**GMT20241122-001026 Recording 640x360**

All right, welcome back to our Thursday night Bible class. We're studying on Thursday night the book of Revelation, but we have taken a sidestep to actually understand what this life of Christianity is, so that when we go back into the chapter four and look at the rapture, we'll understand whether or not we're going to be part of that or not. So this is used to sort of get your life together, get you a self-assessment, understand exactly what the scripture says about what Christianity is, and make the determination yourself as to where you fit and all of that.

Now we're into Ephesians four. Remember, Ephesians is split up into two sections. The first section is chapters one, two, and three that gives us the doctrine.

The theology gives us the history of basically the world before Genesis. So we take a view on that, and we understand that everything that is happening in our lives, because we're predestined and we're elected, happened before even Genesis was created. All right, now starting in chapter four through six, we get into the application, and what we learned for the last three weeks as we were looking in chapter four, what we find is that chapter four, five, and six focus on what is called our walk.

And our walk, by definition of the word walk, is conduct. So what is our conduct in relationship to chapters one, two, and three? And we know our goal in conduct is established in chapter three, verse 20. That's where our engine actually is running on eight cylinders.

And you can't get there because it's a progressive move. You start in chapter three, verse 16, and you go to verse 17, verse 18. You can't jump over because one, basically, it's like achieving a race result, desert race results.

You get through one area, and you place, and you get to another area, you place, and the winning is the collective of all the times. Well, that's what this is. You can't get to 17 chapters or verse 17 activity unless you've completed verse 16.

You can't get to 18 unless you've completed 17. You can't get to 19 unless you've completed 18, and you can't get to 20, which is your goal, unless you've completed 19. So therefore, you've got to complete all of them to get to your goal of running your life on all eight cylinders.

That's the key. So, and it all exhibits in one word, conduct, your conduct, how you walk in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Okay, so let's go back into Ephesians chapter four.

As we slowly walk through this, we're going to be here for at least two more sessions in these first six verses. So I'm going to begin reading in verse one again, and we're just going to take this one verse, verse one again tonight, because it is filled with principles of application addressing your conduct. We talked about some of it last time.

We're going to talk about more this time. So it says, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you walk worthy. In other words, your conduct is worthy of the vocation to which Christ called you to do.

Okay, that's the first thing. You got to walk. How do you know how to walk? Well, you got to study scripture.

Okay, that's your sanctification. With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. Unity of Spirit is the unity of the church.

Okay. I had a conversation this week with an individual. Well, I'll never point them out.

But the conversation was quite unique in that the revelation of the fact that what they were doing was they were, they were doing what they've always done and thought that it was doing good when in actuality it was tearing down people. And it all started with a gossip. And it was all based upon false assertions, the gossip.

They thought they knew what was going on. But when they actually sat down and talked to the person that they were talking behind their back and found out really what was going on, they couldn't put Pandora back in the box. And they wanted to know what they needed to do.

You know, that's like counseling 101. Okay, so now I've been saying to you for over the last several weeks that we're examining what it means to walk worthy. Okay, your conduct.

That is the heart of the entire second section of Ephesians, second section being chapters four, five, and six. As we went verse by verse through the first part of all of Genesis 1 to, or Ephesians chapters 1, 2, and 3, the foundation was laid. We understand what it is that we're called, how we're called, how we're determined, who's going to be safe, who's not going to be safe, what's the role you play, how you get your engine started, how do you keep it running.

We understand all of the principles. Now we got to understand the application. So as we go verse by verse through this second part, we find the practical injunctions based upon that foundations of chapters 1, 2, 3. And it all begins here in the first three verses of chapter four, the walk, the worthy walk.

What is that? And Paul is calling us to walk worthy on the vocation to which we are called. So if God indeed has called us, which happened in Ephesians 1 verses 1 through 11, if God indeed has called us, we are to walk worthy of such a calling. We're going to share this tonight in all kinds of ways, but Martin Lloyd Jones, the great English expository and pastor, said, and I quote, I do not think it is harsh judgment to say that the most obvious feature of the life of the Christian church today is superficially.

Martin Lloyd Jones, the great expository, further said, the one main cause is our attitude to the Bible, our failure to take it seriously. Why? Because that's what we've always been taught. That's what we grew up.

Okay. We got to pour your glass out so that you can fill it up with the truth. All right.

The biggest hurdle for anything that we're going to deal with from now to the end of days is instilling in each one of us the truth. That's going to be the, and I said this from the very beginning, when I met with the, with a group that we're putting together for the transaction we're all involved in, I said, our number one issue is education in all of this. And the guys laughed and sort of chuckled it off, but it came, it's come back to roost several times because without that education, we would have been a mess.

So, and I would add our failure is also to obey it. Not only our attitude to the Bible that we, we don't take it seriously and our failure to take it as it is and allow it to speak to us. Our, our failure is in obedience because Christ says, we got to live your life by every word of the mouth of God.

And if you're not studying your Bible, you can't achieve that command. So what is that? That's sin. Guys, pure up.

Sin. Now, I think Jones is spot on in his, his quotations. It is true that the basic characteristic of the church today is its superficiality.

It says it's a church. It calls itself his church. On the surface, it looks like the church, but at the root of the church, it's not church.

It's an entertainment center. I think it's changing from what it was to even 10 years ago. Matter of fact, I can, I can walk in churches around here and see that.

Even the churches I went to as a young boy, I can tell you, I can walk in there and see a drastic difference. But I think there's, is a mass of the Christian, Christianity that doesn't know the meaning of real commitment. There's a tremendous amount of half, half commitment of superficiality, of indifference, of complacency, of an idolatry, okay, idolatry, idolatry attitude that keeps people from one, understanding the Bible, two, making application of it in their lives, and three, obeying it.

And yet this is the heart of everything. This is your history. This is who you are.

This is where you came from. What a tremendous sin it is for those who named the name of Jesus Christ to be indifferent about the principles of the Christian faith. Now we're talking about your conduct here.

And yet that's very true. Many, many Christians are half committed or less. They're superficial, complacent, and indifferent.

To study the Bible, for example, without letting it say what it really means is a serious sin. If I take, well, I don't know which one I want to pick up, but if I take the Bible, it's one of eight over here, and pick it up and start reading it and reading it as a book and not comprehending what the words say. You know what that is? That's sin.

And how am I going to have you say, I read my Bible every day, but do you actually study it? Because that's what it says. Study to show yourself approved. Didn't say read it as a novel.

So Peter speaks of that in 2 Peter 3 in 16. And he's talking about Paul's epistles. And he says this, as also in all Paul's apostles, speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to understood.

Now watch this. The reason it was understood was because Paul was teaching a different principle from what they had learned. The same thing that we're doing today.

Paul was teaching to a Gentile world that had no clue what he was really talking about. The Holy Spirit had to really convict them to get them on track, which is exactly the position that we're at today. Are we not? So watch this.

Which they that are unlearned and unstable wrests. W-R-E-S-T. As they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction.

Now the word rest is the word that we're going to key on in this verse, because that is the objective here. The Greek word means to torture or to put on the rack. Now this is what you're doing.

Okay. This is your conduct. Okay.

Don't think about it. Somebody else's. This is you.

Okay. You are, you are creating your own destruction by your conduct. Now, when somebody tortures somebody else, they have a goal in mind.

The tormentor takes the victim, puts them on a rack, stretches his limbs to get the person to say what he wants him to say, which is what they do. That's exactly what Peter is saying here. There are some people who take the scripture and put it on the rack and twist it out of shape to make it say what they want it to say.

That's a serious sin. To twist the scripture, to not let it say what it really means to you. And that goes on in Christianity all the time.

Twisting the scripture to somebody's bias, twisting the scripture because you're unlearned and don't have the tools to do it right, twisting the scripture because you're unstable and you don't have a solid commitment to a theological principle of truth. Remember, chapters 1, 2, and 3 is all about principles, doctrine. Twisting the scripture because you know no better because you're not taught.

Well, you're taught, you're held to a higher standard. You need to go do this. Because now, after tonight, when you know that there's a way that you have to study this and there's a way to hold yourself in the conduct that the scripture tells you, your standard has just been raised, elevated one more time.

There are many people who have taken the scriptures and forced them into meanings that are improper. I venture to say 99.9% of the church pastors do this all the time today. And of course, under the umbrellas of Christianity, you have cults and isms and schisms and spasms and everything else all doing this.

There are people who torture the scripture on the rack to force it to say what they want it to say, to make it accommodate their own bias or justify their own behavior. Guys, your self-assessment. Think about this.

Yeah, that's exactly also what the world does to even justify homosexuality. Yeah, because they twist the scripture. Yeah.

And we need to understand that there's so many commands in other parts of the Bible that tell us this is what's going on. It says, do not love this world or anything of this world. Do not conform to this world.

Have a renewed mind. You guys who want to live in this fence line of, oh, I just want to be happy and I want everybody to be happy and I want to love everybody and I just want everybody to love me. You know what? That is not scripture.

You got to make a decision. Are you going to walk and have your conduct in accordance to the scripture or you're not? There's no gray areas, guys. Absolutely zero in your decision process of whether or not you're going to conduct yourself in a worthy walk knowing the scripture now.

Okay, let's continue. So it is also a sin to study the Bible and even let it say what it means, but then use it for your own ill-conceived ends. Just exactly what Billy Ruth was pointing out.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 17, Paul says, we are not as those who corrupt the word of God. We're completely different. He uses the word kapelos, which means a huckster, a con man, or a phony or a fraud who takes something and pawns it off for his own ends.

Do you like what you do? You're going to find scripture to support what you do and that's not what it says and you just elevated yourself one more time towards judgment. There are people who take the word of God and even it's rightfully interpreted, they may even proclaim it, churches today, but they see it as a way to get their own ends met. There are people who believe it or not and getting fat rich off the word of God.

Prosperity gustles. So you've got a church in Houston, you've got churches, there's mega churches all over the world, that's all they're after is money. And people don't see it okay at all.

And thirdly, it is also possible to study the Bible and let it say what it means and even make the right application and then refuse to obey it. And that's the worst of all, guys. That's when your standard has been raised to the highest level and oh my gosh, if you're not obedient, you're going to be crucified in judgment.

And that's the worst of all. James 1 verse 17, to whom that knoweth to do good, got to think about this, and doeth it not, to him it is what? Sin. So there is the sin then of twisting scripture.

There is the sin then of taking scripture and using it for your own ends. And then there is sin of not even obeying it. When you know it, when you apply it, and you still don't obey it.

That's three sins. So if you don't obey it, you've incurred the other two. You see how the standard works? You know it, you apply it, now you don't obey it.

Oh, you're going to get culminated for three sins. Three levels of standards. We cannot do that with the scripture.

Why? Because the scripture is what you communicate to the Holy Spirit inside of you. Think about that. The Bible and its scripture is your communication tool, your network logic to the Holy Spirit inside of you.

Your gateway of communication, however you want to look at it. If you want to look at it technically or, you know, airwaves or whatever. Without scripture, you have no means of communicating with the Holy Spirit because you have no basis.

We cannot torture the scripture to make it say what we want it to say to fit our own thing. We cannot use it in a corrupt manner, nor really sincerely trying to glorify God, but to gain our own ends, and we dare not ignore it and not obey. I submit to you that we must not be the half committed.

We must not be the superficial. We must not be the indifferent, the unconcerned. We do less than it says what it means.

Let it be applied to what it must be applied to and obey it with all our hearts. Now, only that is to walk worthy, nothing less. So now you know what your conduct needs to be in the first walk.

In order to create your eight-cylinder engine to run on eight spark plugs inside your body called the Holy Spirit, you must, what? Walk worthy. What's that mean? You read the scripture, you apply the scripture, what it means, and you obey it. Nothing less.

And Paul says here we are to walk worthy of the vocation to which we are called. It means we take the Word of God at its face value and we allow it to say what it means to be applied where it must and to respond in obedience. Now, as we come to this section of Ephesians 4, Paul is hitting on that bottom line because he just wrote how to get your eight cylinders running in chapter 3 verse 20 at the end of the chapters.

Now he's starting the application and he's saying, guys, the first thing you got to do is you got to understand scripture, apply it, and obey it. And you can't do that unless you've studied it. You're either going to take these verses for what they say or you're not.

There's no gray. You can't have any grayness here. It's a black or white decision.

You're either going to apply them where they need to be applied or you're not. You're either going to obey them or you're not. And it's a question of the level of your commitment.

Paul is at the bottom line right here. He's saying this is where it all begins. This is the rubber meeting the road.

If you're going to walk worthy, what do you do? Do you say, well, I think the first thing we ought to do is to join a church? That's not what Paul's saying. Well, do you think the first thing you ought to do is read your Bible one hour a day? No, that's not what Paul's saying either. Or do you think the first thing you ought to do is witness? That's not what Paul is saying here either.

Well, the first thing you ought to do is make sure that you say your prayers every day, right? We've talked about that. First thing you need to do is connect to God every morning. It's really going to live that life, walk the way you walk.

That isn't what Paul is saying. What he's saying is all lowliness and meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. Listen, guys, he's talking about the cultivation of basic attitudes, your mindset, your thought pattern, how you approach things.

Do you listen before you speak? Do you ask the Holy Spirit what you should be doing before you do anything? The worthy walk is predicated on right attitudes. And Paul here is talking about you cultivating the right attitudes in the heart. Oh, that is where the Holy Spirit resides, guys.

So he's saying cultivate the Holy Spirit to get him to tell you what to do, which means allowing him to take over your life, which is the sanctification process that you guys ought to be dealing with every day. Now, if we are the children of God, let's just back up and take a core law opinion on this. If we are the children of God, if we are blessed with all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, as according to what Ephesians 1-3 told us, if we were chosen before the world again, which is also what Ephesians 1-11 told us, if we have been redeemed, Christ's death, burial, resurrection, your salvation, made me wise, gave me some knowledge, gave an internal inheritance, which means we're going to heaven, we got our ticket, been placed in the body of Christ, that is what happens in salvation, made alive from the dead, we were buried with Christ and rose again in spiritual life that gave us the ability to become a new creature, our DNA changed, raised to sit in the heavenlies where we're told that we sit right there with Christ on the right hand of God the Father in spirit form today.

If we had been granted an inheritance and given the earnest of the Spirit inside of you, if we had been designed by God unto good works, that means after your salvation he wants you to do good works, that is your reward center. If we've been made fellow citizens with all the saints, means that we've got joint heir to Christ's throne, and basically we're a citizen of heaven upon salvation, living in a foreign land called this earth, that's scripture, if we are the habitation of the Spirit, if we are the partakers in the promise of Christ, if we're all these things guys, which is what scripture tells us, those are factual statements from scripture, then we ought to live like it. The jury's out.

And living like it means we start with the five characteristics of the worthy walk, which are identified in verses two and three of chapter four. Now we're already seeing the call to the worthy walk in verse one. That's what Paul did.

He says you are to walk worthy in accordance to what you're called. Now we went through that verse by verse, word by word, last week. Now we're into the second verse and we're looking at the characteristics of the worthy walk.

And there are five of them in verse two and three, five characteristics of worthy walk. Now I know that you think we've been going at this a couple of weeks, but we needed to do this because we need to bring out the detail of these words. We need to bring out what it's telling us to do.

So the first one, the first thing that characterizes a Christian who's committed, the first thing that characterizes a Christian who's not superficial, somebody who's really on point, really dealing with it as it ought to be dealt with, somebody who's letting the word of God say what it means and mean what it says and who's obeying it is characterized by number one, verse two, all lowliness. And we've talked about this last time. All that exaltation, we're so high and heavenly and holy and exalted and lifted up and made to sit in the heavenlies and one in Christ in the incredible position of the believer.

And all of a sudden we descended right to the very bottom with this first characteristic, or to be humble. We are so exalted because of Christ. We must live so low, our lowly walk.

We need to be humble on this earth. All lowliness. And when we spoke about this last time, it's total humility with all humility.

Okay. Now self-assessment, humility means that your attitude towards somebody probably is much different than your attitude towards yourself. Because if you were looking in a mirror and ask yourself, am I humble to myself? Like you'd be shocked at what's going to come back at you.

You attract what you are. So if humility is not started with you first, self-assessment guys, if your humility hasn't started with you first, how are you going to be able to provide humility to somebody else? You have no nature to do it if you're not doing it to yourself. What's the basis of learning? It's how you treat yourself.

Five keys to a worthy walk, five necessary keys and they're progressive. This is the same thing that we had in Ephesians chapter 3, 16 through 20. They're progressive.

You go from humility to meekness and then meekness produces long-suffering and then long-suffering produces forbearing love. And where there's forbearing love, there is unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. You progressively go from one to another, to another, to another.

And the hardest one is the first one because you got to take your ego out of the equation. And oh my gosh, that is so large in a lot of you. There's a beautiful logic progression in this.

Now we're still at point one, all loneliness. And you know something? I plan to go through the second one and the third, fourth one and the fifth one this evening, but I doubt I'm going to get there because I could spend all night just talking about humbleness and humility. So let's go back to the concept of humility and look at the word all loneliness.

It's so hard to be humble. It's just something you fight through day after day after day. But you know what I've noticed in my Christian life? I'm not humble enough, but I'm humble more often than I used to be.

I'm growing it. I'm finding ways to understand what it means to be humble. Matter of fact, got a haircut today.

Misty went with me because we were going to go have lunch afterwards. There was an elderly guy sitting in the chair next to Misty. And by the questions that the barber and he asked me, and I guess the way I responded, the guy reached over and told Misty that I found out later he picks his battles, doesn't he? And I said, okay, that's, that is getting, I'm getting closer, getting closer.

All right. So, but I'm not humble enough, not nearly enough guys. And you guys seen that, you guys have seen it.

I get frustrated. I get frustrated with ignorance. That's what I get frustrated with.

But I've seen as I've grown as today, I've seen that I've learned to gain the victory over my self-pride. I really could care less about, oh, you guys already, you know this, I don't care what anybody says about me, what they think of me. I just want the respect because that's scripture.

That's it. They don't have to like me, anything, just respect me. If they want to be, if they want respect for me, they got to give respect.

Remember if you're going to want to receive it, you got to give it first. So, and I guess it's because I began to concentrate in that area. I'm working through, I've been working through Ephesians long before we got into this study.

One of the prayers of my heart constantly is God teach me true humility. That is the teacher to do that. Somebody said to me, what's all this stuff going on in your head? Don't, don't you get to just to thinking, boy, you're really something with everything that's going on.

Absolutely not. I give it away in a heartbeat, but I've had that thought along in my career. I can say that, you know.

So all lowliness, what is lowliness? What does it mean? So let me show you something. When Jesus the Lord came into the world, he had a message to give. His first message was this, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Come on into the kingdom, get converted. And as soon as he had gathered about him a little band of believers, as soon as he had some children of the king, as soon as he had some subjects of the kingdom, he knew he had to tell them the basics of how to live. You know, what is the first thing he told them was look at Matthew chapter five.

And let's find out what the bottom line on living like a king's child, the bottom line on being in his kingdom, Matthew five one. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain. And when he was seated, his disciples came unto him and he opened his mouth and taught them saying, now he's got them there.

He's got them there and he's going to teach them. What's he going to teach them? They're the ones who entered the kingdom. They're the ones who become fellow heirs to whom? Him.

They're the ones who are part of what he's doing in the world. They're the children of the king of kings. What's he going to say? What is the basic principle? What is the basic stance that they must have? Well, we find that in verse three.

It says, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall devour you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they, the prophets who were before you. That's your life. That's your conduct.

That's lowliness. That's humbleness, humility. Listen, did you ever see such a pitiful bunch in your life as that bunch on the mount? Think about it.

Let's just walk through this. Blessed are the poor in spirit. And by the way, Luke says blessed are poor.

That's how Luke spread it out, okay? Not in spirit, just poor. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are they who have, they don't have anything. So they hunger after and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful.

Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers. Not the ones who stand up for the rights, but the ones who are concerned that everybody get a fair share.

Blessed are they who are persecuted and reviled and accused. Boy, that is a pitiful bunch, the people. What did Christ do? He always went for the lowest part of the barrel.

Because if you can save them, you can save anybody. But those are the humble, you see? And that's where it all begins. We live in the day when we're, it's all fouled up.

It's turned upside down. We're so busy in the Christian world exalting people and making superstars out of them and patting them on the back and handling awards and degrees and notoriety and fame and making something out of them that we have got the whole thing completely reversed. These are people, Jesus said, these are people who belong in my kingdom.

Are we pursuing the grandiose things of the world? Do not love this world or anything of this world. Are we pursuing the righteousness and our hunger for knowledge according to the scripture? These are the children of the king. And there we are in Ephesians 4 with the same thing.

Who is it that walks worthy? It's the lowly and the meek and those who suffer long and those who endure with love. Those are the ones that get into the kingdom. The gate is narrow.

It isn't the great and the famous and the loud and the boisterous and the prominent and the talented, the rich, the super duper ones. It's not those people. And yet in Christianity, there's so much of that going on that this is the child of the king.

Now, I'm not saying that they don't, those guys that have means are not Christians. There are some Christians that are wealthy beyond wealth, but that they understand that that wealth came from Christ and they absolutely give it away. And it keeps coming back to them over and over and over again because they do that.

Peter put it this way, 1 Peter 5, 5. And you see he was writing there to provide to people who are in the pastorate to those who would be the shepherds, to those who would stand out, those who would be the leaders of the flock, those who would get the recognition and get the honor and love and the attention and the affection of the people. And he says to them, be clothed with humility for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Keep your perspective, he says.

Be clothed with humility. He used a Greek word that is used to speak of the overgarment or the apron that a worker put on to keep that which he wore from getting soiled. That's what he spoke of.

That's the word he chose here. And when you take all of your graces and all of that which is true about you, you deck it all over your humility, Peter says, that's what you need to do. But it's an exclusive thing, isn't it? We talked about it last time that there are three keys to humility.

One is self-awareness, seeing yourself for who you really are, a sinner and nothing more, and worthy of nothing other than judgment. Honesty, dealing with your own sin. Honesty, dealing with your own weakness.

Honesty, dealing with your own stupidity, dealing with your own inadequacies. We are not sufficient, according to 2 Corinthians 3 and 5. Paul says, to think anything of yourself, our sufficiency is of God, and honest self-awareness. Can you guys think that way? Literally.

Secondly, we said Christ awareness. Listen, if you follow 2 Corinthians 3 again, through to about the 18th verse, he says, you better gaze on the glory of the God, and as you focus on the majesty of Jesus Christ, you'll get a true picture of yourself in relationship to him. You want a self-assessment? There's where you go get it.

Finally, God awareness. And as we read it in Psalms 8, when I consider thy works, the moon and the stars which thou hast made, what is a man that thou mindful of him? When I really am honest to see myself and my sinfulness and my inadequacy, when I really see the majesty of Jesus Christ, as I gaze at his glory, when I know what God is like, I come out humble. I cannot come out any other way.

Those are the perspectives that drive the heart to humility. Now, you're not going to get humble by sitting in a corner and wishing you were there. You'll gain humility by sitting in that same corner and reciting before God your sins and your failures and your inadequacies.

And you'll gain humility by opening the pages of the word of God and seeing Jesus Christ and God in all his majesty. And by the way, God may shove you along a little bit if you're going not doing so well. Okay.

But God has some things he uses to help us get humble. When we don't do it, he puts us there. Second Corinthians chapter 12.

Paul said that he had so many visions and so many revelations that the Lord had to give him a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. So you're going to have something that's going to bug you to keep you humble. And the Lord may give you that or the Lord may put something in your life that just consistently bugs you.

It's just a hurdle you never get over. It's just a reality you constantly face that makes you see yourself for who you really are. It's somebody you can't handle or you can't conquer.

It's a problem you can't solve. It's something about you that you can't seem to get over. And it's there just to keep you in the place where you understand who you really are.

Humility. Total humility is the bottom line in a worthy war. Where are we tempted to be proud? First of all, I would have to say there's a sense in which we are constantly being tempted to be proud about what we do.

Ability pride, let's call it. I just thought about that. So you know, you're always tempted at the point of your strength.

Do you know that? You're always going to be tempted because that is where if Satan can grab that, he's got you total. So he's always going to come at you where your strength is to get pushed over into pride. And I've never been tempted to be proud about my fantastic mathematical ability.

I didn't know I had it until my daughter was born and she's almost a freaking genius in math. So you know, and it had to come from somewhere and it didn't come from her mother. I can tell you that.

So I didn't know that. I don't want to tell you what I got in algebra because I flaked off in everything. I didn't really care about going to school at all.

That's just another one of my rebellious natures. But it was okay. It wasn't good.

All right. I can't handle that kind of stuff. I didn't like general studies in college.

I made A's in my curriculum, but I didn't really care to go to class in my general studies. I've never been tempted to boast about my tremendous musical expertise either, which I don't have. So we just do it to try to get attention.

Well, the Lord helps us. I'm thankful for helping us to keep us in perspective. Or else somebody will come up.

Somebody would say, we came here to talk to you, to hear you, but we like our brothers at home better. We're tempted to exalt ourselves and our own abilities. Let me give you an illustration of that.

I just thought of one. In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul was a well-educated man. He went to the best schools.

He had the best teachers. He had the best teachers of Jewish history and philosophy and everything. He had the best.

He had so much going for him. He'd been at the feet of Gamaliel. He was trained in the rabbinic traditions.

He knew the Old Testament backwards and forward. I mean, he had so much that he could rely on. And philosophical, he had a mind like a still trout.

He could go right to the moment and capture the prey. That's how he did his work before he was saved. It was tremendous getting at Jews, at Christians.

So let's look what he says in 1 Corinthians 2. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. He took himself out of the picture and he put Christ at sin.

I didn't lay any of that philosophical stuff on you. That's what he's telling them. I didn't come any of that logical wisdom from the human realm.

And you know something else about Paul? He not only didn't use that, he had a lot of personal pizazz. The guy was a dynamo. We know that because before he was a preacher, he was a Christian killer.

I mean, the guy was an intense, fiery type guy. And he had tremendous courage. I mean, you got to have a lot of courage to be chasing around capturing Christians.

You got to have a lot of boldness. He was sort of like a spiritual bounty hunter. He's a tough guy.

He was really a tough customer. Well, he could have had come through his ministry like a bulldog. And that's what the people who knew him thought he was going to do.

But he didn't. He says in verse 3, I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And then he could have preached all the philosophy, those big long words, and he could have come on so grandiose, but no, in verse 4 he says this, and my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of the power that your face should not stand in the wisdom of men, but the power of God.

He put God center, took himself out. That's humility, guys. That's being humbled to the one who gave you your salvation.

Now, here's a dear man who avoided the temptation to have his strengths turned into sins. To get pushed over the edge with his power of personality or with his ability to communicate or with his logic and his knowledge of philosophy, he backed completely off. And later on in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, he says, these same people, he says, oh, he says, I really rejoice in my infirmities because when I'm weak, then what? I'm strong.

When you're humble, you're strong. We go after life, and I have to create change all. I, the big I, in the center of that.

Instead of saying to the Holy Spirit inside of you, well, something's going on here. I'm sure you're watching. What should we do? How should we handle this? And doing that before we even do anything.

We're all tempted like that. We're tempted where we have some strength to abuse it. We're tempted where we have some ability to want to flaunt it.

Oh, and don't tell me you don't. It comes through every day. To want to make a big thing out of it.

You know, if we can do something well, we want everybody to know we can do it well, right? Some people call that selling yourselves. That's an area of temptation. Let's call it ability pride.

It's kind of hard to stay humble about that. I guess the key is to remember that whatever you do, you do it because God gave you the ability to start with. Did he not? He gave you your talents, and he gave you your gifts.

Any gift and any talent useful to God is a gift of the Holy Spirit who divided to you every man severely as he wills. That's scripture. There's nothing to be proud about it.

It's all a gift from God. So let's go into another area. Let's call this economic pride.

You know, especially in our society, I couldn't teach this message in some places in the world. Some places where I've been, it wouldn't go over quite well. I couldn't talk about economic pride.

They wouldn't even know what I was talking about, and that's the truth. I've stood in places all over the world on mud floors, with mud walls, with mud roofs and sticks, I could tell you some places I've been, and this wouldn't even relate to them. But in America, this is a problem, economic pride.

This is the boasting and the bragging and the parading and the throwing around of all of our riches, displaying them, trusting in them, idolizing them, exalting ourselves and our accomplishment by parading what we're gained. That's pride. What does Christ tell us? Sell everything, give it all away, and follow him, to the man that had the pride.

This is pride that says, look what I have, guys. I must be somebody to have what it takes to have this. Now we all get in that game, all right? So we need to look at Deuteronomy chapter 8 for a minute to see an illustration of this from Scripture.

In Deuteronomy 8, verse 11, a very vivid one, to be honest with you. It says, beware, Moses is talking to the people of Israel at this time. It says, beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping his commandments and his ordinances and his statutes which I commanded thee this day.

Now watch this. Lest when you hast eaten and art full of your pride, that's what it's talking about, you've eaten and art full of your pride, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt with therein, and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold are multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied, then thine heart be lifted up. Let's stop there a moment.

What Moses is saying is this. You're going to go and you're going to inherit all these wonderful things in the promised land. God's going to give you so much.

You're going to have goodly houses. You're going to have herds and flocks and silver and gold because that he's given it to you, and you know what he's going to be the tendency of the people? You're going to forget when you got it, and you're going to think you did it with your own ability. Everything I own, says the Lord, you own nothing.

You're going to think you're the self-made man. You did it, and your heart will be lifted up, and the next line, it says this, and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, scarpions, and drought, where there was no water, who brought thee forth water out of a rock of flint from under the ground, the most purest water is under the ground, who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not. Remember, they had to die in the wilderness because of their sin over not telling the Israelites that they could overcome the giants in promised land.

That's the reason why they wandered for 40 years. That generation had to die off, that he might humble thee, that he might test thee to do thee good at thy latter end. You see, God had all this stuff in mind.

Your storehouse is full, but you'll forget, he says. The day will come when you'll forget what he took you out of, and you'll think you did this. What did the Kabbalah say? What did Rothschild say? Give them all the money in less than five years, we're going to get back, and you'll forget what you went through, and you'll forget how for 40 years God made you absolutely dependent upon him and showed you that every good thing you ever had was from him, every meal you ever ate was from him, every drop of water you drank was from him, but the day will come you'll get your god goodly house, you'll get your fancy clothes, and you'll have your gold, and you'll have your silver, and you'll forget the source of it all.

At that point is you'll get indulgent, and it'll be hard to remember God, and you'll be lifted up with proud, and you'll want to parade those things and say, look what I have done, and it'll be out of perspective, and the sin comes, first of all, in the boastfulness, second of all, in the thought that you did it, and third of all, in the wastefulness that parades riches rather than investing them in God's kingdom. Now, that's pretty practical stuff. I'm sure everybody can relate to that, and thou say in thy heart, in verse 17, my power and the might of mine hand have gotten me this well.

You're going to take your ego self and elevate it to the point that you become your god. You're going to say, look, this is what I've done. Check out what I've got, and you know I'm successful because look what I've done.

I've got all of this. I must be successful. Verse 18, thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he who giveth thee power to get wealth, and he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers as it is this day.

The only reason you have anything is because the covenant he made in the garden. Think about it. And it shall be if thou do all forget the Lord thy God and walk after other gods, which is you, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall utterly perish as the nations which the Lord destroy before your face.

So shall you perish because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God. Okay, guys, we're talking about your conduct, and we're talking about obedience to the Scripture, and we're talking about your knowledge of the Scripture and the wisdom it gives you, and the revelation that God grants you by studying the Scripture. I can't imagine the judgment of that standing.

I do not want to be there in that. So everything we have, God gave us. Have we forgotten that? Are we parading it as if we got it? Are we parading it as if we created ourselves with the ability to gain it? If we created ourselves in this country where we could earn it rather than someplace in the world where no matter how smart you were, no matter how clever you were, no matter how creative you were, the best you could do would be to have a two-room mud hut.

What humbled me the most in my life was to see Christian people, loving people, and rejoicing and living in a mud hut. No windows, no doors, no bathroom, no running water. That humbled me, and they were rejoicing.

We all get tempted in that way. It's so difficult to resist it. In Isaiah chapter 5, verse 8, we read this, Woe unto them who join house to house, who lay field to field, till there is no place that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.

In other words, woe unto the person who just buys more and more and more. They're not satisfied with what God's given them, until he's so crowded with people so far out of his life that there's nobody around. He's just adding to himself for his own ends.

I guess this isn't stretching the point to say it was this kind of people who existed in the church at Laodicea, because this is what our Lord said to them in Revelation 3.17, Thou sayeth, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. In other words, you've got it all backwards. So there's the pride that comes to us in our abilities.

There is the pride that comes to us because of our economics, our material lists, our material things. Thirdly, there's a temptation to pride in the verbal area. We call it verbal pride.

Ability pride, economic pride, and now verbal pride. You know what this is? It is the bragging. When you brag, you self-idolize yourself.

You've just slapped God right square in the face by saying you're now him. The Greeks had a word for it. It was the Greek word elezons.

Elezons is the word used for the guy. In fact, this is an illustration from the classical Greek. The guy standing on the shore looking out at this fleet of ships in the harbor in Greece, and a fellow walks up and says, those are lovely ships.

Who do they belong to? And the guy says, oh, they're my ships, and I own those ships, and we've sailed the seven seas, and I've been here, and I've been there, and we've carried the greatest cargo. And he goes on and on and on with this big deal about who he is. And the man is overwrought at what he possesses.

And finally, the elezons walks away, and the stranger is still awestruck. And he says to a person standing by, did you know that all of that belongs to him? And he looks and he says, oh, no, that's the town fool. It all belongs to Mr. So-and-so.

Elezons, the guy who shoots off his mouth about the stuff he doesn't even own or do. A big mouth braggart. That's verbal pride.

We can get to that place where we say things about ourselves that aren't even true. When you say it long enough and often enough, it becomes your truth. You become your own deceiver.

Do you know that? I hope you do. It's amazing how great we are the further we get away from the actual events. Have you noticed that? You say things away from the people around you, close to you, more than you say when they're around.

Think of your settings. Think of who you're trying to impress. Now the story gets better and better year after year.

Every time you tell it, there's another little wrinkle. Oh, I caught the fish, is this big? No, next year it's this big. And I caught a whale three, four years from now.

Remember that conversation when you really stood up to your boss? The first time you told it, well, I did hold my own, as you might say. The second time you told it, boy, I held my own. The third time, did I ever tell you that guy a thing or two? That's the braggiosis point of view.

Arrogance, making sure you tell everybody what you want them to hear. And it comes down in two areas. We brag about what we have done.

We brag about what we have done. There is something, just a tendency of the human nature to tell people what we've done. Boy, I fight that all the time.

Everybody will get into a conversation that they're going to say, well, let me tell you what I did. It's can you top this attitude? This is another thing, being in New York and an investor banker, you get to go to a lot of parties and you meet a lot of folks. And have you ever sat in a room where there's alcohol and watched the big boys see who's got the bigger point of view? And as they're doing this, their voice is raised and raised and raised to the point that they have not only tried out to one another, but they've taken over the entire room.

And then they look and everybody starts laughing at them like, okay, it's no, but nothing. This is all the time it happens. It's amazing how people think of themselves.

It says, 1 Samuel 2 and 3, listen to Hannah, what she says, talk no more so exceedingly proud. Let not arrogance come out of your mouth for the Lord is a God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed. Your conduct, you better keep your mouth shut.

We've talked about this a number of times. God's the one who knows what you really did. In fact, we saw this last time last week in Proverbs, the statement, don't you talk about you, leave that for somebody else.

We want to talk about what we've done. I think I might give you a test sometime about that. We'll see, see how this goes.

And it might go something like this. We might start with a single day or not even a day, an afternoon. Let's just go for four hours.

Don't ever talk with people around you. Don't say a word for four hours, just four hours. I don't mean sitting in a room alone.

Go into a crowd where there's a lot of people and don't say anything for just four hours. You will be so antsy in your pants to try to say something you can't even be beside, you'd be beside yourself. We have a verbal pride in what we've done.

Secondly, we have a verbal pride in what we're going to do. And we do a lot of that. We boast about that.

I'll tell you what I'm going to do, boy, when I get down with this thing, there isn't going to be anything like it in the world. Just selfless pride, selfless pride. Psalms 12, three says, the Lord shall cut off all flattering lips and of the tongue that speaks proud things.

He's not talking about cutting off your lips or your tongue. What he's talking about is cutting you off from the spirit blessings. He said, I'll shut you down.

Imagine what a vivid cutoff might look like though. Now I read the LA Times. I used to read four papers every day.

So LA Times is one of those. And there was something there that I remember. This guy picked up a girl.

He wanted to seduce her. She was a rough girl from down in LA area. And I'll never forget reading this.

In fact, I had the clip somewhere. I just, I don't know where it's at with all of the stuff going. I don't even know where my box is at.

It could be trash by now. And he was flattering her, trying to get her to go to a motel with him. And he tried to kiss her.

And she had a razor blade in her teeth and cut off his lips. I'll never forget it. And then because I go back to Psalms 12, three without thinking that, and it's so a vivid thing now, God will cut off the flattering lips.

There's no reason for us to brag about what we've done or what we will do. There's no reason for us to have any verbal pride. Now there's another, there's one other area I want to mention, and I don't know what to call this one, but let's call it class pride.

By that, I don't mean like the freshman class of a particular year. I mean, this idea of strata, the tendency to look down on people at another level, this elitism. That might be the key to this.

Elitism pride or elite pride. You know, we get to a certain place in our society, we get to a certain place in our life where our mind shifts. We forget where we come from.

And we get to a certain level of that society and we just look down on people. We think of them as sort of a lower class. We don't want them in our neighborhood.

We don't want them to get over for dinner. We have a certain echelon that we're going to, and we'll all fall into this. And you know, we don't want to bring these people, those people over.

They might soil the place or something. You might have to sweep up after they leave. They have mud on their shoes, or they're just like little, in pigeonholes at all levels.

And when we have a feast or a dinner or something, it's only a certain strata who are invited. Let me challenge you this Thanksgiving, go get somebody that's not of your family on the street and invite them to dinner. My oldest daughter used to do that all the time.

We never knew who's going to show up. She would leave early in the morning. She would go to the park with all this and we just know that we're going to have one person new in our house.

Didn't know who it was, had no fear for her in doing this. She was blessed and a lot of people got blessed by that. I challenge you to do something like that.

Now, maybe they're just done, don't come up with your level of economics or your social order of standing. Maybe they're just not real good conversationalists. I think that's a very common thing these days.

We look down on people at another level. That's a sin, by the way. In James, it tells us it's a sin.

That's pride. You've forgotten something very, very important about life. And that is God loves poor people.

He made so many of them. He must love them. And when Jesus came into the world, he was one of them.

He had no home. Scripture tells us he had no place to lay his head. And that's the way it is.

James says, look, when a man comes into your church with a gold ring and fine clothes, and behind him comes a man in filthy clothes, vile raiment, and you say to the man in the fine clothes, hey, sit down here in the front seat, man, and make yourself at home. And you say to the man in the vile raiment, sit under my feet here and stay out of the way. Have you forgotten what James said, that it's the rich people that oppress you? Our elites, have you forgot that? Have you forgotten that it's the rich people that abuse you? Have you forgotten the royal law of love? Listen, there is to be a recognition of equality among men.

Jesus says he was no respecter of persons, nor are we to be. In the 10th Psalms, in the second verse, it says the wicked in his pride does prosecute the poor. That's a very, very true statement.

That's how our government is set up. Now, we may not say, well, I wouldn't persecute a poor man. Wrong.

They take them off the street. They kill them. They harvest their organs.

They take them into satanic rituals. They drink their blood. They do all kinds.

Guys, when your eyes are open to this and you actually see the world as it is, we're living in this time. You may do it by the fact that you don't let him in your world. You don't love him.

You don't embrace him. You don't take that much that you have and meet his need with it. Lots of ways to persecute the poor.

Class pride, elitism, looking down on people at another social level from us. Now, there's one more kind of pride, and there's many words to describe this, but let's put it in a category called appearance pride. Now, I think people ought to dress as nice as you can, except when I don't want to do that.

Misty wants to tell me I can't wear my pajamas to the store. I don't really care that if it's morning and I'm up and I need something, I just put my slippers on and I put on lounge wear and I go to the store. I don't need to take a shower and put on clothes that people might want to see me in.

That's my attitude. It's not my wife's. Now, I think people ought to dress very nice, and I'm not just saying that, okay? We don't want you to look like Wanda Wallflower, okay? We don't want you to go around like the one guy said, every old born needs paint now and then, all right? We want you to look halfway decent.

So, you know, we realize that there's got to be, sometimes you got to take care of yourself. And there's a sense in which, like in the Song of Solomon, you have a beautiful adorning of the woman there to please the one she loves, all right? My wife trying to tell me I need to dress up, okay? That's what he's talking about, all right? And there's a sense of propriety in that. In fact, you know, if you look too crummy, you'll call attention to yourself in a bad way.

In fact, that's what the Pharisees used to do. Whenever they wanted to be really pious, they'd put on old torn shredded stuff, and they'd dump ashes on their head. That's scripture, guys.

And they'd go around looking so right, and everybody would say, oh, they must be holy. They have no thought for the things of the world. Now, that's piosity.

That's sickening hypocrisy. But on the other hand, we were always tempted, and particularly in our culture today, to dress to call attention to ourselves, okay? You know, see, this is my argument with my wife. When I go to the store in the morning, there's people dressed just like me in the store, so why should I have to worry about what I'm wearing, okay? I don't want to call attention to myself.

Don't follow my logic at all, because there's no logic to it. It's just I'm rebellious. So we are stupid cattle led to the slaughter by Madison Avenue to buy all the junk that keeps selling us, wastefully investing ourselves in needless things so that we may appear, and we may parade ourselves, show ourselves off.

We want to be better than others, okay? So let's just throw some things out. You dress above your means. You want to put yourself in a class of people above that which you have been given to operate in by Christ.

You always want to accelerate that process. You're not happy with what you're given. Or women typically do this more than men.

You want to be provocative. You want to be seductive in what you put on your body so that everybody looks at you all night long. And what does that do? Number one, the men that look at you, their wives get upset with them, and the man that you're with doesn't.

If he likes it, then he's stupid. And if he doesn't like it, then he's upset with you as well. And I could go on and on with examples.

I mean, when you raise daughters, you go through all this mess. So it's not like I'm preaching to a choir. You know, in First Timothy, the apostle Paul confronted that very thing.

In those days when women wanted to get dressed up, you know, you just basically wore a fancy thing all the way to the ground. So if you're going to put on any real riches, you stuck them in your hair. And so a woman let her hair grow really long, and then she would wind her hair all over the place and wind up everything she owned in it.

So it would be full of gold combs and turquoise shells, combs and stick pins and pearl things wrapped in the way through it. And she literally had a fortune on her head. And that was the way she showed off.

So you can go back in Scripture, guys, if you're doing really studying, you can see this. It really talks about this. And so when you went to a party, you know, it wasn't a matter of comparing whether you got this dress at this price, place, price, whatever, or that dress at this, you just looked at each other's head.

And you knew who was the queen of the whole deal. That's why in 1 Timothy 2.9, Paul says that a woman should adorn themselves in modest apparel. And it doesn't mean only modest in terms of the way it fits.

It means in terms of modest in the way it costs. Modest in not with, he says, not with braided. It means plaited hair, this flopped over with everything in it.

That's free translation, gold pearls, whatever. It's so easy for us to get into our society. You know, when Lucifer was the most beautiful creature God had ever made, you know that, right? That's what it tells us by Scripture.

Most beautiful thing that God had ever created. And his beauty was his downfall. He looked in the mirror too much.

And God had made some of you very lovely people, lovely to look at. We all want to do that. We all want to be that way.

And that can be the greatest device that Satan can use. Your looks, how you dress, what jewelry you wear, how much makeup you have on. I mean, go on and on in creating a term for modesty.

Very few people can handle that. The appearance pride, which we become haughty, boastful, indulgent, and we want to show ourselves off as better than other people. It's an evil thing.

Do you realize that? It's a self-esteem sin. Read again the 30, or rather the third chapter of Isaiah and read verses 16 to 26. It's all there for you.

Then there's another kind of pride. I call it power pride. Power pride.

This is the pride that comes from positioning. This is the temptation that comes and says, look who you are. You deserve better treatment than that.

You know, everybody's got some position and everybody's tempted to use it. Mark said, listen, you see, that's the way it is. Whenever we are in the world, we can find somebody that we can oppress.

The Old Testament, we don't have time tonight to get into it. The Old Testament says a lot about oppressing people. You know, when God gives you a position of leadership, whether it's at your home or whether it's at your job or whether it's at some sort of natural recognition of leadership in a group of peers, sometimes among women, there'll be five or six women that are good friends and it's obvious that they're looked to one or two for leadership.

We talked about this in our authority structure for the workplace. You know, any of those kinds of situations, whether it's the business, the home, the social group, school, whatever it is, you can always be tempted to oppress people with an over-exaggerated sense of your own self-worth, pride pal, ruling and dominating the oppressing. I deserve better than this.

You do this, you do that, do this, treating people as if they were machines to serve you. All about school, guys. I can remember parent-teach, what do you call it, the parent group that you had in school for your kids, whatever that was called, PTA.

Yeah, PTA, Parents Teachers Association. That was the most political, corrupt group of people that I've ever been with and, oh guys, it wasn't us, it was women running it and they were, they were, oh my gosh, so haughty, just it all went to their head. I guess they should have gone to work.

Because they hadn't too much time on their hands. So we get an illustration of this coming out of the 18th chapter of Revelation, where you have Babylon, this ultimate system, and it's, and it says of Babylon, how much she hath glorified herself and lived luxuriously, so much torment and sorrow give her. As luxurious as she living, as she lived, as much as she glorified herself, that's how much torment she gets.

Standard, standard, standard, standard. You know, if you continue to do this, what you're going to do is torment yourself. For she said in her heart, I sit a queen, I am no widow, I shall see no sorrow, therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord who judges her.

Okay, symbolism, but of course, it is judgment on a prideful situation that could be yours. She says, I'm the queen, and God says, that's all. Herod who stands up in Acts 12 on Herod day, and he gives a speech about himself, and the people say, oh, he is the God, and he eats it up, and he loves it, and the Bible said, and he was smitten by an angel of God and eaten the worms on the spot.

Think about that. Now, I'm not sure that would happen in today's world, but in Herod's world, he probably knew better. He knew his standard, okay, which is what I'm trying to get you to realize.

You now have a standard higher than what you probably are living, and you're creating tormentual situations for judgment to come your way, because you're not obedient to what you know. We're tempted to use the position we have to lord over people. Ability pride, economic pride, verbal pride, class pride, elitism pride or such, appearance pride, power pride, and the last one I want to talk about is social pride, and this is like a kind of class pride.

It's just a little different, a little twist. It's demanding, okay, now what you think about this, it's demanding a certain kind of treatment. To give you an example, as you go, as you move up in your life, and you move from one strata to the next, and once you get up the ladder, you just know now you've reached a certain point of in your life, you expect a certain kind of treatment, and if your waiter's a minute late, what does he think he's doing? Does he think he's just treating some ordinary person? Entitlement, absolutely right.

You've just come up the ladder, and you, the world of people who are supposed to serve you, gets bigger and bigger and bigger. You think you're entitled to some grandiose treatment, and you want the chief seat. Matter of fact, your attitude demands the chief seat.

Have you ever walked in, I love this in New York too, always got to make dinner reservations. I don't care what time of the night it is, you need dinner reservations. There's only certain places that you can get in, but typically you're going to sit at the bar if you don't have a reservation, and then sometimes you're eating standing up.

So you got to have dinner reservation. Have you ever walked in behind somebody of real means, and their table is not yet ready at their point when they walked in the door? The party at their table is left, but the dishes and stuff haven't been cleaned up and wiped down, and it would be just two to three minutes before that happens, and they throw a fit. I've seen it over and over and over again.

For these guys, do you not know who I am? How much money have I spent at this restaurant? How much do we come to your restaurant? I know the head chef, you know. And by the time they get through yakking their mouths, the table's ready, and all they wanted to do is throw a scene so everybody could watch them. There's nothing wrong with nice things that God may have provided us in any way.

There's nothing wrong with that. It's a matter of perspective. In Luke chapter 14, we find that the Pharisees always wanted the chief's chief seats.

They wanted the best of the best. They always wanted the best places. They always wanted to sit in front.

They always wanted to lord it all over everybody else and have everybody recognize who they were. So Jesus said to them, let me tell you a little story. When you go into a wedding and you're invited to come, don't take the chief seat because if somebody more honored comes, they'll move you out.

I've seen that happen at the restaurant too. Where the maitre d' has set the people at a wrong table, and they have dinner, and the guys who walked in the door reserved that table, and it was their time to have that table. The maitre d had to go find another table, move the people to give the table to the guy.

You know what? New York City is cesspit. Yeah, right. Hey, Jim, sorry.

I don't want to go off topic, but exactly what you said reminded me of churches. You've probably been in the ministry for so long. You've probably seen those skits that they've done where pastors dress up a certain way to see how they're going to be treated, and they dress up as bums and homeless, right? Right.

Yeah. Oh, my gosh. That has happened so much, and it still goes on today in these churches, and they got the front row sectioned off strictly for dignitaries or pastors and stuff.

And the pastor says, man, he dresses up that way and comes in, and they don't even treat him well and sit him in the front. But then it's biblical, but it just got me to think about that and how upsetting that is. But it's an attitude.

It is conforming to your attitude. My mentor, my business mentor, told me in all business meetings, especially at the C-level, do not sit at the table. Always sit at the back.

That's so good. Because when you stand to say something, everybody's going to listen. If you're at the table, it's just jogging.

That's good. So let's continue. We'll finish up.

And then there's spiritual pride. I just want you to know that above all of this is the worst one. This is the worst one.

Jesus just literally blistered the Pharisees in the 23rd chapter of Matthew for their horrible hypocrisy. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites, he said. You hypocrites, you love the uppermost places in the feast and the chief seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplace.

And you want to be called rabbi. And you want to be called master and father. And yet you are inside, completely rotten.

You are the biggest spiritual phonies there are. Jesus said all throughout the gospel, he condemned the sin and the loved the sinner. But in this case of hypocrites, he condemned the sin and the sinner together.

Why? Why? The standard. They knew. They completely disobeyed.

They haunted themselves that they were disobeying. And what Christ do? He condemned their sin and the sinner. The only time he literally blasted them because they sought to be intellectual or rather spiritual when they weren't.

They knew what was right. They didn't do it. They didn't obey.

They called himself above everybody else. And Christ shut them down both for their sin and as an individual. So guys, listen, when we understand that basically the entire Christian life is based upon our conduct, not an intellectual ability, not ability to absorb scripture or reading or whatever, it's our conduct of what we do.

We must then self-evaluate, which is what I've asked you to do now for weeks. Self-evaluate yourself to ensure that your conduct meets that standard that you're learning about. Because if it doesn't, then because of your conduct, you're going to be held at a higher standard and will be judged at that higher standard for not being obedient.

So let's pray. Father, thank you for this evening. Thank you again for studying your word.

Thank you for opening yourself up and giving us the understanding of exactly how do we conduct ourself in a Christian way, living this life eternal in this kingdom of heaven on earth. Father, we ask that you continue to open our hearts and minds to your truths. Convict us when we self-violate those truths so that we can become obedient underneath your covenant and ask you for forgiveness for the sinful nature that we possess in our natural form.

Father, we ask you to continue to be with us, nurture us, provide for us, love us. We thank you for all of those things that just come natural to you. And may we endeavor in our life to do the same for others.

We ask as we come into these holidays, may we do something that is supernatural in your eyes that we may see the glory and the blessings from that in our lives. Father, we ask that you bless what's coming the rest of this month and may you give us peace and joy that you're in total control. And we ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ.