

I. The Old Paths and the State of the Church

The Bible is a book of Israel, and today in the nation of Israel, God's advice to the nation of Israel in the book of Jeremiah was to get back to the Old Paths. In the Bible, the Old Paths always represent the right way that God wants it done. And the nation of Israel had strayed from that in the book of Jeremiah, much as the church has strayed from it today.

In fact, if you were to go back in history and you could be in Israel, around 580 BC when Jeremiah writes this, and you knew anything about the Bible at all, you would know that the nation of Israel was hardly recognizable to the great nation it was under David and Solomon. It had gotten into every form of apostasy. They still had services on Saturday. They still went through the temple worship. They went through everything, but there was no purpose to it and there was no meaning to it.

I find today that that is the way most churches are. I find most of God's people, who have been saved 5, 10, or 15 years, have no more clue now about what is going on than they did the day they got saved. That is very unfortunate. I do not always blame that on the Christian. I think most of that responsibility falls on the pastor. I believe that the church's job is to edify, to admonish, to teach, to instruct, and to build men and women up in the faith.

II. The Church's Purpose and God's Provision

I will tell you this right now, and this will save you some time. If you are trying to scope out our church, having been coming for three or four weeks, let me cut you to the quick: we do not have a contemporary service here. We have some contemptible services, but we do not have any contemporaries. This is not a smorgasbord where you can go in and pick whatever you like and get whatever you want. We just serve one thing here. This is a lot like the City Union Mission. You just haven't figured that out yet.

That is why you ought to go down to the mission tonight. There are a bunch of people that are starving to death, and they are hungry. You do not see anybody when they bring in... I think the food is pretty good. In fact, a couple of times I felt like I would like to have some of that. But I have never seen any of the guys down there... everything has changed. We used to call them bums. We cannot call them bums anymore. Now they are transients. Politically correct, they are transients. They used to be drunks. There are no more drunks. They are chronic alcoholics. Sounds good. You almost want to be one.

But these guys down here, when they feed them, they never ask... I have never seen one say, "Do you have anything else to eat?" They know that out in the world where they are, they have lost everything. And because they lost everything, they are not in a position to be picky about what they eat. And they know that they come to a place that will feed them, and they can count on "three hots and a cot," as they say, every day. And though it may not be what... the "great society" people of this city may turn down their nose at eating down at the City Union Mission,

they know that it is always there, and they know that somebody cares about them, and they know that there is food available.

Now, that is the way it should be for a child of God. You ought to realize that there is nothing in this world that is going to satisfy you after you get saved. And we can dress up the services and make them look as worldly. That is what we are into today. We are so afraid that portraying God in Christianity is going to offend somebody, that we want to dress it up so you come to church and not be offended, that somehow I can get the message of Christ. But if I window dress it, if I put all the nice stuff in, that somehow it will take the sting out of somebody's head, out of the Gospel message. Well, let me tell you something. I do not want to take the sting out. I want to make it sting even harder, because I know in the society that we live in today, we are very lethargic.

I know that the body of Christ is much like the nation of Israel. And I know that last week, after the solid foundation we laid, I told you that we were going to begin a study, and we are in the middle of helping you grow. My goal is to make marriages stronger. You only make marriages stronger by taking individual men and women and making them stronger in the Word of God individually.

You know my policy: I will spend an hour a week with anybody. You do not even have to be a member of this church. I will spend an hour a week with anybody, helping you put together the Word of God so that you can learn it to make your marriage better and to make your own personal walk with God better.

Many of you have children. No, that is wrong. All of you have children. You may not have gotten down much of the Bible, but most of you got down, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." You walk down to the nursery there right before Danny's song, and I think that place is packed. We have more kids than we know, and that is a good sign. That is healthy. That is what we want. But you have to raise those kids, right? A lot of parents need help with that today. And maybe you do not have any kids today, but maybe you are contemplating having children, and you will want to; you need to learn. You need to learn. You do not want to wait until you have kids to find out what to do with them, just like you do not want to get married and then find out how to have a right marriage.

So around here, we stay on the Old Paths. I have had guys tell me, other pastors tell me, that they go contemporary because you have to do that to reach people. Do you know what I believe? I believe you reach people today just like you did in the book of Acts. I still believe, as Christ said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." You see, in most churches, they want to lift up the people. They want to lift up the pastor. I want to lift up Christ here. I want you to go out of here today, and I want you to think about one thing, and that is my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and where you are at in your relationship. Hopefully, something I say today will turn a button in your life, flip a switch, and you will say, "I want to learn more about God. I want to take that man up." When I was growing up, if I had had somebody stand up there and say to me, "I will spend an hour a week with you in the Bible," I would have worn his ears out all week long. That is how you learn. That is how you learn.

III. The Seven Changes at Salvation: A New Creature

Last week, we laid a solid foundation, and I told you it was in preparation for beginning the study that we are going to take today to help you understand the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. Now, we are not going to get through all seven today. We are going to take them one a week. Maybe we will get two a week. But we are going to talk today, and we are going to begin a study. You need to understand that the day you got saved, something changed.

Now, most of God's people know the terminology. They will say, "Well, the day I got saved, I got born again." That is good. "Well, the day I got saved, I got washed from the blood." That is good. "Well, the day I got saved, I got redeemed." That is great. "Well, the day I got saved, I became God's child." That is good. But that does not state what happened internally to you.

Now, I believe that one of the many reasons why God's people fail today to fulfill what God wants them to do is this. Remember, this overall study has to do with the fact that we know now what our job is as a church and what your job is as an individual Christian. We got into it a couple of weeks ago. Your job is to finish what God started. He started it, was on this earth for 33 years to give you a model, and then went back to Heaven, and then He told you and me that greater things will you do than He did. Why? Because He expected you and I to pick up the ball and finish what He started. And most of God's people do not know that today.

One of the reasons they do not know that is because they do not understand how to do that. The reason they do not understand how to do that is because they do not understand what took place inside them the day they got saved. Now, that is what we are going to talk about starting today. And I guess if there is any area in your life that gives you and I the ability to fulfill God's plan, it is understanding these things. You see, once you get saved, you have to begin to grow spiritually. And when you begin to grow spiritually, things change. And the spiritual growth process is something that most of God's people never experience. I have met people that were saved for 10, 15, or 20 years, that honestly, they never grew past the day they got saved.

Now, part of that is the pastor's fault, but part of that is their fault. Staying in a place where you do not get fed is not your pastor's fault. If I went to a restaurant and it was terrible food, I would not go back the next week. It is as simple as that. And I am not saying you should not leave your church if you are going to a church someplace. I am just talking. I am just telling them. And when you understand that our job is to finish what God started, then we see that these seven areas are the absolute crucial things that we need to grasp.

Now, when I preach, when I teach, I come at it from several different angles. I know that sitting under the sound of my voice today, we have a lot of young Christians. I know that we have some visitors here today, and I want to be sensitive to you. You are coming in here not knowing where we have come from and what we are doing. So I take a little time to bring everybody up to speed. But I teach this this morning for young Christians who really need to know to begin to put these things into their lives. I have some of you that have been around now for three years, some of you longer than that have been with me. And you have come so far in the Word of God, and you

are doing so well. You are now working with people, teaching them the Bible in our discipleship program.

And some of you are going to come to the point in your life where you really like this concept of working with people. You are going to come to the realization that the only two things in this world that are worth investing your life in are the only two things that are going to last for all of eternity. One of them is the Word of God, and the other one is the souls of men. You have already bought into the Bible, and now that you have gotten to the level where you are beginning to work with people, you are seeing the value, and you are going to say to yourself, "I really want to learn this Bible because I want to work with people on a level that really allows me to impact their lives with the Word of God." And there are some of you in here that have that ability. Some of you do not know you have that ability yet. I know you have that ability. And some of you are moving through that threshold, and it is all a package, like we talked about last week. It is all about getting experience. Sometimes you have to go through the tough things to get experience.

But we talked about that when these seven things really begin to work in your life. And we talked about that they are immediate the day you get saved. I mean, they do not kind of stage themselves in the day you got saved. All seven of these things took place in the moment, in a twinkling of an eye. They are immediate, but they are not always apparent. And as you grow, they manifest themselves outwardly. We talked about last week, if you remember, how it manifests itself in your purpose. Your purpose in life changes, your passion in life changes, your perspective in life changes, and certainly your patience in life changes. And as we go through that process, it now gives us the ability to complete the mission that our Commander-in-Chief has given us. And as you look, as I said a little while ago, as you look on the horizon, the storm clouds are building. We know now that the Bible, when you put it into your life the day you got saved, changes the inner man, changes the outer man, and changes the end of man.

We now know from last week that every church has three types of Christians. And sitting here this morning, you are in one of these categories. If you are a young Christian, you are not in one of these categories yet; you will grow in time into one of these categories. Obviously, my job as pastor of the church is to help you get to the best category. But every church, in the last 35 years of my life, I have been in every church, more churches than I can think of. And I find the same thing wherever I go.

- You find people who make things happen. The power of God in their life dictates that things just happen when they are around.
- You have people who make things happen.
- You have people who watch what is happening.
- And then you have people who do not have a clue what is happening.

And that is what you have got. Now today, I say, take your Bibles and turn to 2 Corinthians 5. Now I am going to take a very familiar verse, but this is the first thing that got changed the day you got saved. And it is a very familiar verse. You have heard me quote it many, many times. But

what we are going to do today is we are going to dissect it. This is like a little biology class. Really, this is a philosophy class today, because I am going to show you as a young Christian what you have got to get over. At the same time, I am going to show you older Christians who are ready to move in to deal with people, some things that you need to understand about people in circumstances and situations. And you are going to find me coming back and forth to these all day today. So whatever category you are in, if you are a young Christian, get it from where you are at. If you are somebody that is on that upper level, get it from where you are at and get it from how you are going to use it.

Here is the verse, great verse.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Now, Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. I love you. I thank you today, Father, for the truth of the Word of God. We thank you for those that are here. We pray, Father, that you will bless us in all that we do. And Father, we just ask you now to touch our hearts wherever these people are at, wherever they are struggling in their lives, wherever they are at, take this message and help them to understand that here lies one of the greatest keys. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name, for the sake we ask it. Amen.

IV. The Devil's Twofold Plan and the Power of Thought

Now, simply put, that is probably one of the greatest verses in all the Bible for you and for me. The depth of that verse is hard to comprehend. And I know it is like most verses. You hear them quoted a lot, but you never really stop and dissect them and take them apart. You do not realize that some people, when they get saved, they stop right here and they never grow past this verse, because this verse, ladies and gentlemen, will make you or break you. But this is the first thing. This is the first thing that changed about you the day you got saved.

It is hard to say what the number one problem is with God's people today. We have got so many. But I have dealt with people now for many, many years. And I am going to tell you, it is without a doubt, one of the major factors that keep God's people from ever reaching their potential once they are saved, is simply the concept of this verse: that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus. They never see themselves as God sees them. They never really understand who they are in Christ Jesus when they got saved. Because they do not really understand what changed about them the day they got saved. And they go through the rest of their life thinking that God views them by the way they view themselves.

We have all seen, and they are in all kinds of offices, and I really like them. You always see these beautiful pictures that have a little saying under there, like motivational things. And I saw one, the basic simple, but I like the... sometimes they have eagles flying or mountains, very majestic pictures with a little thought. And one of them is a very basic and simple one, but it is so true. It says, "Attitude is everything." And that is true. Attitude is everything.

Now, if you are saved here this morning, you need to understand that the devil's plan to stop God's plan is a very basic, simple, twofold plan. Part number one is to try to get your soul in hell. We saw this when we were coming through the Book of Exodus for those of us that are in the Exodus study. We saw that the devil's plan, number one, is to get you in hell. Once he knows he is not going to do that, once you find Christ as your own personal Savior, and the devil knows now that he is never going to get your soul in hell, the second plan kicks in, and that is to get you to compromise, or to sell out, or to not finish the task that God has called you.

The greatest Christian that ever lived, the Apostle Paul, at the end of his life when he was getting ready to die, said he finished his course. He finished the race. He knew he was in a race. You and I are in a race. Now, people sometimes think that we are in a race with each other. As a child of God, you and I are not in a race with each other, but we are in a race against time. Because we only have so long to finish our course. You will waste 20 years of your life and then give God what is left. That is good. But the bottom line is your race and my race is up against time, up against the world, the flesh, and the devil, because everything that he has orchestrated in our lives after we are saved, it has been orchestrated to defeat us. If the devil cannot get you in hell, then he will defeat you as a child of God, and you will never accomplish what God wants you to do in His life.

Now, in the biblical counseling world, we have a little pattern that we follow. And if you have been through the marriage enrichment class, you have heard me talk about this, but the pattern here or the process here in biblical counseling, we call it thought processes or thought patterns. Very simply stated, you are what you think about. We have in the world of biblical counseling, a concept of patterns of thought or thought patterns.

Now, here is how it works. You and I are what we think about. And what we think about develops our attitude. That attitude in time will translate into an action. It is that simple. That is based on a biblical verse found in Proverbs 23:7, where Solomon talking about man says:

Proverbs 23:7

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:

You and I are exactly what we think about. And this is one of the key things that you have got to understand if you are a young Christian. It is absolutely vital if you are going to work with people. Otherwise, you are going to wind up getting deceived. You and I are what we think about. And what we dwell on produces an attitude about it. That attitude in time will invoke an action.

Now, two really easy places to see this, really easy ways to see this, are in marriage and your children. And I just use them because they are the easiest examples to see. The Bible tells very clearly, we saw this in marriage, that what happens is when a husband and wife, or a man and woman getting married, become husband and wife, they have an idea of what marriage is. Nine times out of ten, I am talking about saved people now. Most of the time, it is not the same idea that God has about marriage. So the man enters into marriage with his idea of what it is. She enters into it with her idea of what it is. Neither one of them has God's idea of what it is.

Therefore, the attitude about it produces an action which in America today usually winds up in a divorce. People wonder why they get divorces, because they get in something called marriage that God designed, but they try to operate it with their own attitude about it instead of getting God's attitude about it. It is that simple.

Your children are the same way. And the Bible says that just as a father is responsible for his wife, you and your husband are responsible for your children. And your attitude about marriage and children will become a factor that will translate not only into your marriage, but into your child. How many times I have seen a young girl raised up in a house, and she hated her father. She had a very bad relationship with her dad or her mother, but her dad in particular. And she just could not wait to get out of the house. She hated her father. They did not get along. She hated her home. She hated everything about it. And all through her teenage years, her statement was, "I cannot wait until I get out of here so I can get out from under this. I hate my parents. I hate my dad." So she finally gets out when she hits her late teens, gets married, and lo and behold, she married somebody just like her dad. Do you know why? She is a victim of her attitude that produced her actions. Parents translate into their children what they are. And it is as simple as that.

V. Eliminating Sin and Personal Responsibility

We have a concept in America today that we were born with a particular sin, and we are just stuck with it. I had a man tell me one time that he was an alcoholic because in his family heritage, in the family genes, was alcoholism. And so alcoholism was passed through his genes. The bottom line is, that is not true. I have had men tell me and women tell me that chose a gay lifestyle. I have had them tell me. And this is a perplexing thing, and you need to understand where this comes from. I have had men and women tell me that they were born gay. And the idea today, because we want to be accepted, is that we say, "Well, I was born that way." I had a guy tell me one time, he said, "I remember feeling the things that I felt when I was a child." And you see, if you do not have your Bible, if you do not know your Bible, that stuff kind of looks good. And it kind of sounds halfway workable. But the bottom line is this: you were not born gay any more than you were born an alcoholic.

Over in Kansas, we have a guy by the name of John Robinson. Remember him? He killed all those women, stuck them in 55-gallon drums. He is a serial killer. His defense attorney will say, "Well, when he was young, he grew up. His mama hated him. His daddy hated him. He had a bad relationship with women. They did not have a lot of money. He wanted Wheaties. He never got it. So he wound up being a serial killer." That is how it works. But that is where we are at today. Let me tell you this. And you have got to get this down if you are going to work with people.

The day you are born, you are not born gay, you are not born straight, you are just born, but you are born with an old-sin nature. That old-sin nature will become very active very quickly, about 10 seconds out of your mother's womb. And you will know that that baby has an old-sin nature as it grows up because that baby wants all the attention in the world. I am not kidding you. That baby does not get what it wants when it wants it, it will let you know about it. Now, you think it is cute when they are little, but you do not like it when they are 20. It is the same system. That

kid, any kid, any child born, has the ability to be anything. That old-sin nature can be vile and do every vile thing that is imaginable. That is why God's plan was to have the parents correct that child with the Word of God. Because God knew that there will always be somebody willing to teach your child if you are not willing to do it yourself. And when that child grows up, let me tell you something: he did not grow up that way. He was not born that way.

Everybody has circumstances that are different. Everybody comes to the point where they have different things in their life that will alter their lifestyle at some point. Some will go this way, some will go that way, some will... That is immaterial. God's plan was whatever the lifestyle you were going to take can be canceled out if you take the Word of God. Do you know what the Bible says in Psalms 127?

Psalms 127:4-5

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Now this is not a parenting class today, and I am not attempting to be, but I have got to lay this thing out today so you understand first of all where we are at. Modern man today has eliminated sin. Now that is a big deal. You have got to get rid of sin. We have eliminated sin. Of course, Romans 1 told us that we do that. You see, we got rid of sin, and now we replace sin with a sickness. You are not a drunk, you are an alcoholic, as I said. You cannot help yourself. And everything that we get into, we have eliminated... modern man has eliminated sin and made it a sickness, and then we took the sinner and we made him a victim. So now what we have done is we have taken completely away any personal responsibility for your problems.

Let me tell you something. As long as an alcoholic, you think that it is a sickness, you will never overcome alcohol, being an alcoholic. Never. As long as you think that whatever you are into is not your responsibility and it is not your fault, you will never overcome it. And what the devil has done is he has removed the two bottom elements that you have to recognize in your life, and that is being a sinner and sin. And we have come up with a whole bunch of terminology now that people buy into that is absolutely ludicrous. You are going to talk about... you will get on there, you will read a book, and it will talk about mental illness. Now I am going to tell you something that is an impossibility. You have problems in your life for two reasons: one, organic. Organic is a chemical breakdown or something physiologically broken down in your body, or you have a problem because of sin. Your mind cannot get sick. You would not give me a psychiatrist, a doctor in this world, that would tell me where even your mind is. You are going to tell me this guy has got a sick mind when he does. You cannot even tell me what his mind is.

Now, do not tell me that this guy has got a... this guy here, he has got a bad heart. And a bad heart and the fact that he does not want to do what is right... So we give Bubba a heart transplant. Bubba gets a heart of a saved man. Bubba is an unsaved man. Do you know what Bubba does? He is still the wicked man he was before he got saved because the problem was not his heart. But

they want you to believe that you can be mentally ill. Now that does not take away retardation. They are all defined in the Bible. We just do not have time to do it this morning.

Somebody said one time, "This person has got a brain disorder." I want you to explain what a brain disorder is. Do you mean the front is in the back and the back is in the front? I do not understand that. Somebody says, "Well, they had a nervous breakdown." The clinical definition for nervous breakdown is you have all your nerves break down. You just died. Do you know what we use the term nervous breakdown for? A complete collapse of the fabric of society in your life. That is not physical. That is spiritual. You cannot handle the pressure anymore.

Somebody said one time, I read a book one time, and it says, "Whatever happened to sin?" That is a great question. You see, whatever an unsaved man or a saved man becomes... now we are focusing on saved people here, but we will talk. Whatever a saved man or an unsaved man becomes, it is what he has based his attitude on. And when he or she has been taught the wrong things in life, they are going to translate into them, and they are going to come up in life, not only with a bad attitude toward marriage, but a bad attitude toward everything else in life. And there lies the problem. And the verse I am talking about says, "If any man be in Christ, all things are passed away."

Now I want to talk to you about being a victim. I really do. I want to talk to you about being a victim. Now I understand that when parents... and I know this, I have dealt with parents for many, many years. I have seen very good parents. I have seen mediocre parents. I have seen terrible parents. Let me tell you some things that parents do you ought never to do. And again, this is not a child training class. I have got to get this out to get to where I am going.

I have seen parents that told their children that they were dumb. I have seen parents that publicly all the time told their children they were stupid or they were worthless. I have seen parents that no matter what a child does, no matter how hard he tries, they always only point out the negative. I have seen parents set children up for failure, maybe not on purpose, but I have seen them set children up for failure because they made for them unrealistic goals that the child had no way to accomplish. And then when he did not make them because somebody else made them for them, they will belittle them. I have seen parents make fun of their children in public. I have seen parents and heard parents tell their children they will never amount to anything. I have seen them humiliate them. And then on the opposite side of that, because we do not want to just stay on that side, I have seen parents do the opposite: give them everything they wanted, put no restrictions on it.

Now, when that person grows up, they are going to be trained. How I know that you are not born with a lifestyle that you may choose down the line, whether it be alcoholism, drugs, or whatever, how I know that that is not hereditary and genetic, is because just take terrorism for a moment. Every terrorist in the world over there today that wants to kill you, kill me, and wipe out Israel, when he was born as a baby, could have been trained to be anything else. Do you know how he became a terrorist? They took him, they put him in a little school, and from the day that kid could understand what was being said, he was told to hate you and hate the Jews and hate everything in this world. And do you know what it produced? It produced Osama bin Laden, Massali. Those

people were born just like your kids were born, and one family on the other side over there in the Middle East teaches them to hate God, hate Jews, hate Christians, hate Western society to the degree that they will strap on a bomb and blow themselves up to kill you. Now, they were not born with that. They were trained to do that. That is exactly what kids come with today.

Some of you are victims of that. Some of you had parents that were bad parents. Some of you had parents that belittled you. They made fun of you. Some of you had parents that never gave anything positive for you. You grew up in a bad situation. And now you find yourself as a New Testament Christian struggling. Do you know what you struggle with? You struggle with seeing who you are in Christ today because all you can see is what your parents told you you were. Or all you can see is what you see yourself as being. You have got to get past the point of where you look at yourself from what your parents said you were. You have got to get past the point of this bad self-image. You have got to get past the point of this complex of anxiety. You have got to get past the point of looking at yourself and thinking yourself as a failure. The reason why you do is because that is how you were trained as you grew up. And in that, my friends, I want to say this, listen to me carefully: in that, you are a victim. That was terrible. That was wrong. I am sorry. It never should have happened in God's perfect world. He did not want it to happen, but it happened. So what?

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

VI. Personal Testimony: Overcoming Victimhood

Now, I am going to make this real personal. You look here at me, and you have been around me for a while. You look up here, and you see me. And you think you see something that you think. You see me preach. You hear me preach. You see me in life. And I think this is probably true of most people who think of most preachers. You look at me and you think if somebody says, "Bob, he is someone that is very confident. He is someone that is very self-confident. He is someone that is very disciplined or self-disciplined." Bob always seems to be in control of his emotions. Bob has purpose. Bob has passion. Bob has perspective. Bob has patience. In fact, as Barb Christie says, "I am the smartest man in the world."

But let me tell you the truth of the matter. Now, I do not ever talk about these things because it is pointless, but I use it this morning. When I grew up, my wife knows a lot of this is true. When I grew up, I came from a terrible home. My parents never divorced because back in those days in the fifties and the sixties, you did not get a divorce. You stuck it out. But I do not ever remember a Christmas that I did not live in fear of my mom and dad going to get a divorce. Every Christmas was ruined. Every holiday was ruined. I do not know what it was. My mom and dad never along. I do not know why to this day. My mom and dad died. My mom is still alive.

Now, I have got to say this. My mom is a weird person. I love her to death, and do not take anything as wrong. I am just telling you what it is. My mom is a unique person in the Alexander and Birkett family. That is my mother in the Birkett family. They have the ability in their own

family to turn you off. And when they turn you off, you are off. My mom got in a fight with her mother over something and never talked to her again. And I remember as a little child, my mom screaming at my grandmother that she hated her and that she hoped she died in the most agonizing death. And she never wanted to see her again. And do you know what? Seven years later, we were... you were with her. We were deer hunting out in Maryland, and we went down to a little church where my grandfather was buried. And do you know who was buried next to my grandfather? My grandmother. And we never even knew she died. My mother did not want to know. When my mom turns you off, you are off. That whole style of family is that way. Wild. Wild.

I mean, I remember the fights. And my dad was an easygoing guy. I got a little bit of both of them. But my dad was an easygoing guy. But my mom... I do not know what the deal was to this day. I do not know. I will tell you what, she slept in one room. He slept in another room for the 20 years that I lived there. I do not know what it was all about. Saturday night at the fights had nothing on my house. I am telling you what, I watched my mom hit my dad in the head with a frying pan. I watched her pull out his hair. I watched my dad go down and sit in the garage. I watched my dad take it so many times, and he popped her in the head and broke her glasses. A little stupid me. She did not have any glasses, she could not see. So I got two little magnifying glasses and took them together and took them down the garage saying, "Mom, maybe you can see through these." And I was stupid for doing that. All my life I was told I was stupid. I mean, I do not want to tell you.

I was dumb in school. When I was in the first grade, I was diagnosed with TB. I really was. And even that I could not get any... I remember when you are six or seven years old, or however old you are, and you are told you have TB. Back then you got vaccinations and all that. They did the patch test on all that. They do not do that anymore. But I remember that nurse coming in and saying, "You have TB." What a thing to tell a five-year-old kid. I remember going out on the playground and talking to my best friend, Johnny, a little guy, my best buddy. And he did not grasp it. I was looking for a little sympathy. I mean, my goodness, I am nine years old. I just have been diagnosed with TB. I want to tell somebody about it. I went over to him and I said, he said, "What is the matter?" I remember putting my arm around him. I said, "I have TB," and he said, "That is great! I will come over and watch it at your house tonight. You come over." I said, "That is not what I am talking about. I need this release." I am kidding you.

When I was in the second grade, I was diagnosed as being... they told me that my mom and I had a learning disability. And I remember to this day, we went in to compete with the teacher. Now they did not have the big fancy words for today. ABC, EFG, or whatever they call it today. My teacher called it right on the money. Now I look back on it. She was right. But at the time, I am in the second grade. Do you know what she said to my mother? "He can do the work. He just has a lazy mind. He daydreams all the time. He looks around the room. He is busy with his neighbor." She said, "It is not that he cannot do the work. He chooses not to do the work." Well, that did not cut me any slack when I went. My mom got mad about that. Now I was lazy and on top every day. I flunked seventh grade. I flunked math. I had to go to summer school. I had a very bad self-image.

If you want a tough time in life, let me give you this: when I was in sixth grade, I was getting very bad grades. My mother was furious. Now you have got to understand where we live. The grade school was down here, and all the kids walked right by my house. They went there because we were about two blocks from the grade school. Do you know what my mom did to train me to do better in school? She dressed me up in my sister's clothes. When everybody was walking home from school, she threw me out on the front porch, locked the door, and made the kids laugh at me. To this day, I remember the humiliation of that. Do you know what I did? Remember back then everybody had a glider on the porch. Do you know what a glider is? You know, that you go on? I hid under the glider. It was the only place I could find. And I could hear the kids laughing. I could hear them making fun of me. They were calling me sissy. They were calling me that. They were calling me everything in the world.

Now that is the life that I grew up in. I remember I was fat. I remember I did not have a lot of money. We lived on the other side of the tracks. My dad was a steelworker. I remember everybody else went to school. They had new blue jeans. I had to wear those old canvas things. They had button-down covers. I had polo shirts. Back then when you were a kid, peer pressure was everything. So I not only had all the other stuff to contend with, but when I went to school, they laughed at me. And they never forgot the girls' clothes things. I mean, never. And I will tell you, I was in drag before drag was in vogue. I mean, now, if late at night, if you drive by my house and you see some 56-year-old woman walking down the street, it is not me. I had no self-confidence. I was not good at sports. I mean, I was not. And I do not talk about this. I really do not because it does not affect me.

Two things changed me. Now, this is not the order of their importance, but it is the order of the event. The first thing was in 1968. I went in the United States Army. And I do not know that I could recommend it now, but back then I could recommend it. And I never forget the guy, the first guy that God put in my life that really gave me what I needed, was my drill sergeant, Sergeant Webb. Sergeant Webb had two tours in Vietnam. Sergeant Webb was everything that a guy could want. I will tell you what, he did not cut you any slack. And from the very beginning, he told us what my mother had told me. He told me that I was no good, but he gave me the hope: if I did what I was supposed to do, I could become what they were looking for. That is all I needed. And I became a good soldier.

In 1971, the second thing hit my life. And after the day I got saved and found the Word of God, I got my second drill sergeant. His name was Mel Subaca. He was an old warhorse, a Philadelphia preacher that would not allow me to feel sorry for myself because of the way I was raised. The first message I ever heard him preach was one on 2 Corinthians 5. It says, "You are a new creature in Christ Jesus." And he said, "So what? So what? So what? So what? Old things are passed away. All things have become new."

And I am telling you, so you have got to know going into this thing. Now, if you come into my office and you have a problem in these areas, I really need the most compassionate. I will be the most understanding because I know where you are at. And I know that this is... you are at the entry now to being able to fix that. So I am going to give you everything I can give you. I am going to be as kind and loving and sweet and understanding. And I am going to sit there and I am

going to listen to you. And then I am going to take you by the hand and I am going to walk you out if you want to go. But I am going to tell you, I do not have a lot of sympathy for whiners of life who want to blame every problem they got on their mommy and their daddy or their bad experience in life. I will compare my experience with yours any day of the week. And it goes both ways. I mean, you tell a girl she is pretty all of her life. She is going to wind up being a snoot. It is not what you will be. It is just the way that it works. So I understand where you are coming from. But my drill sergeant in either case, my unsaved one or my saved one, did not allow me to wallow in self-pity.

And maybe you had a bad home life. Maybe you had some tough times in life. Well, let me tell you something. I have some good news, and I have some bad news. I will give you the good news first. The good news is, you do not have to live under the bondage anymore of whatever you are under once you get saved. When you get saved at that moment, what changes about you is that you cease to be a victim.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Now I am going to tell you something. I do not care what you did in your life. And if you are here this morning and you have never trusted Christ as your personal Savior, then listen up. I do not care what you have done in your life. I do not care how black it is, how vile it is. I do not care whatever it is. I do not care how you are embarrassed about it, how you would never like to talk about it, how you do not want anybody ever to find out about it. Let me tell you this: the day you got saved, those things got washed in the blood, and they are gone.

Remember when we used to go to camp, the song we used to sing?

- > *Gone, gone, gone, gone.*
- > *Yes, my sins are gone.*
- > *Jesus came into my heart*
- > *And now I have this song.*
- > *Buried in the deepest sea.*
- > *Yes, that's good enough for me.*
- > *I'm in Him and He's in me.*
- > *Praise God. My sins are G-O-N-E. Gone.*

They are gone. And so is your attitude about yourself. He wiped it away under the blood of Christ. Never again do you have to be under the bondage. You are now a new creature in Christ Jesus. All things are passed away. You have been washed in the blood. It does not matter what you did, who you did it with. It does not matter what took place, what transpired, or it does not

matter how you were raised and what they said. You now have the ability to have the right attitude about yourself to produce the right action, and they are gone. That is the good news.

Now for the bad news. You can keep being a victim and continue to blame your problems on everybody else if you want to. By the way, let me just stop here for a minute. You are all going to get into dealing with people, or most of you sometimes. Let me tell you something. All of my life... And once you get into the ministry on the level that you get into it, you had better know this now so you can, if this is going to be an issue for you, you need to check out. Once you start with people and they fail because they do not want to do what is right, you are going to be the problem. It was their mommy's problem or their daddy's problem, or it is their boss's problem, or it is this problem, or it is their wife's problem, or their husband's problem, or the kids' problem, or the dog's problem. And sooner or later, when a woman or a man does not want to do what is right, and is faced without alternative, they are going to, because they have the attitude they have got, and they have hid this thing. It is now going to become your problem. You are going to be the reason they are not going to do what is right all the time. In 1990, the Lebanese blew up the Marine barracks in Beirut. My fault. It was my fault. 9/11, my fault. Hurricane is down south, my fault.

I am telling you. And then the old guilt trip comes out. "Well, you just do not really understand me." No, that is the problem. I understand you too well. You would like that I do not understand you. "Well, you just do not really... you just do not really... you just do not really love me. You just do not..." And I will tell you, I have had them go so far that once that guilt trip thing kicks in, then the mode is, "I want to get the attention off of me." So I am going to shift it somewhere else. And when we play that roundabout game for a while and it does not work, then it is going to come back and it is going to be, "Well, I think I am going to kill myself." And everybody rushes in. "Oh, please don't kill yourself!" I am going to tell you something right now: I am the last guy to call if you want to kill yourself. Now, if I do not know you and you call me up, I will be right there to help you. But if we went through this game for a long time, call somebody else. Do not call me.

Years ago, I had a guy who played game, played game, played game. I spent four or five years with this guy. He just... and he blamed everybody, everybody. I have had people say, "Well, it was the pastor at the last church." "No, it was this," or "it was that," or "it is you, Bob," or "there was that person discipling me," or "it was the person that counseled me." Blame on everybody instead of just saying, "I am an idiot and I need to change my ways." This guy called me up one night and he says, "Well, I am just going to end it all. I am going to kill myself." I said, "How are you going to do it?" "I am going to shoot myself." I said, "Take two bullets." "Why?" "Because you are so stupid, you will probably screw that up." Do not call me. Do you know what suicide is? Suicide, and I am not making fun of it. Suicide is a terrible thing, but it is your choice. Do you know what suicide is? It is just another terrible choice that you have made in a series of other terrible choices, but unfortunately it is the last choice. And if you think I am going to run in so you can feel good about yourself so you can continue to do your life... if that is your calling, pal, have at it.

People will play games with you if you allow them to. What you have got to do is understand that your victimhood stopped the day you got saved. You do not blame it on anybody else anymore. It is your situation. You as a young lady, you as a young man, you as a child of God, now have the ability. And if you do not... say you were in Baghdad right now, and they are big on taking hostages. And you did not listen to everybody. You thought you would go down to the market and pick up some dates. So you are walking down there. All of a sudden the car pulls up, three guys with hoods, turbans on, masks on their face, AK-47s. They throw you in the back of the car, and you are now a hostage. Now you are a hostage. And you are out there, and you are in this place by an air there. They are interrogating you and trying to get you to admit the things that you are scared to death because they have cut everybody's throat. They have had. And the President of the United States finally looks at the Israeli issue, and he says, "We are going to do something." So they turn all their big spy satellites to Baghdad, and they have some spy satellites. Right now they have a spy satellite up there that you can see a grapefruit from 600 miles up. A grapefruit. Incredible. And they are spying all down through there, taking pictures, looking for you. And the General calls up the President. The President says, "General, did you find him?" And he says, "No, but we have got a great deal and some grapefruit."

They find you. And here it comes. Those old Iraqis over there, they are out there walking guard, and here they come. They all come rolling in at the same time: 101st Airborne, Screaming Eagles; 82nd Airborne, they are out there. Leadership. Translators. You can say, "Man, I am glad to be out of here. Let us get out of here." Or you can say, "I do not know, I have kind of enjoyed them bamboo sticks under my fingernails. I thought I would stick around and let my toenails grow back and let them pull out again. It really feels good when they stop." Your choice. Your choice.

Life is about choices. Somebody said, "In New York Harbor, you have the great Statue of Liberty. Take that one down and put up... we need to put up a Statue of Responsibility." God's people, you need to understand. Listen, I can care. I am telling you. And I have heard it all my life, "Well, Bob, you just do not understand." Let me tell you something. I had the same choice you got. Instead of preaching up here this week, instead of laying out the Word of God, I could be going in to see my therapist this week, my psychiatrist. And I could walk into him and I could sit down there, and he would say, "Well, Bob, how are you today?" And I would say, "Doc, I really had a bad week." "Well, I really had a bad week." "Well, what happened?" "Well, my wife, she does not understand me. My dogs bit me. My boss, he does not understand. And I just... I just feel so worthless. I mean, nobody, nobody, nobody... I do not think anybody cares. I just... I do not know what to do. I just..." And he said, "Bob," he said, "Let me give you a test." He pulled out a blank sheet of paper. "What do you see? When you look at this blank sheet of paper, what do you see? Tell me your first impression. When you look at this blank sheet of paper, Bob, what do you see?" "Well, it kind of looks like a snowstorm." "No, Bob, it is a blank sheet of paper. But that proves the point. You do not want to deal with reality." You cannot accept things as they are. "I said, what do you see?" The answer was, "A blank sheet of paper." "No, no, no, it has got to be a snowstorm. Do you know why? You do not want to deal with reality."

"Now let me ask you, Bob, how was your childhood growing up?" "Well, my childhood was terrible." "Oh, okay. Did you have a good relationship with your mom and dad?" "No." "What was the worst experience you had with your mom and your dad?" "Well, doctor, I will tell you. My first, worst experience was the day I came home with all Fs on my report card." "Yes, and what happened?" "Well, my mom, she dressed me up in my sister's clothes." "And then what happened, Bob? Just take your time." "Well, then she threw me out on the porch, and all the kids were coming down from school. And I just... I remember... I remember that day so bad, so terrible. Every time I think of pressure, every time I just think about how I was out there." "And then it bothered because... oh, I liked the clothes on after a while. And I just... And he said, 'Well, what did you do?' And I said, 'Well, I crawled under the glider.'" And he said, "Oh, yes. And tell me, Bob, what did the glider do for you?" "Well, they could not see me. And I could hide under the glider." "Did you feel safe under the glider?" "Yes, sir." "Well, Bob, let me tell you what your problem is. Now, you are a victim. You really have no responsibility in this. It was your mom and your dad that created this in you." "And here is what you do, Bob. Every time you deal with an issue that you do not know how to deal with, in your mind, you crawl back under that glider." You crawl back under that glider. And that glider is your comfort. That glider is the place that you hide from your problems.

I could have been there. That is exactly where I could be. I chose not to be. I chose not to blame my mom or my dad or my sister. I chose not to blame my home life. I will take that for a personal responsibility. Sure, I did not have the best home life. So what? The Bible says the prophet had no honor in his own country. Christ did not have the best home life either. They did not believe in Him. They made fun of Him. You have got to read it sometime. When the Bible says He was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin, He knows what He is talking about. I chose. So do not tell me. I had the same choice that every man and woman has, that you want to blame everything else, every problem, on something or somebody else. Let me tell you something. I had to grow up just like you have to grow up, and you recognize it, and you start by knowing that the day you got saved, you now have the ability not to live in the past anymore. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus, all things... but it is your choice.

I am going to tell you. Listen, if the devil cannot get your soul in hell, then he will keep you in the bondage of this old world through yourself, and you will always be a victim of what man says about you or your past, or what you think about yourself or your parents, or whatever the case may be. Listen, the day I got saved, people hated me because of my Bible. They hate me today. They have always hated me, and yet... I am not the kind of guy you just say, "Well, I kind of like him," or "kind of." You either like me or you do not. I like that. What you see is what you get. I do not pretend, I am just... here I am. I tell you where I am at. You do not talk to me for 15 seconds and you do not know exactly where I am coming from. I am telling you. You could go across this city, across this country, and you could hear everything you wanted to hear, good and bad, about me. Do you think it bothers me for a nanosecond? It does not. The only thing I care about is what God thinks about me and where He and I are at, and how He views me, and He knows where I am at, and He knows what I am doing. If you let the people in this world control your spirituality, you will never make it. And that is why most of God's people never make it. You never get past... you never get past fearing what man thinks. I could care less. And if you do

not learn this, my friend, you will never make it anywhere doing anything for God because there is always somebody who is not going to like you, always somebody who is going to blame you, always somebody who is going to manipulate your emotions. Always somebody that is going to put the guilt trip on you, and if you let them do it...

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.

Fear God, not man. When you fear God, then you will recognize who you are in Christ Jesus. Once you understand that, you will understand you can do anything God wants you to do.

VII. Practical Steps to Change: Washing the Mind and Building Confidence

Now, I have five minutes left. I am going to tell you how to overcome this. I am not going to bring you to this point and then not tell you how to fix it. I am going to tell you how to fix it. I am going to tell you how to overcome this complexity of attitude versus action. Okay, you are a victim. Okay, your mom and your dad or your home life or whatever, your science teacher, your math teacher, whatever. Your legal guardian, whatever. You were abused as a child, whatever. All of that stuff that you are holding onto, I am telling you, it has developed your attitude, and now it is producing the action that you are the way you are.

Here is how you change it.

1. You have got to get honest with yourself. That is tough. None of us like to face what we see in the mirror. None of us want to, but I am telling you, the longer you go with any particular situation or problem in your life, the longer you go before you make that thing right with God, the less chance you have of ever doing it. Now, that is just a rule that is taught throughout the Word of God. The Bible says, "Do not let the sun go down on your sin." And brother, the longer you wait, the longer you do not get honest with yourself, the longer you quit blaming everybody else and will not take responsibility for yourself, the more you try to kid everybody and yourself that you are doing right with God, when you are not doing right with God, the less chance you have got to make it. You have got to begin to get honest with yourself, quit blaming everybody else, and deal with your problem. Cowboy up! Get up on that horse and ride it. Stand up like a man or a woman and do what is right.
2. The second thing you have got to do: you have to identify the problem. You have to know exactly what is wrong with you. You have to go to the Word of God and you have to find out exactly what your basic problem is. Then you have to get a plan, a biblical plan. You have to understand that these seven things we are going to talk about are the way out. You have got to, once you get honest, then you have got to realize that you have to solve the problem, not treat the symptom. And that is what most of God's people want to do. They do not really want to solve their problem. They want to treat their symptoms. And we have all had the experience of going to the doctor because you got strep throat, you got the flu, you got this,

and the doctor says, "Okay, here is a prescription." And the prescription is for two weeks. When you start taking the medicine, it changes the taste buds in your mouth, water tastes terrible, food tastes terrible, maybe gives you a headache, maybe you bloat. You do not like it. So you take it, and then two or three days later, you start feeling better, do you not? So you know what we all do? We quit taking the medicine. And then a week later, we are back sick again. Do you know why? All you did was treat the symptoms. You did not attack the problem. When you attack the problem, I do not care how bad it tastes, you have got to take the medicine down to the last one. That is what it is designed to do. And the Word of God is the same way. You have got to do it all the way down. You have got to have a biblical plan that changes your attitude so you can adjust the action. If you just touch... I do not know how many times I have seen a husband come in with marital problems. And the husband will say, "Well," and she will talk about it. It is clearly the husband's fault. And the husband will say, "Well, okay, I am going to do it." He will get down on his knees, he will promise everything, and it will last for about two or three weeks, then he is right back to the same old way. Do you know why? All he did was adjust his action. He did not fix his attitude. He did not solve the problem, he just treated the symptom. So the problem goes right back. If you want a lasting change in your life, you have got to deal with your attitude. And your attitude is about you and God, and getting honest with yourself, and recognizing that you cannot blame anybody anymore. You now are a new creature in Christ Jesus. I have seen men and women get saved, start getting into the Word of God, and come to this point, and then they are gone. Do you know why? They cannot get past the first one. And the first one will kill you. It will make you or break you. It will show you you have got the courage to be God's man or God's woman, or you do not have the courage. That is where it will stop, right there. You will never get to the second one until you get past that first one. Because if you do not recognize who you are in Christ, you are not going anywhere. Because there will always be somebody out there to defeat you, and you will usually be yourself.

3. Then the third thing: you have to start washing out your mind. That is how you change your attitude. You have got an attitude because somebody told you you were goofy. They told you that 100 times. As Joseph Goebbels used to say, the great propagandist of Adolf Hitler, "If you tell a lie enough times, people will believe it." And the fact that you have been treated the way you have as you have grown up, the fact that you have been taken advantage of and some terrible things have happened to you, I am sorry, but the bottom line is this: I cannot go back and fix it. We have all had our tough times. If you think your life was tough, come over and try my dress on and see how you like it. It all goes the same way. And I could have just taken the same route that some of you have taken. I could have taken the same attitude about it and blamed my mom for it. My mom and I today have the greatest relationship we could ever have. When I was home three or four weeks ago, we spent every day together. I will tell you what, do you know why? Because I do not have to be angry at her. I do not have to be angry at anybody. I know that greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world. And I know what Psalm says when it says: Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Whatever my mom did to me, whatever bad times I had in life, nothing compared to what God gave me the day I got saved. It made me a new creature in Christ Jesus. I do not look back on those

things. I do not ever... my mom ever... I do not ever walk with my mom, and my mom is getting ahead, and my mom looks around, and I am... well, my mom is in the car, I am not over there. "What is the matter?" "My mom, I am just thinking about, you put me out on the thing and you..." "Oh, what is the matter, Bobby? I am just... well, I am just struggling with that today, mama. You did not..." No, never, never. Do you know what it is? "Hey, mom, let us go, let us go for a ride. What do you want to go eat lunch? Let us go do this. Let us go and see dad's grave. Let us go out here and see that." And I did not even know we had a grave plot out there. I mean, I knew we had someplace in Ohio. I got to see... I got the greatest little view overlooking the thing down there. You get everyone in your life. I wanted to... I did not know... I wanted to lay down and just feel what it would be like. Nope. Because when I really get there, I will not know. I just want to get a little... my mom, she would never have understood that. But I could have always said, "Well, mom, it was because that dress she made me wear." But anyway, we have the greatest relationship in the world. I do not hold anything against her. I certainly do not blame her. Now that I understand the Word of God, I understand what God has done for me, I feel sorry for what she has done, what she went through in life. I understand better now where she came from, and I appreciate her more. I have seen God work in her life. Now I had an option. I could be bitter against her. I could blame her. I could take everything that I did not functionally work well in society and bring it back on that. What good is that? It is not going to solve it. No, I had to get honest. I had to recognize that God... now I look back and see why God put that in my life because I deal with people all the time that have the same problems. Some of them you can help, some of them you cannot. But it is invaluable. So when somebody looks at me and says, "Well, you do not understand," I just snicker. I just laugh inside. I am thinking to myself, "Right, right, right, right. I do not understand." Sure, I understand. What you could have never... because they see me, they think, "Well, here is somebody that could have never had that." I was just as bad or not worse than you were. I made the choice. You have to make the choice too. Do you know how you do it? You start washing out your mind. You get the Bible in your head that changes your attitude and then changes your action. Psalms 119:9

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Okay, that is how you do it. Psalms 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. That is what you do. Do you know what you have got to do? You have got to start getting the promises in the Word of God that tell you that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus and you do not have to live there anymore. We like to play the silly little word games. Once you become a counselor, you also need to become a translator. You need to translate because people will speak to you in another language. And you need to be able to translate. When a person says, "I cannot," what he is really saying is, "I will not." When he says, "I have done everything," what he is really saying is, "I have done what is convenient for me. I did not really put myself out." You have got to be able to translate. You have got to know how to put it together. When he says, "Well, I did the best I could," when I have... when I prayed, I always say, "All right, what did you pray?" "When I did the best I could," I said, "Good, name me five verses you have got memorized." He will not have any done. So he did not try. You have got to translate. You have got to translate it. He said, "I have done everything." "Really, everything? Tell me what

you have done. You missed last Sunday, you missed Thursday night. You do not have any verses done. You do not have anything done in your Bible. You have done everything according to who?" "Well, nobody cares," "Really? Nobody? Jesus does not care? God does not care?" Well, I will tell you somebody else, the devil even cares. He wants to mess you up. "Well, nobody believes me," "Really? Well, I wonder why. A life of lies and deception, and now you are upset because we will not believe what you say, sweetheart."1 Thessalonians 5:21

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."Well, if I just had the time..." Well, you take time for everything else, do you not? I will bet you whatever you like to do, you do not miss it. And maybe sometimes you have to give up what you like to do to do what you need to do. Do you see where it comes down to? You have got to start washing out. Washing out your mind by putting the Word of God in and getting rid of the silly little word games that people play. I have heard them.

4. Then the last thing: you have to build your confidence level in Christ.Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:God has a work that He wants you and I to do. We have talked about it. It is the reason you are here. And you have to make the choice to do what is right with God just like I had to. But the only thing that is going to allow you to accomplish that good work is the confidence that you have in yourself through Christ Jesus that the day you got saved, all things are passed away, all things become new, and you do not have to be a victim any longer, unless you choose to be.The book of Philippians, what I would suggest for you, would be a good place to start. That book is built around nine great principles that will help you. I already gave you one in verse six. I will give you another one. You can find the other four on your own. Philippians 4:13, do you know what it says? It says:Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.You see, once you realize that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus and all things are passed away and all things become new, then you come to the point in your life where you really have the ability to change some things. Once you start the process of spiritual growth in your life and you begin to quit blaming everybody else for your problem, identifying your problem, go to work in the Word of God, not just playing around with it, but putting those verses. I have seen some of you folks have 10, 12, or 15 verses on those little three by five cards. And every time you have a weak spot, you pull those cards out and you start flipping through them, and after a while, you never write. Do you know what it does? It washes out the old thought patterns and it begins to put the new ones in. It is what it does.

VIII.The Daily Choice: More Like Him or Less Like Him

Let me tell you something. The job at this church is to build you up. The job at this church is to take young couples that want to make their life count for God, give them everything that they want. Take young men and young ladies, give them everything that they want. Take older couples that want to take their life and turn it over to the Lord and keep growing and build a formidable ministry that you and I as individuals within this church, recognize that our job is to

finish what He started and then dedicate everything we have in ourselves to that. Get our personal agendas out of the way, get our personal problems put aside, and start focusing on what God wants us to do. It will only happen as every individual in this church realizes one great truth.

Let me tell you something. You can say what you want to say. You can talk all day long. At the end of the day, the bottom line is simply this: every day of your life, you become either more like Him or less like Him. It is just that simple. You can tell me all that you want to tell. You can talk to your wife, your brother, your sister, your mama, your daddy. You can tell everybody everything you are excused. The bottom line is every day of your life as a child of God, you are either more like Him or less like Him, and when you are more like Him, you do the things that He does.

People get so fooled today by people. That is why a lot of people do not like me. You cannot fool me. Do you know why you cannot fool me? Not because I am smart. Not because I have got a higher IQ. I told you, I was in the sixth grade so long the kid brought me the apple. They thought I was the teacher. It has nothing to do with that. I have a book that tells me that if you are Christ-like, then you are like Christ. You do not say you love Him and not do what He says. You do not say, "I am right with God," and not follow through with the things of God. You play those games, folks. You play those games. You trap yourself in that little web of deception. I told you before, "Denial is more than a river in Egypt." It is where most Christians live, and I am telling you, every day you are either more like Him or you are less like Him, but it is one or the other.

My job is to help you get there, and I am telling you, some of you have great potential. And I talked to some of you, and this message was good for a number of you because we talk every week, and I know where your struggles are, and that is why I told you to just hang on. There is a Sunday coming. You are going to get what you need. I could never have broken it down into your life. Now you know. Several of you in here that we meet on a regular basis, you are struggling with this very thing, and I know you have the ability. Sometimes it just takes putting it in line. You did not forsake the number one thing. You should not forsake to fix it. That is the church that God has given you. You want to clean out your mind. You want to get the right attitude. You want to get the right action. Well, now you have the ability to do it, but if you do not get this one done, you are not going anywhere; you will spin around in a circle. You will kid yourself, fool yourself, and everybody is as stupid as you are that wants to believe you, but you will never go forward. Never go forward. That thing will stop you. It will make you or break you right here. And that is why some of God's people never go past the day they get saved or very shortly past it. They just cannot get past that first hurdle of realizing when God looks at you, what does He see? You need to start seeing when you look at yourself what He sees. Old things have passed away, all things...