins with truth.

Where does truth go? You put it on your body? Where do you put truth? Obviously you put it in the same place Peter's talking about. You gird the loins of your minds. They're talking about the same thing.

You see, you want to get away from just the materialistic aspect here and look past it. Look past the analogy here and look at what's really being spoken about. What is Paul saying? He's saying that you, in the same way girding is the idea of you kind of tie it all together.

The idea here is that you're going to enter this battle and you've got to have a mastery of truth. You've got to be mastered by the truth. Christian, this is the first thing in this battle.

The devil's real. And you know, the devil even comes into the church. We know that because when the gospel's preached, he's there like the birds picking up the seed.

He operates, right? He's not afraid of church walls. This isn't like some old vampire movie where you could hold up a Bible or holy water or a cross and the vampire runs away. The devil quotes scripture.

This is a real battle. And he means to knock us over. And the very first thing that Paul wants us to recognize, the very starting point, is that you've got to be girt about by truth.

You've got to have settled convictions. You've got to be mastered by the truth. Now, I want us to bring these two concepts together.

The concept of being wrapped with truth, encompassed with truth, clothed with truth, ready with truth. That's the idea of girding, as we find it in the old and the new. And standing, girding yourself with truth and standing.

I want to bring those two concepts together. Have you ever watched children? Did you ever do this? I can imagine you two when you were little girls. You spin around, spin around, spin around, spin around, then take off running.

Did you ever do that? Come on, mom and dad did that. We all did that, right? You get the balance mechanisms in your ears all out of whack and then you take off running and what happens? What happens? You fall over. Exactly.

Why do you fall over? You're dizzy. You've lost your balance. You're out of balance.

Okay, see, when we bring these together, if you're going to talk about truth and standing, we want our balance. And the thing is, people, when it comes to truth, they can be out of balance. They lose their balance.

You know what? The devil is a devil of extremes. He tries to push us out of balance. He tries to push us so that we fall over.

He tries, and you know, have you ever noticed throughout history? Look at the cults and look at heretics. Look at the heresies that have been identified through the ages. You ever notice you can trace them back to some truth.

You can trace them back to some scripture. You emphasize a truth to the point that it becomes error. And we, you know, people that happens in the church, you get churches that become so consumed with certain aspects that before long, what happens is it's to the neglect of a whole bunch of other things and they're no longer balanced.

And so they're not, you know, when you gird yourself with truth, you want truth on every side. It means if the devil comes and pushes me over here, I want a truth that pushes him back there. But if he runs around to the other side and he begins to push me in the other direction, I want a truth that pushes that way.

You see, if I arm myself where all I'm doing is pushing in that direction, you know what he's going to do? All he's going to do is push on me over here and get me really pushing, really pushing. But all the while, he means for me to actually go in that direction. You say, what do you mean? All he comes and he pushes here.

So I push back. It's kind of like the maybe Christian liberty thing. You get somebody and there's a danger of legalism.

So he becomes, he comes over and he begins to push and you begin to push back on Christian liberty. Well, really he wants you. He's not, he's not trying to lead you into legalism.

You feel like that's the threat. He's really trying to run you into license. He wants your life sloppy.

He wants you playing with worldliness all the time. He wants you to destroy your reputation. So what does he do? Well, he starts trying to push you towards legalism.

But see, that's never his intent. His intent is really to run you into license and loose living. You say, well, he's pushing you in the exact opposite direction that he wants you to go.

Why? Because then you begin pushing. And you know what happens when you push and you begin to push it and you begin to resist against him. And now suddenly he lets go and he runs around to the other side and he pushes you.

And you know what, that happens in the church all the time. And that's how you end up with heresies. And that's how you end up with cults.

It's like, there's a verse over here and you begin to look at it, but it becomes distorted. Have you ever, I was, you've got software. Sonny's got software that you can manipulate photos, right? Okay, you take a photo of somebody in the church.

What happens if you take a photo? You take a photo with Tim. Sonny, you take a photo with Tim. You just think about this and you put it up on your computer screen and then you start enlarging his nose.

And you just make it a little, you say, I'm gonna play with this a little bit. I'm just gonna make his nose a little bit bigger. And then you make it even bigger and then you make it even bigger and then you make it even bigger.

And what happens? You're gonna show it to Rachel and what's she gonna say? She's gonna scream. You know what you've done? You've just distorted him into something that's, it becomes ugly, distortion. And you see where, if we're not balanced, we need to be girt about by truth and there needs to be balance in this reality.

And the thing is, you need to remember what's happening. We're up against an enemy that means to make us fall. We're not playing against a lightweight here.

My son, my son got involved in Brazilian jujitsu. Evan was doing that. So my son got involved.

My son said this. He said, dad, the best guys, he said, they get you to work against yourself. He said, the best guys, they know the direction they wanna take you in.

And so they actually begin to push you away from the place they want to take you ultimately. Because if they begin to push you, you push back. And when you push back, now you're pushing in the very direction they wanna take you.

And once they've got you exerting all your energy in that direction, guess what they do next? They immediately stop resisting and force you that way. And now they got you right where they want you. And you know what, oftentimes, we're talking about spiritual realities.

We're not talking about something harmless here. This is a favorite method of the devil's attack. People with no sense of balance, they're like those children and a fall becomes imminent.

And these falls can be catastrophic. And listen, he means to kill, he means to destroy, he means to disrupt, he means to keep us powerless, he means to keep us fruitless. He wants to mess the whole thing up and he will come in and he'll seek to do that.

He does that in individuals lives and he will seek to do it in the church. He wants us to get out of proportion where that picture of that person becomes ugly, it becomes distorted, and it becomes the same with truth. Look, the devil has certain routes that he follows very regularly.

I mean, as clever and crafty as the devil is, he lacks originality. He basically, you can look at him and he operates the same in every generation. One of his first lines of attack is displayed in trying to produce a lack of balance.

He is the devil of extremes. I'm gonna give some specific examples in a second, but I want you to see him at work. Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 4 once again.

And we were here a couple of weeks back. And you remember, we looked at the temptation of Jesus Christ. Again, just mark this.

He's crafty, but he lacks originality. And when you can identify how he operates in different places in the Bible, be sure of it. He operates the same way today.

I want you to notice something about the way he engages our Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 4, verse one. You'll remember two weeks ago, I said that as a young believer, I really didn't get how this was such a great temptation.

It was my ignorance. Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting 40 days, 40 nights, he was hungry.

And the tempter came and said to him, so while he's hungry, the devil says, if you're the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. But he answered, it is written, man shall live by bread alone or not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Now, as a young believer, I hardly perceived what was so diabolical about this temptation.

After all, Jesus is the son of God. He can change stone to bread. If he did it, it wouldn't be devil bread.

Wouldn't be like the devil made it. It would have been Jesus making. And so, you know, the question that I had as a young believer, what's even wrong with eating bread? I mean, what's the devil doing here? It just didn't seem like that big a deal to me.

But I want you to remember this. Remember when Jesus was faced? I mean, we talked about this two weeks ago. Jesus came upon a path of submission to his father, emptying himself of servanthood, a path of lowliness, where he would not exert his prerogatives.

He was resigned to doing what his father wanted him to do. You remember what happened when he was there in the garden? He specifically, one of the most pathetic cries of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, father, my father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me.

He said, nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. Now think with me. You see what the devil was doing? He's like, Jesus, come off that.

Not as I will, but as you will. None of that. You're hungry.

Feed yourself. You see, that's what he was doing. Don't depend upon your father.

Just come on. Are you the son of God or are you not? Prove it to me. Do it.

That was the issue here. Come off that path of lowliness and suffering obedience. Let it be your will.

Let your will be done. You're hungry. You want to eat? Come on, turn it.

You have the ability. Do it. That was the issue.

Okay, now here's the thing. Notice the strategy. He's pushing him to not trust his father.

And then what does he say? He says, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. You see what Jesus did? He pushed back with the very truth that says I'm staying centered and focused on my father and his will. I don't live by bread alone.

I live by my father's will. I live by the words that come out of his mouth. Okay, now that's kind of where we stopped two weeks ago.

But now we're talking about the devil of extremes today. Notice his next attack. Again, as a young believer, I just didn't get it.

I missed this. It didn't make sense to me. But notice verse five.

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on a pinnacle of the temple and said to him, if you are the son of God. Oh, don't you like that? How he comes with that again. Throw yourself down for it is written he will command his angels concerning you and on their hands, they will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone.

Jesus said to him, again, it is written. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Now notice he's balanced with truth, but the devil is also quoting Bible.

The devil will quote Bible to you. The devil is often quoted Bible where he seeks to deceive. But do you see the tactic? Notice this temptation.

Okay, Jesus, you're so intent on this path of servanthood and trusting your heavenly father. You just said you're gonna live by every word that proceeds from your father's mouth. Okay, okay.

Okay, let me tell you what your father has said. Let me remind you what your father promised you. You see that? You see that's exactly what he's doing.

It's like he pushes Jesus to not trust his father. Jesus said, I'm going to trust him. Every word that comes from his mouth, his will is what is spoken out of his mouth.

His word and his expression of his will. I am committed to doing my father's will. The devil immediately runs around to the other side and begins to push him in the other direction and says, okay, if you're minded to go that way, then go that way, but go all the way that way.

He wants to really push him. I dare you to trust him. Jump, jump.

Do you trust him or not? Jump. Did your father say that he would protect you by way of his angels? Okay, prove it. You say you're going to trust every word that comes out of his mouth.

Listen, you need to see this for what it is. He is a devil of extremes. We need to be people that are balanced.

Think about this tactic. Listen, if I tell you right now, look, I want you to stand up. You, I want you to stand up and I'm going to come out there and I'm going to try to push you over.

Okay, so you're standing there and here I come. What are you going to do? You know what you do. You begin to kind of put your legs in a certain direction where you're going to keep me from moving you, knocking you over.

I'm going to come and I'm going to try to knock you over. I'm going to try to push you from where you are. Well, you're going to begin to kind of put your weight that way.

You're going to put your center of mass more towards my direction. You're going to get yourself ready. And what happens is, if I begin to push on you and we're pushing, we're pushing, we're pushing, well, you know what happens when all of a sudden, the guy that's pushing against you just lets go.

You have this tendency to just, to go. And that's the kind of thing that we're up against. We're up against a devil that operates that.

Suddenly, the devil's going to stop pushing on us and he immediately runs around to the other direction. Now, you remember this. He quotes scripture.

We must have the loins of our minds so girded about with truth that the moment the devil shifts, you seem to be balanced. What you're going to do is you're able to push against the devil when he pushes from over here because you're balanced with truth. All your truth isn't aimed here.

You're not so focused on one truth that you don't have the truths over here. See, to be girded is to be fully wrapped. You want the truth going off in every direction.

You want to be balanced. People that aren't balanced, they get blown about by every wind of doctrine. They're like those little kids and they just spiral off and they're toppling over.

Now, I want to give you some examples. Let's just think here. This goes everywhere.

But these are things that I've heard about just recently. I just heard right here in the church, there was a question about baptism. Okay, so the question comes up.

You know, some churches, they won't baptize children. You have to wait till you're 12 years old. That's a lot of the Baptist churches in the United States.

That's what they do. You get in the reformed Baptist churches, a lot of times you have to wait till you're 18. Maybe some of them are even 21 before they'd even consider baptizing you.

You've got some churches where, I guess this is pretty common among Presbyterian churches. You've got to go through these catechism classes or these beginner classes or these new members class. And sometimes they're years.

Sometimes it can be a year or two years that you have to go through classes before you can get baptized. Now, okay, so then we come to Scripture. See, on one hand, you can resist people.

You don't baptize children. And then what? And then what's happening? You get a little guy who's truly a Christian. And what happens? The church says, no, we're not going to baptize you.

Jesus says that we should make disciples and we should baptize them. And the little guy is starting to read Scripture and it's like, he's supposed to be baptized. He wants to be baptized.

He believes God wants him to be baptized. But you know what? The leaders in his church won't let him be. So they offend one of Christ's little ones.

They're stiff-arming him. They keep him out. Some of those churches, you can't take the Lord's Supper unless you've been baptized.

Look what you do. You see, look what the fruit of that can be. You can be massively discouraging to young people in the church.

You basically are almost indicating like young people can't even be saved. It's a massive discouragement. You're not sufficiently encouraging the children to come to Christ and to be his followers and to do what Scripture says.

But okay, you get pushing in that direction. And you know what? You know what somebody says? Somebody says, hey, I find in the Scriptures, that in the book of Acts, that people were baptized at once. And so you know what? Then you can jump on that bandwagon.

And so next thing you know, somebody comes in the door. They're like, I'm saved. Oh, hey, get the baptismal water.

So you fill them up. We're just, that's how it says in the Scriptures. And so next thing you know, you know what you're doing? You're baptizing everybody.

Knee-jerk reaction, knee-jerk reaction. And you know what next? You talked about the devil being able to sow tares. That's one of the things he does.

We see it very clearly in the parable. Wheat and tares. Now, you know what you're doing? You're inviting the devil just to fill the church full of his tares.

All he's got to do is send somebody in the back door to simply say, I'm a believer. And now they're in. And you see what Scripture says, if you pay very close attention, is you've got two things that need to be held

in balance.

What two things? Well, on the one hand, Scripture repeatedly says that we make disciples and then we baptize. You want to make sure they're a disciple. You want to make sure they're a learner of Christ.

You want to make sure that you've input sufficient there that they are a learner in Christ. That's been verified. It also says repent and be baptized.

There is an order there. You want to make sure that there is at least, look, can we really examine a person's heart? I'll tell you this. There are fruits.

John said it. John said, bring forth fruit that is meat for repentance. There are fruits of repentance.

Scripture also says, believe and be baptized. They received our word and were baptized. That's how Scripture speaks.

So you know what we want to do? We want to at least, were people baptized quickly? Yes. But is there an order? Do you want to make sure they're a disciple? Do you want to make sure they've received the word? Do you want to make sure there's some credible evidence of faith? Some credible evidence of repentance? That is what Scripture says should precede it. You see, this is balance we're looking at.

Listen, the devil is behind these kinds of imbalances because when you go way off in a certain direction, you bring discouragement or you bring false converts into the church too easily. And so next thing you know, you've got massive impurity in the church. You've got carnality.

You've got worldliness. Or let's talk about the government. You see, we're facing this right now.

I'm dealing with some practical things. The baptism thing has been a practical thing in this church. And now all of a sudden we're faced with the government.

Government edicts, government mandates. We were just talking about praying for John MacArthur. Well, okay, so where's the balance? Well, the balance is this.

We recognize that Peter said a couple times and Paul to Titus talked about and also Paul to the Romans spoke about this reality that we need to submit ourselves to the governing authorities. You know what? That's pretty plain in Scripture. We need to honor the emperor, the king.

We need to submit ourselves to the governing authorities as it says in 1 Timothy. We need to be praying for these authorities. But then you know what happens? We tend to forget what was said in Acts chapter four and Acts chapter five, that whether it's right to obey God rather than men.

I mean, you've got the disciples there. Those early guys, Peter and the disciples, Peter and John, they're having these discussions. Which is right? Is it right for me to listen to you or to listen to God? And say, I'm gonna obey God rather than man.

This is the kind of thing you find there. So we come to the balances. But you see, what happens? Think about the implication of the extremes.

If you go with the extreme, then you let the government basically dictate what you do, how you do it, and you fall right in line with it, no matter how they want you to dishonor God. And you know what? That's the

easy path. Because you tend to avoid persecution, at least government persecution.

When you take that road, you end up not being threatened with being thrown in jail, like John MacArthur is. That's a very easy path just to say, oh, we're just gonna obey the government, no matter what the government says. And so you got police that come along and they say, you can't preach out on the streets, you can't propagate the gospel.

You end up under communist governments or certain regimes or whatever it is. Brethren, life can be easy if you don't ruffle any feathers, if you never make problems. But Jesus said, that's not gonna be the case if you follow him.

If basically, if you follow him, you need to be ready to face the facts and the reality that there is gonna be resistant from government levels, from religious levels. They're gonna put you out of the synagogues, they're gonna put you to death, they're gonna throw you in jail. Satan is gonna imprison some of you for 10 days.

This is the kind of talk you have in scripture. But what happens if you go too far the other way? You know what, if you go too far the other way, then you're always claiming that because of religious purposes, you basically make yourselves out to be lawless. It's like, well, you know, you kind of get in the habit of obeying God rather than man.

And next thing you know, you're not obeying man where you should be obeying him in a bunch of places. And you can go to these excesses and you can go to these extremes. Listen, brethren, across the board, we need to be submitting ourselves to the governing authorities.

We should really go out of our way to seek to be a people that are recognized as being a law abiding group. If there's anybody that the government ought to be able to look and say, you know what, we don't like what they believe, but we do have to admit their testimony is flawless. Other than when we asked them to go against this book, and then they're willing to go to jail, even to death for it.

See, again, there's gotta be this realm of balance. Or think about this. You talk about something, oh, brethren, you're gonna find this out about me.

If there's one place the devil wants to move us, you know what, he does not like churches that begin to recognize the sovereignty of God. He doesn't like that. You know what he wants? He wants people thinking you can do this in your own power.

You've got this free will. You know, he wants us to believe that basically this is all about us. This is about how we do things.

We gotta have the proper method, and then we'll get people saved. It's about us. It's about us being innovative.

It's about us using the right tactics. He wants us all consumed with us. He doesn't want us looking at God as sovereign, and God as our help, and being absolutely dependent.

I'll tell you what he doesn't want. He doesn't want anybody in the prayer meeting. He doesn't want the prayer meetings full.

He doesn't want desperate people there because we know nothing's gonna happen unless our God moves. Our God reigns. Our God must do this.

Our God has to save. He doesn't want that. He basically wants to convince us that we're independent.

We're not really that needy. He doesn't want to call in on the Lord. That's on one extreme.

But then I'll tell you what, there's another extreme, and that's the extreme of hyper-Calvinism. Okay, you want to believe in the sovereignty of God, and you want to believe that you need Him, He's now gonna quickly run around to the other side and begin to push us. Okay, go that way then.

The next thing you know, He has us believing we can do nothing, and we shouldn't do anything, and evangelism is actually just useless, and take up a passive mode. Brethren, I'll tell you this. You need to be well-rounded with truth even when you can't fit everything together.

You know what I find in Scripture? I find in Scripture a God who elects. I find a God who chooses before the foundation of the world. I find a God in Scripture that says He has vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath.

I find that in Scripture, but you know what else I find? I find a God that specifically says to the prophet Ezekiel that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. And you know what else I find? I find that He sent His Son to this world, and His Son would say to people, I say these things exactly the way that I say them so that you might be saved. And I find that He would look out over a city that rejected Him, and He would... It's not just weeping, He weiled.

He had a heart for sinners. He said, I speak this way to you that you might be saved. He would say to those cities in Capernaum, He would renounce them because they didn't repent.

It's your fault. I did these works in front of you and you didn't repent. And then He turns around to His Father and He says, I thank you that you revealed these things to babes and you hid it from these people.

Wait a second, you just said it was their fault and you were renouncing them. And now you say to your Father that He hid it from them. Yep, that's how Scripture talks.

And then He quickly turns around and He says, come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest. It's like, wait, a free open invitation like that? You see, we have to be balanced. On one hand does Scripture say that unless Jesus said, no one can come unto me unless my Father draws him.

Oh, there it is. And you know what? Many of the Baptists from this country, the primitive Baptists, these particular Baptists of centuries ago, they came to this horrible hyper-Calvinism. William Carey and his cohorts, Fuller, Ryland, Sutcliffe, all those guys, you know they sent William Carey over to India at a time when hyper-Calvinism was just rife in your land among those circles.

They broke out of that. But listen, you have to hear Scripture. Does Scripture on the one hand say, you cannot come unto me unless my Father draws? Does Scripture say that? But you know what happens when you look over at Luke 14? Luke 14 says, everything is ready.

To the servants, go out and call them all to the feast. And you know what they said? I cannot come. Okay, that's what Scripture says, you cannot come.

Why can't they come? I can't come because I just bought land, I just got married. You see, I got these things. You see why man can't come? Man can't come because he's wickedly wedded to his sins.

You see, you got to be balanced in Scripture. If you just simply look at one place and you disregard all the rest. You see what happened? You know where hyper-Calvinism largely comes from? An obsession with like John 6.44. You just become obsessed with it.

You don't hear anything else that Scripture says. Become massively out of balance. You know what Scripture says? Scripture says, come out from among them.

Anybody know where it says that? That would be like a 2 Corinthians 6, come out from among them. And yet to the same Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 5, he says, I wrote to you not to associate with sexually immoral. And he says, but not at all meaning people out there in the world.

Otherwise you'd have to come out of the world. Wait a second, Scripture tells me to come out from among them, but it also tells me not to come out from among them. So which is it? You see, the devil would gladly run you into not coming out from among them and being like them.

He would love to run you to get drunk with them and do the things and go worship the idols with them and go visit the prostitutes with them, which by the way, the Corinthians were doing. He'd love to have you do that. He tells you to come out, but you know, the same Corinthians, he's telling you not to isolate yourself within these four walls.

The devil wants you to do that. You know what? The devil wants you to go out these doors and get involved in all the sins of the world. Or if you're not gonna do that, then he's gonna ramrod you right into these sterile walls and never go out there.

You see, he is the devil of the extremes. And you gotta be balanced. Brethren, I'll tell you this.

This is what I feel the great pressure to not just give you truth, but to give you well-rounded truth. We've gotta have truth on every side. We've gotta be balanced.

Otherwise the devil is just gonna run us right off into a corner somewhere where you don't wanna be. He's gonna knock you over. Because basically what happens is your nose becomes this big and suddenly it's not pretty anymore.

He's created a really ugly thing. Do you know that? There are churches that are ugly. Why? Because they have been moved into a place where they have become so obsessed with certain truths and they've magnified those to the exclusion of others that it just becomes horrible.

It's based on some figment of truth, some portion of truth, but it's been so exaggerated and something else has been so avoided and overlooked. That's what we don't want. We wanna be balanced.

That's the thing that I find myself massively, a massive responsibility before the Lord is not just to hit you with truth, but to try to look at these things from all the possible perspectives. And also, I mean, we do have to be mindful of what direction we happen to be pushed in at the time by the devil. This is no small question.

Now, listen to this. What I'm interested in is this. In Ephesians 6, in the first verse there that we've been looking at, verse 10, it says this, finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

We need to be strong in the strength of another, not in our own strength. We live, Christian, you live in the strength of another. That's why you've gotta abide in Christ.

You gotta draw from Him. Then verse 11, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand. So here's the question I would ask you.

Does the ability to stand in verse 11, able to stand, does that ability come from the armor of God in verse 11 or does it come from the strength of the Lord's might in verse 10? Which is it? Both. Yeah, you don't wanna put them at odds. Basically, I think what happens here is verse 11 answers verse 10.

Because if you're the Ephesians, be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might. Remember Mary asked that question a few weeks back on Friday, our sister over in, what, Cyprus? She was asking that question. Oh, that's a good question.

Probably the Ephesians would have asked it. It's like, okay, be strong in His strength. It's kind of like Romans 8, 13 that says, if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

It's like, how do I do that? How do I put sin in my body to death in the power of the Spirit? How do I tap that? How do I get it? I mean, I can't see the Spirit. I can't see Christ. This is an unseen Christ.

I can't see the Father. They're there, they're real, they have power. But how do I get that power into my life? That's a really practical, massive question that we face living the Christian life.

God is powerful. God offers me access to that power in order to live this life that He's called me to live. But how do I get access to it? How does it flow through me? Well, verse 11 answers verse 10.

Paul shows us. It's by way of the armor, provided, of course, we put it on. Listen, the armor doesn't do you any good if you don't put it on.

And so we're talking about truth here, being girded by the truth, truth, truth. What truth? Biblical truth. Yeah, but okay, go back just a little bit in Ephesians.

Look at Ephesians chapter four. Paul actually spoke about schemes and truth and even being children, tossed to and fro. In some previous verses, look at Ephesians chapter four, verse 13.

Until we all attained the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children. And I might say no longer children like the ones that spin around and run and fall over, but it's the same thing. They're tossed to and fro.

That's what children, children don't have the strength of adults. They get tossed to and fro. They fall down much easier.

That's what children do. Children are on the ground a lot. That tends to be the older we get, the less we're on the ground.

Tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes. Well, we're talking about the schemes of the devil and we're talking about how to stand against them. But the reality is truth is here.

Where is it? Well, it's in verse 13, the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. When you want to talk about truth, yes, there is truth concerning the stars and the sun and astronomy and calculus. And there's truth that has to do with the medical community.

We're not talking about that. We're talking about biblical truth, but even more than that, we're talking about the truth that has to do with God. When you talk about being balanced, remember this, when Jesus answered the devil, it's the words that come from the mouth of God.

It's not presuming upon God. It's God is at the center here. It's His Father only is to be worshiped.

You see His truth that He resisted the devil with is truth about God. We want to be coming to this truth about God, this truth about the Son of God. And you know what? We live in a day where people are constantly, they don't want to hear it.

You work with people, you live among people, truth. What's truth? They sound like Pilate, right? We live in this relativistic time. Truth.

Today, what are we told? We're told we can't define truth. Well, that's truth for you. You know, I've got my own truth.

But if you claim to have truth, what happens? What are you going to be called? Well, you're narrow, you're bigoted. We just heard it recently. I mean, listen, if you say what the Bible says and you say it with conviction and you say it as though it's truth, you know what you're going to be called? You're going to be called a homophobe and you're going to be called an Islamophobe and a misogynistic.

Certainly you're divisive, you're arrogant, you're bigoted, you're intolerant. I mean, can you imagine Paul coming along today and saying something like he said to Timothy? Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. You know, no question about it.

That I think he might have been, or this is a possibility. There is Christ. He's risen.

He's the offspring of David as preached in my Gospel. Imagine that. My Gospel.

Paul, are you so arrogant? There it is, distinct. I've got a Gospel. How narrow is that? See, if we say we have the truth or we say we found the truth today, we of all people are most to be hated.

Relativism is meant to keep us ungirded. Because how can you ever have truth when everything is relativistic? You can't. But if you ever claim to have found it, it offends everybody because it's going to offend what they believe.

Do you know, I had Sonny read from 2 Timothy. Now, you don't need to turn back there again, but just listen to this. What you have heard from me.

What did Timothy hear? My Gospel. This is Paul talking. My Gospel.

I have a Gospel. I have good news. I have a message.

And by the way, he says, if we or an angel from heaven should preach a Gospel that in any way was contrary to the one that was preached, let it be a curse. In other words, here it is. It's mine.

It's established. It doesn't change. Here it is.

He says to Timothy, what you heard from me, that Gospel, I want you to take and I want you to teach it to other men. This is 2 Timothy 2. Verse 2. Teach it to other men. Why? So that they may be able to teach others.

You see what he's supposing? Timothy, you have the truth. How'd you get it? I have the truth. Where'd you get it? I got it from Christ.

And it's my Gospel and it doesn't change and no angel can even change it. We've got a truth. That truth is found in this book.

We can believe something. We can know for certain that it's a fact. Timothy, you know what I taught you.

Now what I want you to do is take what you know I taught you and I want you to teach it to somebody else. To men. Faithful men.

Implying what? They don't know what you know. There was a time you didn't know what I know. There's a time I didn't know what I know.

Christ had to teach it to me, but He did teach it to me. It comes out of this book. Then it was direct revelation.

But we have truth. It's given to us. I have this truth.

It doesn't change. I imparted it to you, Timothy. You impart it to other men and they are able to teach others further down line.

We have truth. You know what the basic assumption in all this is? It's they don't know it. Or think about it even further down in 2 Timothy.

The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone. Able to teach. Teach what? This truth.

Patiently enduring evil. Correcting his opponents with gentleness. Did you get that? Correcting his opponents.

Why would you correct an opponent? Because they don't believe what I believe. You know what the automatic assumption is right there? You have to instruct them because the assumption is that they don't have the truth. You have it.

They don't. You know, brethren, that is how we approach this world. We have a truth and other people don't have it.

This is one of the reasons why we need to really wake up. Look, the devil doesn't want us convicted. You know what? I love this.

But even when it comes to things that we might differ on, he wants us convicted. Say, where do you get that? Romans 14. You ever notice in Romans 14, it's like, well, if you observe the day or if you don't observe the day, if you eat the meat or you don't eat the meat, he just said, but he says this, everybody needs to be convinced.

See, we're a people of truth. You see, that might almost seem like an argument to undo this thing. It's like, well, ho, one thing can be right for one person and one thing can be right for another person.

And they're, no, that's not it. Those are conscience issues. But even there, what do you want? You want your conscience guided by truth.

And the whole idea is if you study Scripture and you come to the conviction that something is right, you need to go based on your conscience. You need to go on that conviction. I heard Spurgeon say one time he'd rather have people that were operating from conviction and be wrong even though they thought, I mean, I'll give you an example.

As a young believer, I really believed that I as a Christian had to keep the Christian Sabbath. And so I did. Now, I may look back now and say, well, as I began to understand certain portions of Scripture and certain applications of how the Mosaic law is treated by New Covenant believers, but you know what? You gotta live according to your conviction.

We had a woman that back in just south of San Antonio, you know, she came to the church, she had a conviction based on 1 Corinthians 11, she should be wearing a head covering. Oh, all of a sudden one day she didn't have the head covering on. I said, were you studying something, studying Scripture and you came to a different perspective on that? She said, no, I didn't recognize she was just doing it from peer pressure more than anything.

I said, you need to have that on your head. You got a conviction from Scripture that that's right? And I would say that here. If you have a conviction from 1 Corinthians 11 that you should be wearing a head covering, then you should be wearing a head cover.

And I'm not here to go into that, but brethren, the assumption here is that we have truth and we can derive truth from this book. The assumption, we believe in the perspicuity of Scripture. That means we believe that simple people, you don't have to have certain degrees behind your name.

We have the ability, God has given us the Word. You as a believer, you don't have to have certain amount of education, scholastic attainments and academic credentials to be able to profit from this book. The assumption is that if we're saved, we've got the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God reveals spiritual things to the people of God.

That's the truth of 1 Corinthians 2. You have a book with truth in it. We need to be people that are girt about by this truth. We need to be people of this book.

And it's right. Just like Sam was asking on Friday, he was saying that he wants to be able to retain Scripture in a greater faculty, greater ability. And you know what? We need to be thinking about that.

We need to be thinking about what are the most profitable ways to read Scripture? What are the most profitable ways to retain Scripture? I'll tell you this, if you put Scripture to song, that's one of the things I really want to introduce to the church, singing Scripture. I've got some great ones. It's all King James because that's how I learned them.

And anyway, you start putting truth to song and you'll retain it. You'll memorize it. You'll never lose it.

And so we need to be thinking, how can we retain this truth? We need to be girt about by this truth. Truth is something that you can take up. It's something that you can put on.

Is that being contentious? Is that being narrow? Is that being negative? I mean, for you to think that, look, for you to think in all my classroom, if you're going to college, I'm the one that has the truth. I don't think anybody else in here has it. Or in your workplace, I think I'm the only one.

Brethren, that is not uncommon for you to be in that place where God puts you in a workplace where you're the only one with truth. Or He puts you in a college classroom where you're the only one with truth. That doesn't mean that we have a market on the truth.

That doesn't mean that there aren't other people that God has revealed His truth to. But brethren, you do realize that there are not an abundance of people in this world that have a knowledge of the truth in this book. And if we do, we need to not be ashamed to say so.

We have a truth other people do not know. And you know what? With it comes a massive responsibility. But all the time we need to be fighting for balance.

We don't want uncertainty. We don't want doubt. Uncertainty and doubt don't help us to stand.

We are in a world where what we believe is going to be attacked from every single direction. And so we need to be well-rounded, well-balanced. So just know, we are up against the devil of extremes.

And so brethren, you know, one of the ways it's like the Friday night study, asking questions. We're asking questions. We're constantly asking questions.

We ask questions of one another. They don't always have to be asked of me. But we're asking questions.

We're seeking proper perspectives. We're seeking balance. And brethren, the thing is I'm asking questions too.

I ask questions all the time. And I go to, I have my favorites. I mean, I go to guys like Robert Raymond and Gordon Fee and Martin Lloyd Jones and Charles Spurgeon who I've mentioned several times.

I go to these guys. I go to different men. I was telling brother last week, I've listened to probably 1,100 John MacArthur sermons.

I'm looking for truth. I want truth. I'm fighting for balance.

We can all get pushed out of balance. Having good spouses, a good husband, a good wife to help keep you balanced. Having good pastors.

Even having more than one pastor. That helps maintain that balance. You can get one guy and he's got certain burdens or certain things that he focuses on and it can get things out of balance.

I think that's one of the big reasons why you have a plurality of elders and hopefully we want God to provide that. We want to fight for that. Men that are gifted.

Men that can lead. Different voices that come. But you want to be reading.

And you don't always want to read guys that are just in the genre of that little subculture of Christianity that you are most comfortable with. You know what? Sometimes if you break out and you read John Wesley. No, John Wesley isn't an Arminian.

Yeah, I'll tell you. You probably have some things. Same thing is true of Tozer or Ravenhill.

You know, if you look back, you might read Luther. Oh, he's Lutheran. He had all sorts of, he messed up.

He was certainly anti-Semitic. He didn't like the Jews. Yeah, there was problems with him.

I know some people have even wondered whether the guy's saved, but you know, trying to get well-orbed. We want to protect ourselves. And you want to run.

You want to test the spirits. You want to run. Everything's through scripture.

You want to see, are people quoting scripture? Can I find that in scripture? You need to be asking that about everything. If you want to stay balanced, it's what is, you want to live your life, girt up all the time. How are you ready for the battle? Girt up the loins of your mind with truth.

Filled. You got to be people of the word, people of this book, people that live in it, people that, I mean, every single day of your life. If Spurgeon said it, he said, some people can write damnation in the dust on their Bibles.

Strong word, but probably true. Listen, man does not live by bread alone. We got to live on this word.

This is the first aspect of the armor. This is the starting point. You go wrong at this level, you're not fit and you'll get knocked over.

And when the devil takes you down, he wants to take you all the way down. You can know this. He's not playing.

It's not, ha ha, you know, I got him to fall over. He wants you to fall over because he wants to destroy. You know, something so harmless as, oh, baptism, how should we have a proper perspective? Oh, he very gladly filled the church full of false converts.

He'd gladly get people that just make these quick professions and then, oh, they just get ushered in and now everybody pats them on the back and they're deceived. He wants people deceived. But on the other end, oh, he'd gladly have the church thinking that young people can never be saved.

So we don't even evangelize them. We don't even target them. We don't even talk to them.

We don't even expect them to be converted. See, it's all destructive. He wants to come in and he wants to cause pain and sorrow and damnation and destruction.

Mark it, what you believe, these truths you believe about the son of God, these truths you believe about God, they have direct impact on how you live. If you go wrong in your doctrine, you will go wrong in your life. You will go wrong in your actions.

You will go wrong in the fruitfulness of your life. You will go wrong. This is key.

Even if we're just talking, some bear 30 fold, some bear 60 fold, some bear 100 fold. Imagine if it was within your reach. And you know, this is the way scripture talks.

The children of this generation are more prudent or wiser than the children of light. What does that mean? That means you have opportunities that you don't take advantage of. Isn't it amazing that we may have

people in this church that are 30 fold fruitful when you have it within the capacity of what God has given you to be 100 fold.

And yet because of the devil, he has duped you. And I'll tell you this, you don't wanna get away from this as much as we're all justified by faith. You also have a truth.

This is another place of balance. You have a place there in Revelation 14 that says, as you walk out into eternity, your works here that you did in this lifetime will follow you. Jesus said, store up treasure in heaven.

You have the opportunity to be storing up treasure now that you'll not have after this life is over. And the devil just wants to put you to sleep. By what you believe, he's just constantly, he's constantly at work, constantly scheming.

And the only way we're gonna protect ourselves is by knowing this book. You wanna live in it. You wanna be, like they said at Bunyan, he was, I think Spurgeon made the word up, Bible, he bled Scripture.

If you poked him anywhere, that's how we wanna be. Rather than talk Scripture, talk to each other's Scripture. Know it, read it, discuss it, debate it.

Listen, you need to be Berean. You know what I will not get offended at? If I find that you are questioning something I preached. Some pastors, preachers, they feel untouchable.

I'm God's anointed, don't you dare do that. Brethren, I can be wrong, you can correct me. I can be in sin, you can correct me.

First Timothy chapter five talks about elders in sin, but you need to be Berean. Even if I'm the Apostle Paul, you need to be checking what I'm saying. Even if it's an angel from heaven, Paul is saying, you need to be looking at what they're saying.

You need to, don't take what I say. You need to compare it to, you need to make sure I'm having you open up text and look at it and say, yeah, that's what Scripture says. What he's saying is what Scripture says.

Brethren, we need to be testing. We need to be iron sharpening iron. Why? Because souls are at stake.

Lives are at stake. The welfare of this church is at stake. Our fruitfulness is at stake.

Our children are at stake. We have an enemy that wants to destroy us. And truth.

How do you get the power of God channeled to you? By way of the armor. So if you gird your mind with the truth, God will empower it. That's what he's saying.

How do you stand in the strength of his might? That. Put that truth in your mind and seek to live by it. Let it impact you.

Let it guide your life. Make decisions based on it. And he'll empower that.

Ask him to do it. Lord, I'm going to your word. I need a word for today.

Father, we do need a word. Every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. I pray, Lord, help us.

Help us not to be imbalanced. Help us to not be like children who are blown about by every wind of doctrine and toppling over like little children that spin around and are all dizzy. And we don't have balance.

We know there's schemes. There's devilish schemes. There's manmade schemes.

The dupes of the devil, his servants, they come as angels of light. He comes as an angel of light. We're not ignorant about such facts.

We've been told to test the spirits. We see the Ephesians of old. They tested those who claimed to be apostles.

And we're not. We know. You've given us truth.

And we're not ashamed to say. We know other people don't have it. The vast majority of people that live in our neighborhoods, probably all the people that live in most of our neighborhoods do not know the truth we know.

And we can admit that. And we're not being narrow. We're not being bigoted.

You've given us the truth. Lord, You've blessed us with having it. And we want to be faithful with it.

Help us to be faithful. Gird us. Help us to be girt.

Help us to put on. Channel Your power, Lord. Channel it into our life mightily.

We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/aFr56NLsPFY.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/the-devil-of-extremes-seeking-to-get-you-unbalanced/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**