

Psalms 19:1-6

June 2, 2024

We are going to take a week break out of Psalms 19. This is the beginning of our summer. I told you last week on Memorial Day weekend, once we get to Memorial Day, this summer for our church and all that we do is a blitz. It is a whirlwind. I want to say thank you for everybody who did what you did to make Memorial Day a success. We had close to 500 people here and a lot of visitors, and it was just an incredible time. I know that all of the guys and gals that helped me do everything that you did and all that you did here with the visitors.

Here we are at the beginning of our summer. We have so many things that we are going to do in the next couple of months. Today, I want you to better understand and to see what we do and why we do some things the way that we do it. I know that you guys pray, you are great prayer warriors. You pray for the church. You pray for me. You pray for the ministries. You pray for our people. It is always important that you pray intelligently, and there are some things we need to commit to prayer as we go through our summer ministries that you really need to understand in the particulars of it.

I always try to show you how our ministry works. We have people on all different levels here that are growing. Many of you work with me on my level of ministry with people. I think it is important that you always understand how ministry, different aspects of it, works. In churches today, you are going to find different styles of ministry and different styles of pastoring in ministry. Everybody has their own way that they do things, and that is okay. Most pastors that I have seen down through my life, they will invest outwardly in reaching people. That is obviously very important. But most will not see how important it is to also invest inwardly with the people that God has given you.

I. The First Mega Church Era

I grew up in Christianity in the 1970s and the 1990s. It was my years where I was involved in churches that that was not the case. That was not the mindset. This is what I call the first mega church era. It started in the sixties, and for Baptist churches, it was pretty well over in the nineties. Back then, as today, and we have a mega church era two today, which picked up today with the neo-evangelical crowd, they counted as success in any church how many people they had on any given Sunday.

Some of you old folks, you remember all of the campaigns that we had to bring people to church. It was like if you had a goal of 2,000 on Sunday and you did not make it, it was the end of the world. It did not matter if four or five people got saved. If you did not hit your goal, it was a terrible day. That is just the way it was. They counted success on how many you had on Sunday morning. They did everything they could to pack the place on Sunday. The problem was once people got saved, there was nothing for them. There was no discipleship. There was no taking them and helping them lay a foundation in their life. Because of that, 99% of the people in those churches never knew anything about the Bible. They were kind of left on their own to figure it out. For many of them, it just did not work. Even the ones that stayed there, they never really

accomplished anything for the Lord other than Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and all the standard things that they taught you. The investment was outward, but it was never inward.

All those churches back in my day that operated like that, they are all gone today. They ceased to exist. Or if they are still around, they are nothing what they were back in the mega church part one. The real success of any church is not how big you get. It is not about how many that you have, but rather do you fulfill God's plan for the church with the people God has given you? That is the key. I do not care how small your church is. I do not care if it is small, medium, or large in the sense of 300 people. The key is, what do you do with what God has given you? Do you understand that the job of every church, every Christian, this one included, is us reaching the world?

As a pastor, it takes time, it takes patience, but you will always build toward that end. Along with that, any pastor, he has to understand where his key investments will be and how he is going to make them and how they are going to work. In any business, nobody starts a business without a goal of making a profit. How stupid would that be? You can get out there and you can find business plans and you can find business models to make your business a success. Understand, I understand the church is not a business in the same sense, but a church should be about God's business. In a spiritual sense, we ought to be profitable under the Lord.

II. The Church's Business Plan

You will see the church business plan laid out in Acts chapter 13. Thursday night, we really got into the book of Acts through a question that came in on the internet. In Acts chapter 13, you have our model church, which is the church at Antioch. In Acts chapter 13, and you might want to turn there for a moment, we are going to be kind of bouncing around today. Here is what he says:

Acts 13:1-2

1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Now, this is where they are first called Christians in Acts chapter 11, so it is a key church. Look at verse 2, "As they ministered to the Lord." Verse 2 says that this model church, the first ministry that they had before anything else was listed, and throughout the chapter, he lists about five or six things that the church does in ministry. But this church's first ministry was ministering unto the Lord.

I am going to tell you right now, I will say this safely, you probably could not find five or ten pastors in this city who can explain to you what it means for you and me, or this church, to

minister unto the Lord. The first investment that any Christian, any church should make based on the model church in any ministry should be our ministry unto the Lord first.

If I could for just a few seconds, allow me to explain that. First off, let us ask ourselves what is ministry? Ministry will be giving people what they really want in life. Maybe they do not know it, maybe they do not understand all the ramifications, but when you get them into the Bible, you get them into church, then the ministry is giving those people what they want by giving them what they need in life, and that will be a relationship with Christ through the Word of God.

Having said that, when we minister unto the Lord, we simply find out what He wants, we simply find out what His first priority is, we simply find out what His needs are. It is kind of ridiculous to say that the Lord has needs, but He does. The Lord needs you and me. That is what He saved us for. He saved you and me that we could finish the work that He started. He wants us to find out what He wants, what He needs, and then give Him what He needs from us. He wants us and needs us, as we talked about last week, to get into the Word of God, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," and then fulfill the plan that God called us to fulfill.

This church has a mandate. This church has a mission, but this building is not going to go anywhere. This building is not going to reach anybody for Christ. What makes this church special is not the building, it is you who are sitting in it. When you understand that our first ministry as a body of believers is to minister to Him first. Over there in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verse 5, Paul is admonishing the church in Macedonia, and he is talking about what a great church that was and how they really helped a lot of people out. But he says in 2 Corinthians 8:5:

2 Corinthians 8:5

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

That is what ministering to the Lord is, realizing He saved you for a purpose, realizing what He wants you to do. When you as individuals understand that and you give yourself, Romans chapter 12, as a living sacrifice, and you prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, when you do that on an individual basis, then this church ministers unto the Lord. You see, we build, by ministering to the Lord, we build ourselves inwardly first, long before we try to take it outwardly to others. That is just what it is.

III. Three Things a Pastor Must Do

I am a people person, and as a pastor, I minister to people. Obviously, the ministry is people. I have learned over the years that you have to be able to do three things well if you are going to pastor a church and get the people where they need to be.

1. Look behind and always see what God has done for you.
2. Look around and see what you have that God has given you, what you have to work with.
3. Look to the future.

That is what this message is about really today, to understand how that you keep the ministry alive, not only for you, but for future generations of this church if the Lord Jesus Christ does not come. God's people must always continue to grow, and in that you will ensure that your investment in them will continue to grow the church. Not necessarily in numbers, but in a spiritual maturity to fulfill God's plan. A church needs to continue to grow.

I find, and I see this a lot with young pastors, they go out to pastor a church. I talk to them all the time, and I try to get them to see it. Some do, some don't. They go out and they start a church, and after there is natural excitement for two or three years. But after two or three or four years, when everything settles down, you now better have a plan to get that church from point A to point B and from point B to point C. They run out of ideas. They run out of sermons.

I used to think, and a pastor told me this before I got into ministry, I used to think that you just got up every Sunday and you preach a topical message about this, this, this, this. A pastor pulled me aside and he says, you are going to find out quickly how that is not true. Because you are going to run out of, you figure, you are going to pastor for maybe the rest of your life. You have got to preach 10,000 sermons in that time. You are going to run out of material. You have to be able to understand where your people are, take a book of the Bible that fits where they are at in their spiritual growth, and then systematically lay that book of the Bible out. We did that in Romans. We did that in Proverbs. We have done that in every book that we have done. Now we are doing it in Psalms.

He has to have the ability to grow his church. He has no ability to grow his church because he does not know how to grow people because he is not growing himself. Pretty quick, he runs out of teaching the Bible and then they all follow the same pattern. Then they have got to go to the internet to get their material. Now they have got to try to keep people interested by getting into social events. They will preach on COVID-19. They will preach on the end of the world. They will preach on the blood moon. They will preach on AI, all these conspiracy theories, stuff that they will get into because they simply do not know how to stay and teach and lay out the Word of God to their people.

IV. Losing the Burden and Vision

When I look back and think that, that was really the problem that started with Israel's decline. They stopped growing spiritually. If you go back into your Old Testament, you will find two other minor prophets books that really, really lay this out. One of them will be Habakkuk and the other one will be Haggai. In the book of Habakkuk, he deals with the main cause of Israel and also our not growing spiritually. When you go back there, you will find that they lost the burden and they lost the vision that God had for them.

Habakkuk chapter 1 tells us that first off, the burden that they had, it was not their burden. The burden they had was them understanding as he says in verse 2, their burden was the burden of the Lord and their ability to see it. Too many churches today are fulfilling the burden of the pastor and it is not the Lord's burden. They are building buildings instead of people.

In Habakkuk chapter 2, verses 1 through 3, he then lays out the three key ingredients of a burden that will lead to a vision. The vision of us seeing what God sees, what he wants us to do and then how a pastor should take that and incorporate that into the growth of the people in his church. There are three ways that he does that. We do not have time to get into that this morning, but as Proverbs 29:18 says so clearly:

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Then going over to the book of Haggai, once they lost the burden and the vision, this is where they stopped growing. I am telling you, once God's people get to the point, if they ever get there, once they lose the vision, once they lose the burden of what God really wants them to do, they too will stop growing. Back in Haggai, they quit building the temple. In Ezra and Nehemiah, they went back after the 70 years captivity and God allowed them to rebuild the temple. They needed to have that for the first coming of Christ. But when Haggai writes to them, it has been 16 years and they quit building that temple.

Obviously, you can all see the spiritual application of that. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says:

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

We do not have any literal temples. The temples today are spiritual temples. Every one of you today that is saved is that temple. God wants you to build that temple, your body, and through building that, you ensure that you never lose the burden or the vision. More importantly, you never stop growing.

I love how Haggai deals with them. He tells them, look guys, you quit building the temple. You are looking at the temple just like it is any other building. That temple that we are to build, it is not just a building, it is the future of the nation of Israel. So many times we as God's people, we just look at our body, coming to church, doing whatever we do, jumping through the spiritual hoops. But you never see that the building of your temple, your body, it is not just about today. It is about your future as a child of God. Where the nation of Israel was to build the temple looking forward to the first coming of Christ, we are to build the temple looking forward to the second coming of Christ. He says in Haggai chapter 1 verse 7, when he lays all this out, he says:

Haggai 1:7

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

That is a great message for all of us today. If we claim to be saved, claim to be the body of Christ, claim to be our bodies, to be the temple, we too need to consider our ways that we continue to grow. You do not build buildings, you build people.

V. The Sliding Rule of Ministry

I totally get what I call the sliding rule of ministry. Most pastors I do not think understand it. We are the church militant. We are in a spiritual warfare. Ephesians chapter 6 tells us about the armor and how to use the armor. We are in a warfare. If I may for a moment use a worldly analogy, any combat unit, any army unit, any Marine unit, any combat unit that is in battle, if they are going to win, you will always have to out balance the enemy you are up against.

You say, what does that mean? Well, if your enemy throws a company of soldiers at you, that is about 200 men, four platoons, then you counter that with a battalion, that is 400 to 600 men. If he then comes to you with a battalion, then you hit him with a regiment, that is 12 to 1500 men. If he hits you with a regiment, then you nail him with a division, that is 10 to 12,000 men. In other words, you always out balance your enemy by superior firepower. Whatever he throws at you, you lob back at him five, six times of what he is throwing at you.

I am going to tell you, that is really the key to the successful Christian life, and jumping back to the spiritual side now. We all want to have 25% of the world in our life because we have got to live in it, and 200% of the Bible in your life to overload the world. That is what it takes. That is what it takes.

Maybe that, I do not know if it will or not, but maybe that helps you understand my method in ministry as your pastor. Everything we get here, if you have been around here any length of time, I do not care what it is. On Sunday morning, Thursday night, our special classes, whatever, when I teach you the Bible, I always overload you with truth. That is why it took us, I do not know, six or seven or eight years to get through Proverbs. That is why it is going to take, we will probably finish Psalms by the end of the millennium. Somebody said one time, he sent me an email and he says, I really love your teaching, I love your special classes, but I have got to tell you, it is like trying to get a drink out of a fire hydrant. I can tell you this, nobody will leave this church because you do not get enough Bible, but there will be plenty that will leave it because you get too much Bible, and that is not what you are looking for.

We work with folks on whatever level they are on, spiritually speaking. I have said this many, many times, it does not matter your age, it does not matter your skills with the Bible, it does not matter where you come from, what you did in your life, what trouble you were in, none of that matters. So many of God's people can never help people or accept people because all they can do is look at the past. We only care where you want to go from this point on in your life, and we are here 24/7, we never close. But we as a church must always look to our future generations, our kids, our young adults, our young married couples, and the main reason for that, that this will be the lifeblood of any church, and are seeing them as God's future leaders and to build them to, and prepare them to carry on after we are gone. Building our temple so as a church we can build our future.

This is why some parents will lose all their kids to the world. There is no understanding, no seeing that within their own family what those kids represent as the future, and the kids have no burden, the kids have no vision, because mom and dad have no burden and no vision, and the endless chain of broken families continues on down through the generations.

VI. Three Types of Christians

Again, I have learned this over the years, in any church today, any church, you will find three types of Christian, this is across the board.

4. Those who get the burden and the vision and are part of what God is doing.
5. Those who have no clue of God's burden of vision.
6. Those who could absolutely care less of what God is doing.

I have learned that it is the pastor's job. His job will be to lead and to develop and to build. Anybody who is willing to go that extra mile to keep people growing and fulfill the future that God has for them on whatever level you are on. Some of you, I mean, you know what the main problem is? I am always going to tell you, have you ever stopped and considered this? Why are you even here today? Some of you were Catholic, and God saved you out of the Catholic Church, but He left people that were your friends there. Some of you were Charismatics. Why did God take you out of that, put you in a Bible-believing church, and leave other people there? Did you ever ask yourself that? Did you ever stop and say, why me? What is so special about me? Why did God reach down in the mess that I was in? Some of you were drunks. Some of you were dope addicts. Some of you were whatever. Why did God reach down, grab you by the nap of your collar, rip you out of that life, set you in a Bible-believing church, and left your friends where they are at? Ever stop and ask yourself that?

The answer to that is simply this. God saw something in you. Have you ever taken the time in the Bible and went through Noah, Job, Abraham, David, Samuel, Daniel, Paul, all of those guys? Could you stop and go through each one of them? Because I could, because I get it. Could you stop and go through each one of them and see each one was different? God had a job differently for each one, and God saw something differently in each one of those that made them who they were. God saw something in you. That is why you are here today. If you are out listening to me and you are in a Bible-believing church like this one, God saw something in you and He pulled you out of whatever mire you were in because He saw something in you.

You know what the problem is? The problem is simply God saw something in you, but you do not see it in you. You just go to church. You give your offering. You come to Thursday night. You take all the classes. But the bottom line is simply this. He saw something special in you. That is why He did not leave you where you were, and that is why He left some people where they are at. The quicker you learn that, the quicker it is going to change your life in a positive way. He could have left you where you were and given you and put you into some cult church, some dead megachurch. Why a church that believes and teaches the Bible on the scale that it does, like so many other ones out there, why are you here today? Do you actually think you are here because you decided this is the church for you? Do you really? Please tell me you are not that stupid in life. You are here today by God's design. You are here today because God saw something in you that you do not see in yourself probably. Many of you. A lot of you do.

When you understand that and you see that, you will realize that your continual spiritual growth is the key. The future generations of our church will be our children. We are getting ready to talk

about this summer. We are getting ready to talk about what we do really all year long. Our children, our teens, our young adults, our young married couples, and we put the emphasis on them all year, but especially going into the summer. There are some things that I want you, as we move into this summer now that Memorial Day is over, there are some things that I want you to understand that you can more intelligently pray for. Some things that you need to understand.

VII. Seven Stages of Spiritual Growth in the Church

I do not know how you look at this church, but when I see the future of this church, I see seven key sections. Seven key areas that we as a church and the older ones as elder men and elder women should be helping to grow. Getting to the stage of building spiritual maturity in our church. That is our future. Our future in keeping God's burden and vision alive, so we do not become so many churches out there that on Sunday we have to wonder where we are going next. What are we going to do? As a pastor, I do not have to walk around all week. What am I going to preach this week? What do I need? You know that because you have God's burden and God's vision and you know exactly what your job is to do. That is us. That should be us.

I know that I have talked to this many, many times on a personal level throughout the Bible. There are seven stages of spiritual growth. We know that. Well, there are also seven stages of spiritual growth in a church. You cannot separate one the other because the growth of the church is dependent on the growth of the people.

In this church, here is how I break it down:

- Our nursery.
- Our Bible Buddies.
- Our Bible Explorers.
- Our Timothy Ministry.
- Our high school and our junior high.
- Our singles ministry.
- Our young married couples.

In the first three, the nursery, Bible Buddies, and Bible Explorers, if you have kids in there, I want you to understand that your kids are taught and cared for by some of the best teachers and counselors anywhere in this country. I know because I trained them. I would put them up against anybody in this city on what they do with the Bible. This cadre is made up of the core adults of our church. They love the Lord. They love and know their Bible. They put hours into their lessons. They love this church and they love your kids. I want to tell you, I monitor what they do. They do not even know it many times. They do not do anything halfway. They buy their own materials. They do for your kids what I do for you as your pastor. They overload them.

After volleyball, we always went to Jason's Deli. I try to learn everything spiritual, something wherever I go. You always got that big baked potato. That sucker is that long. There is no room for anything else on it. It is the most overloaded baked potato I have ever seen in my life. Yet it is a good potato to eat, is it not? Lord knows you ate enough of them. Every time I would watch it, some of you other ones too. Every time I went by and you had that big potato, and they had

everything on it, I think to myself, that potato represents my ministry to this church. Overloaded. Leave nothing else that you could ever want on this potato, given everything that deserves. I am telling you, this ministry here is like that baked potato with your kids. They come home from church. They have everything they can handle because of the people that teach them.

Then we get to our high school in our junior high class. This will be Jared and Kenzie. There is nobody better. I went to Risa Bradford's graduation party last night and I bumped into Zach who was there and got to spend some time with him. Zach was our youth pastor for many, many years. Him and his wife did a really good job building the foundation. I want to tell you, nobody does it better than Jared and Kenzie. Nobody. Yet at the same time here again, they are staffed with our young adults. Those young adults are long under their leadership. They take the principles and the biblical aspects that you as mom and dad want to instill in your kids and they enforce those with your kids. They are your counterpart. They are not the parents, but we exist. They exist. The cadre, those young adults that are in there exist. Brother, let me tell you something. They take care of those kids. They are number one.

Today is graduation Sunday. Danny already said, everybody moves up to the next class by age group. If you understood what all he said, you are better than I did because I did not understand a word of it. Yeah, I did. But built within our structure of our Sunday school and elementary division, we have built a consistency. Nobody sees it. We never talk about it. We certainly do not brag about it, but together we understand the goal of future generations and what we need to do. The nursery. I know they are little kids and you cannot do a lot with them, but they are in there for quite a while. As they get older, you get them ready for the Bible Buddies. When they go into the Bible Buddies, the Bible Buddies has them for a couple of years and the Bible Buddies then gets them ready for the Bible Explorers that are older. The Bible Explorers has them for several years and they get them ready for the Timothy and they move into the Timothy. The Timothy gets them ready for the high school. Jared then gets them ready for me. The young men and young ladies that we together begin to try to finish up what God started and get them into the ministries of this church and to keep them growing fully knowing that this is the process of leadership in the future for this church. In time, they will get married and they will work in all the areas of my ministry, as many of you couples do.

VIII. Building Leadership

My verse for this and my ministry for this, and we want to turn to this, will be found over in 1 Timothy chapter 4 verses 12 through 13. Remember, I built our investment inward first and then outward. In 1 Timothy chapter 4 verses 12 and 13, Paul was writing to his young man, Timothy, who he had won to Christ. He had worked him through the word of God and now Timothy is a pastor and he says to young Timothy:

1 Timothy 4:12-13

12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

I do not do much well in life. There are a lot of things I just cannot do. I am very, I mean, I am very, I am not the brightest light bulb in the box, but I am smart enough to know my limitations. So what I do is I have built people around me who do things better than I do. Most pastors cannot do that. They have to be in charge of everything, do everything, know everything, even when they do not know anything. I have learned the fallacy of that and I think the real key of leadership is recognizing your limitations and then build people around you who do things better than you do and allow them to help you.

God has given me ability to just do two things well and I am okay with that. I do not know anything about cars. I go to the garage and the guy said, the car has got a circuit. I ask him how much to make it longer. My car stops and I open up the hood. I have always made those guys, and I have told you this before, who some damsel in distress along the side of the freeway and long comes the guy in a pickup truck, comes up, big cowboy hat on, says, what is wrong little darling? She says, well, my car will not start. Well, pop the hood, honey. He looked down in there, got a screwdriver. He takes a screwdriver, he sticks it down there somewhere and then says, try it now. And that starts right up. Now, I love that. To me, that is a man. I tried that once, burnt my hand, the screwdriver burnt in half. It did not work for me. I do not know those kinds of things.

God has given me the ability to do two things well and I am good with that. One is he gave me the word of God a little bit and how to take young men and young women and build them to become leaders. I know what it takes to build leadership because I know what to look for in people that hold the qualities of leadership. It is a lot like I said a little bit ago, God saw something in all of you and that is why you are here. The problem is you do not see it yourself. Many times I will see it in you too. The problem is not God seeing it or me seeing it. The problem is you do not want to see it. Once I know what to look for and I see it, I know how to get it done. Where Mozart wrote great music, where Michelangelo did great paintings, where Rodin made great sculptures, I built people.

Building leadership is the key to the lifeblood of any church. Taking young men and young ladies through the process that all of these people from the nursery right up to Jared, right up to when you turn them over to me, what do I do with them then? Look around you. Look at all the young men and women and the young couples we have here. There is not a pastor or a missionary that comes through this church that preaches that does not pull me aside and says, how do you do it? I am in Baptist churches 24/7 and everybody there is 60 years and older and they cannot get any young people to come. How do you do it? Well, I do not try to explain it because I could not explain it if I did not. He probably could not get it. You have to personally see the value that God sees in people. You have to have the ability to see beyond who you really, who you are to see who you really are. You have to know what to look for when you see those basic traits that if that person will allow you, you can take the word of God and develop those things.

There is a process by which you do that. Building and growing those six areas that he talked about in 1 Timothy 4:

- Word: Know your Bible.
- Conversation: That is your lifestyle. You are what you talk about.
- Charity: Number one key to ministry.
- Spirit: That is your worship, John chapter 4 verse 24.
- Faith: Trusting God, walking by faith and not by sight.
- Purity: Being separated from the world, living sacrifice.

Then he starts off with saying, "Let no man despise thy youth." He says that to young Timothy, who is just a young guy, probably like the same age of most of you young guys here today. You know what Paul did? Paul saw in Timothy what I see in a lot of you. Then he took young Timothy and he gave him everything that God had given Paul he gave to Timothy. He trained him. He gave him what God had given him.

I do not know if you have ever caught this or not, but there are three young Christian men in the Bible that Paul dealt with. I guarantee you he dealt with, well I know he dealt with hundreds, maybe thousands. Why did the Bible only give us three? Why did the Holy Spirit of God says three is all they need? Well, because three is a number. He gave us Timothy, he gave us Titus and he gave us Philemon. You know why he just gave us those three? Because everything that a young man or a young lady needs to be and to be a leader is found in those three. He did not need to give us 10 more, five more, 15 more. He gave us Timothy so we would understand the basic format of what leadership is. He gave us Titus that we would understand stewardship because we are to be stewards of the mysteries of God. He gave us Philemon to understand that we minister as servants.

He says, "Let no man despise thy youth." People love good, clean looking young people. I do not know if they still do it or not, but years and years ago when the mega churches, part one was around, Bible colleges would put together singing groups, ministry singing groups with young people that were very clean-cut and they put them in a bus and send them around to churches and they would put on a little concert, go through the little deal that they would do. The whole idea was send them into this church, let the church parent see what good, godly, clean young men look like and then they are going to want to send their kid to that Bible college. That is the way it went.

Some of you guys preached on the City Union Mission. Have you ever noticed how those old guys, when I first started to go to the City Union Mission, which was probably 40 years ago, the average age down there was probably 60, 70. The average age down there now is in their 20s and their 30s. When you young men get up and preach, they love it. They love it because every one of them sees in you what they lost in themselves and your testimony to them. Some of you guys go door to door selling stuff. You do roofing business or that and you are very successful of it. You know why you are? Because of the way you present yourself. You look honest, you look clean, you look like, you know, you are not going to rip them off. People are gravitated to that kind of young people.

Then he says that we are to in word know the book, conversation, charity, spirit, faith, purity, building the strong sturdy maturity in those six areas. Then he says, after you get that done, and

here is where you guys come in. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine."

- Reading: Read the Bible.
- Exhortation: Preach the Bible.
- Doctrine: Know the Bible.

Those three based on the other six are the key that you will never stop growing spiritually. I gave you all those areas of seven. The last one will be, or right in there, there where we, the last ones where we put the finishing touches on our kids. Now enter into adulthood, the high school, the singles, and then they get married and the married couples.

IX. Summer Ministries and Prayer Points

At the end of July, which is coming up pretty quick, we will have our high school and junior high camp. It is the biggest thing we do all year. Each year we see it get better and better, bigger and bigger. As our leadership within the church develops, so does our camping ministry. We have them coming all from all over the country. Again, it started, it is staffed with Danny and Jamie and with all of our young adult couples who are trained in high level ministry and all of our older adults that be part of that too. We have the counselors, we have the cooks, we have the grunt guys who help Danny do whatever he has to do. We have the scorekeepers, we have the medical staff, we have the top speakers that we could bring in. Mike Fernandez is coming this year, bringing a bunch of people with him. All our top drawer, highly motivated men and women who will ensure that as we leave camp, we will get the job done. The key to it all is unity. Everybody being on the same page, no issues between people, work through it, get it all done and get the job accomplished because we have a burden and we have a vision.

The first thing I want you to intelligently pray for is pray for camp. It is going to be here faster. We have got all the applications coming in, people are excited about it and it is going to be a great time.

Our next key will be our singles ministry. Basically many of them head up for me what we call our Timothy ministry. You hear that term a lot, allow me to explain it a little better for you. It all started actually when we got hit with COVID-19. COVID was a bad time for everybody. It would not last for three or four years. But the good side of COVID was that it proved a lot of things and a lot of people in ministry. COVID revealed our true commitment and our true spirituality. It defined Christianity and Christians. Some people were so afraid to get it that they left church and never came back again even when it was over. But what it did was it defined for, at least for me, where everybody was at because the church has to go on. I do not care what happens, you always have to find a way through it. That is the pastor's job. Yeah, we all had to wear masks. Remember when we had to set the chairs up six feet apart? It was the goofiest stuff on the planet. I remember when we could not even meet in groups, we had to move in no more than 10 and we met in houses. Please remember that? Now that was absolutely looking back on it, what we had to do. It defined who we really are. It defined how important it was for you to

come and get the word of God and understand the church format or it was easier for you to stay home.

But out of it was born our Timothy ministry. That age group and our ministry to them had stagnated at the time. It was not going anywhere and it was pretty much dead in the water. The lack of growth, the lack of vision, and the lack of burden with the people that were running it. Through all of that, I saw an opportunity to take our key single male and female kids and use them to train the kids like Paul used Timothy and given them the training to train others. I took Danny and Jamie aside and laid out what my vision was and I gave them the job. The mission was to take these young adults and create an elite group of men and women who could take the vision and understand and begin to train the younger kids in that Timothy age group and train our kids. Many of our young couples also work in that and they are spread out just about everywhere that they needed to be. Young couples who again started out single and then got married and they are invaluable to me. Building these kids into the main leadership and the ministries of this church over the years.

I have had a different aspect. Now I stay out of the hands-on every day. This is Danny and Jamie's deal. They do not need me in there. I want these kids to develop their own identity. I want them to take them and develop their own leadership. They do not need me there. I will take things from the outside to add to it. To train them and give them extra information they need. I started the Alpha Bravo teams. That is taking the men and the women and then intimately aside from what Danny and Jamie do with them teach them the intimate fashion of the ministry working with people. Then one on one we started the Patterns class and I opened that up to everybody because I wanted to take them to the next level and now we are in the middle with those kids learning every aspect of that.

I told Danny I want our Timothy team to be an elite group. Give them their own identity. We hold them to a higher standard. It is not just something that anybody can get in because I want to be you have to understand the vision and the burden and the unity that we are trying to build as you come up through those seven layers of spirituality through the church that being trained that we can now take you and get you to the point where you really understand how to work with people. They have to be able to submit to authority. They cannot not understand that unity is the key. We have to work together and I will be honest it is not for everybody. Danny and Jamie hold regular times with them. They kind of turn there. We decided where their house was to turn it into like a little headquarters where they can work with them and deal with them do things with them that they can establish themselves as leaders in every aspect and I do not go to those things. I do not show up. I do not have to say well I want to be there. No, no, no, no. They have to build and develop their own leadership without looking over their shoulder to see if I approve. That is what leadership is. I trust them. I trust them to be able to become that elite group that is only going to be the future of this church down the line of the leaders.

To me this is this is the stages that they go through. The high school, the young adults, the young married. Now these are my highest priorities in this church. The reason for that is at this age group their minds are as sharp as they are ever going to be. Their bodies are as strong as they are ever going to be. Most of them have not been destroyed or tainted with sin to the point where

you cannot do anything with them. They are the ideal of 1 Timothy 4 and "Let no man despise their youth." These first five areas have laid the foundation. You people that took them from the nursery up through the Bible Explorers you have laid the foundation. Now we take them once they graduate from the high school they come into my area of ministry. Now we begin to put the finishing touches on them.

These three groups will basically run all the ministries of this church under our direction. They run the rest home. They run the softball and the volleyball. Most people look at the softball and the volleyball and they just see teams. I tell these guys who are captains I said it may be a team but look at it like it is your church. In both volleyball leagues and churches they play volleyball and then try to figure out a way to minister. I tell them you minister first and try to figure out how to play volleyball. It has to be number one. They have to see their responsibility that I am giving them nine, ten, twelve people. They are not just a captain. They do not just decide who plays where on the field. They have to look at them like I look at you. This is where it starts.

These guys preach down the City Union Mission. They discipleship the other kids that come in. Discipleship one, two, and three. They work with all as I said the new kids that come in. The couples deal with marital counseling with me. Premarital counseling and counseling in general. They form in this church the tip of the javelin and it has to stay as sharp as it can ever stay. My job is to keep the unity. My job is to keep the devil from infiltrating because they are still kids and kids will always have the issues that kids have. They have to be above that because I think they are better than that because I think just like you God brought them here because he saw something. It is my job to see it and then develop it. Keep the standards high. Keep everybody growing spiritually.

Next week we do this every year. They are having their Timothy retreat. That is not the kid in Timothy. It is the leadership. I think there are over 40 some people going away and I tell Danny when he goes down there and again I do not go. This is their time. They do not need me there. They need to go down there, work themselves together, get on the same page, fine tune things, and then come back and we hit the summer. They do not need me down there. I tell Danny spare no expenses. Take whatever it takes. I want him to have a good time. I want him to have fun but I want him to come back. You may take 40 individuals down there but I want them coming back as one because we have got a full summer ahead of us. We have got to hit camp. We have got to hit softball when it starts and everything else that we have got going on and we need to understand that we are laborers together. We have got to keep them growing, keep developing leadership, and spiritual maturity through accountability, responsibility, and ministry. Take the very best that we have and make them better.

Down through the history of war and we are in a spiritual warfare. The job certainly got done by the common ordinary soldiers but the real guys who made the difference were the ones who went above beyond and got the job done. Take people who are really good and make them even better. That is what this is about and I do not care what level you are on. You can have that same spiritual maturity if you want it. But let us face it, I am not the future of this church. These kids sitting around you today and the ones up teaching Timothy, they are the future of this church. We do not see that. We do not understand that. We do not address that. We are just going to be every

dead stagnated church out there that cannot figure out what they are doing anymore. It starts with a vision. It starts with a burden and then transferring it into the people that God has given us. Looking behind, looking around, and looking ahead.

I tell you all this so you can pray more intelligently about what we are trying to do. You need to pray for camp. We have got people coming in all over the place. We need to pray for our kids on all levels. We need to pray for the men and the women who will labor with them and work with them and pray for next week in the Timothy retreat. Because I guarantee you, God moves and the devil moves. We know that. The devil will always try to get into the details.

X. Family as a Ministry Team

It is over 20 years ago now that I started this church. I tried to start it as biblically as I could and as biblically as I knew how. I understood that the key to reaching the world is families ministering together. I saw back in the Old Testament where what God saw in Abraham was that he was a man that would conduct his family in his children. Then God told him, through you Abraham and your children, you are going to reach all the families of this earth. That is a principle. So we started this church with my family as a ministry team to build a church. Jamie and Danny, Kelly and Woody. Where Jamie and Danny worked with this section, Kelly and Woody worked with me with young married couples, premarital, deal with high level problems with marital couples that sometimes you want to pull your hair out. In time we had Maddie, Kenzie, Macy, Jordan. Now they are all part of our team.

Now I did it that way for two basic reasons and I want you to see and understand this.

- It was biblical, the biblical way to do it.
- As a model for families starting in our church to get married and the families that they understood building family teams and family ministry is the way that needs to be done.

Now let me just say this. I am not suggesting and probably some of your evil minds have already went this way. I am not suggesting in any way, shape or form that our family is perfect. We have had our issues just like your family has your issues. Kenzie just got her first DWI. We have got problems. We have got to work through that. Maddie is not here today because we did not get time to post her bail this morning but she will be here this afternoon. Hey, we have our family issues just like you do. I do not want to even suggest that, oh Bob, this is fabulous. No, I think my family is just like every other family. We have to slap them down sometimes. My two girls can tell you. In our old house, remember the bathroom door that had the big hole in it that dad punched his fist through because you guys were not doing what was right and I lost my temper? No, that was wrong. It was wrong. I should have threw the kids through the door instead of putting my hands. That was wrong. Remember the hole in the door? You remember it. I am not lying. Hole in the door, right? Yeah. And I knew I was wrong for doing that. I lost my temper. I am human too. But you know what I did? I never fixed that door, did I? I never put a new door on. Never had anybody come over to patch the hole. You know why? Because every time, every day, I want to look at that stupid hole and realize how stupid I was for doing that. Remember the time we sold the house? Four or five more holes in that door. That is when we fixed the door

because you cannot tell. You think I really want people coming through? Wow, this is a nice house. I have got to ask you, what is the hole in the bathroom door for? Oh, you think I am going to tell them? Our family is just like yours. We have our issues. We have our problems. I do not ever want to suggest for a moment that Bob's family or Jamie's family or Woody's family, they think they are... No, no, no, no. We are right where everybody else is. Believe me. Believe me. Believe me. I have seen them off in the corner someplace and I learned to stay away where they are talking to their kids and the kids are crying and they are pointing their finger at them. I do not walk in there and say, what is going on here now? No, that... We are just like your family.

Can I show you the difference? The difference is when Barb and I started to minister with our families much more than her than me, I was running around the world and she was the baseline. We built it around God's burden and God's vision for our family based on Habakkuk chapter 2 verses 1 through 3 and the three things there that it says to establish the ministry. We taught that to our kids. They taught it to their kids. So when the family is built around these things, you are going to have issues. Your kids are not going to be perfect. You and me as parents are not going to be perfect. But I will tell you what is always perfect, the burden and the vision. It never changes. I am telling you, young couples, and I know most of you are doing this, when you build your family around those things, when you have problems with your kids and you will, that is what is the glue that holds it together. That is what makes it workable. That is what brings them back to the baseline. But you know what? It is the same way with any church. Laying a sure foundation, having the right focus, and build it around God's vision and God's burden. The key and success of any church will be the families built as ministry teams together. I harp on it all the time. Moms and dads who keep the kids growing as they keep the church growing. If the kids get out of line, mom and dad deal with it. Sometimes they will get radically out of line. You deal with it. You always hold them to the principles.

All of us, no matter what level you are on, Ephesians chapter 4 verse 15 says, the ultimate goal is for you and me to grow up, not unto him, but into him. And safely guarantee the future of our church till the Lord comes back. So here we are beginning of summer. Kids are going down next week. We have got camp coming up. We have got everything else that we are working with and that we are doing. You pray for our Timothy workers. Pray for Danny and Jamie next week. Pray for Jared and Kenzie as they gear these kids up for camp and where they are. Pray for our Bible Explorers, our nursery, our Bible Buddies, and our Timothy. This year camp looked like it is going to blow off the roof and pray for our outreach ministries as we invest in others, as we invest in each other first.

Here is the bottom line. I talked to Mike Veach this week, pastors from New York. He is sending down a bunch of invitations for people in this church to come up to their anniversary in October. We will have them next week and I will pass them out to those that want to go. But we were talking, and we are both about the same age. Mike is my kind of guy. It was less than six months ago that he lost a leg in a motorcycle accident. They had to get an artificial leg. I asked him, how are you getting along on your artificial leg? He said, oh, I am doing pretty good. He said, they have to use a cane. He says, I just got back from this mission field. Just got back from this mission. He is already, nothing is going to stop him. I told him, I said, you know, we are a lot

alike, Mike. Nothing is going to stop us. He said, you know what? If the Lord wants to stop us, then we will both be okay with that. I said, you are right. This month I am going to be 75. Okay. Do not yell it. I know I do not look it. But it will be 75 years old. He is about the same age. I am not kidding myself. Some of you out there are about the same age as I am, maybe a few years younger. Some of you may be a couple of years older. But today, some of us are becoming part of the history of this church. Maybe not today, but in a short time, maybe some of us becoming part of the past. But look around you today. You have got to see what I see. The cycle of life is the cycle of life. But as some of us are becoming part of the history and the past of this church, the kids around us are going to be the key parts of the future of this church. We have to keep it going. We have to do whatever we have got to do. We have got to spend whatever we have got to spend. We have got to invest whatever we have got to invest. We have got to take every young man, a young lady that comes in here and says to me, Bob, I want to be part and whatever level you are on, get you to the place where we finish you to be everything that God wants you to be.

I am the kind of guy who everything I do for the Lord, I try to squeeze every drop out of it that I can for his honor and glory. I like blood as the young men and young ladies in this church and how we approach them to train them and to keep them and to grow them growing and keep them moving. That is going to be the key. It is going to take all of us. Some of you older guys and gals, you have a valuable experience in life. Why do you keep it to yourself? Why do you not take some of these young guys under your wing and explain, you know what, son, I screwed up doing this. You do not want to do this. This really worked for me. This is what you want to do. Why do we want to keep everything that God has done for us and never let anybody learn from it? It goes back to what I said. Why are you here today? Why did God pull you out of whatever you were in and put you here today? Because he saw something in you. He saw something special in you. Today I hope you can see it, what God sees in you, in yourself. Then let God have you by all of us ministering unto the Lord first, inwardly, then take it outwardly. Let us pray. Father, we do thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus.