

Session 3 Live Holy: Living Fascinated in the Pleasure of Loving God

RIGHT FOUNDATIONS: GOD CALLS US TO HOLINESS BECAUSE HE IS HOLY

Roman numeral I. Again, we will not go through all of the information on the handout, but I will abbreviate it and leave you with some things to study on your own. Paragraph A. I am going to present two foundational truths and then three practical principles that I believe are necessary in our pursuit of holiness.

Paragraph B. God calls us to holiness because He is holy. Scripture says in 1 Peter 1:16: “Be holy, for I am holy.” Now when the Scripture says to be holy, what God is saying is that He has the highest, most pleasurable exhilarating quality of life in existence. He wants to share this life with us forever. When God says, “I am holy,” He did not say, “I am bored and boring.” He said in the statement, “I am holy. I am indescribably glorious. I am infinitely superior in My qualities, in My delight, in love, and in pleasure than any part of creation.” He is declaring that His lifestyle and His heart give the most pleasurable, exhilarating quality of life, and He wants to share that life with those whom He loves with all of His heart.

HE CALLS US TO ENJOY THE SUPERIOR QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE LIBERTY OF HOLINESS

Paragraph C. When Jesus called us to holiness, He called us to enjoy a superior quality of life, the liberty of holiness from darkness, bondage, and from that which diminishes our greatness and our pleasure. Now, we draw back from sinful pleasures to position ourselves to receive the exhilarating, superior pleasures of knowing God in our life together with Him. Many see holiness as the drudgery of self-denial. They look at holiness, and they say, “It is just a holiness message.” The holiness message is the call to liberty, greatness, and a life of exhilaration.

Paragraph D. God created every human being with a longing for pleasure and for fascination. It is His design. We mentioned that in the last session. He created us with a longing for pleasure because He meant to satisfy that longing. And He satisfies it in part in this age, and that part is substantial. But He answers it in fullness in the age to come, but then it continues for billions and billions of years. The call to holiness is a call to the superior pleasures of living fascinated by the revelation of Jesus.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH NUMBER ONE: BEING PREOCCUPIED WITH SUPERIOR PLEASURES

OK. Roman numeral two is foundational truth number one. We are going to look at two foundational truths that I think are important in pursuing holiness. Foundational truth one: we need to be preoccupied with the superior pleasures of loving God. We have to have a biblical point of view that sees that these pleasures exist. We cannot pursue them and be occupied with them if we do not even believe that they exist. This was a radical mind shift and a paradigm shift in my life some years ago when it first dawned on me that I’m called to be exhilarated in my walk with God.

I said, “Well, in that case, I am going for it.”

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF PLEASURE

Paragraph A. God is the author of pleasure. He created us. I mean, in His mind, in His genius, way back at the beginning in Genesis 1, He wanted us to enjoy physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual pleasures forever. He said, “I am going to create you with this in My mind.” Our longing for pleasure is part of our created design. It must be satisfied. Your longing for pleasure will not go away. It will not evaporate one day. If we are engaged in the superior pleasures of loving Him and pursuing Him, then the inferior pleasures will not dominate us.

There is no such thing as a neutral zone. If you are not pursuing the superior pleasures of loving God, then the inferior ones will fill the gap and dominate your life. The Devil tempts us with “counterfeit” pleasures that are outside God’s will.

You are not going to be very successful at fighting off inferior pleasures. If you grit your teeth and say, “No, no, no. Well, I guess I cannot resist, so, OK,” you will never succeed at overcoming temptation. But, the Lord taps us on the shoulder and says, “Just turn around.” You chase after these pleasures, and you turn around occasionally, looking back at Him. If you are pursuing Jesus with the vision to be exhilarated, you still might occasionally turn to the inferior pleasures and say, “No, in the name of Jesus.” But overall, you are still in hot pursuit of Him. Overall, you are still chasing hard after Him.

However, if you fall, struggle with temptation of different lustful images, and you just try to grit your teeth saying, “I love you. I love you. I fell again.”

The Lord says, “Turn around. Get another vision. Go after this with all of your heart.” I remember once talking to my sons when I was starting IHOP–KC. I was announcing to them how I was starting IHOP–KC. I took them out to lunch. I have two sons, Luke and Paul, who were eighteen and nineteen years old. I said, “I am resigning at the church, and I am going to go do IHOP–KC; we are going to fast, pray, and sing the Word.”

And I remember one of my sons said, “Cool. Like now? Why? You seem so excited. Why are you so excited?”

I said, “Here is why: because I am addicted to pleasure.”

They asked, “What?”

I said, “I am addicted to pleasure, and that is why I am going to do this. My appetite for pleasure is stronger than your appetite for pleasure. In my walk with God, I have got a big appetite. I have got to have more; I am going after it. I am going to abandon myself in this. I cannot even take business-as-usual Christianity. I have got an appetite for pleasure. I want to fill my spirit because I want to feel more.”

They said, “Cool! Dad, that is neat.”

Honestly, that is why I do it. That is why I fast, pray, and read the Word of God. I love pleasure. I just want to get the right pleasures in the right way and in the right sequence; but I am into pleasure. I am not gritting my teeth, enduring a boring God and just hoping it pays off later. He is exciting now and today. I mean when we are face to face with God, it will be far beyond what we receive now. Right now is exciting if we go all the way. I mean, people can ignore you and write you off. You do not have to have a big group of people following you or appreciating you to maintain a vibrant spirit. We just must have the vision for pleasure.

THE INFERIOR PLEASURE OF SIN COMPARED TO THE SUPERIOR PLEASURES OF GOD

Paragraph B. The greatest pleasure available to the human spirit is spiritual pleasure, because there are physical, emotional, and mental; God created all these pleasures. We have a fulfillment in God, but the enemy has a counterfeit of every one of them.

Again, I am going to talk about a book of mine. My point is not to sell books. We put them on the internet, and you can get them for free. I am trying to sell ideas—not books. It is a book called, *The Pleasure of Loving God*. I call people to a life of pleasure—not to drudgery, sacrifice, or counting the cost to endure an old, boring God. Rather, I give them a vision of the pleasures of abandonment to an exciting God. I do not mean that God is exciting just because He will use us to do miracles. That is exciting. I like that. I am talking about exciting because our spirit can be exhilarated and vibrant in our encounter.

Even the little bit that He gives us—those little bits, those little moments, those little flashes of glory are so minimal. They go a long way in changing the interior environment of our heart. So, I want to encourage you with this book *The Pleasures of Loving God*. And again, take whatever material I have, put your name on it, make it your own, and rewrite it. Change what you do not like, put new stuff in, and go teach it. And then, tell the same thing to the people you teach it to. Tell them they can do it.

THE GREATEST PLEASURE IS WHEN GOD REVEALS GOD TO THE HUMAN SPIRIT

The greatest pleasures—paragraph B—available to the human spirit are spiritual pleasures—when God reveals God to our human spirit. This exhilarates our spirit at the deepest level. When we are liberated from the inferior pleasures of sin by experiencing the superior pleasures of the beauty of Jesus, we are truly blessed.

Paragraph C. 1 Corinthians 2:9-11: “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” Now here is the Holy Spirit: He is searching all things. And then Paul said, “He searches the depths of God’s heart.” Now the Holy Spirit is God, but Paul is portraying him as by—instead of the word “searches,” the word “discerned.”

The Holy Spirit is discerning the deepest emotions of the Father’s heart. Why? So we would know them to reveal them to us. The Holy Spirit is the escort. He said, “I am searching the deepest things of the Father’s heart, or I am discerning it. And here is my mandate: to give you insight into it and to exhilarate your inner man with it.”

I say, “You are searching the depths of God to give it to me? And you are God searching God.” We are not talking about some treasure hunter who lost His way. We are talking about God the Holy Spirit searching God the Father and the Son. That is a sound deal there. I mean the Holy Spirit knows. He is going to give it to us. Again, a little bit of revelation goes a long way. Let’s use electricity as an analogy: imagine that it is like plugging in a 110 unit to 1,000,000 volts. I mean we just get a little 110-voltage unit and a little bit of God. And God says, “I only gave you a little bit. A little bit goes a really long way.” I am sure that my knowledge of science and electrical knowledge is not that accurate, but Paragraph D, the Holy Spirit escorts us on the treasure hunt. Jesus said, “He will take what is mine, and He will give it to you. He will take the things in My heart, and He will give them to you.”

And I say, “Oh I want this. I want this.” I call this divine entertainment. Honestly, it is divine entertainment. Our spirit is exhilarated. If we can get the vision for divine entertainment, for superior pleasures, we can turn off some of the other entertainment far easier. If we have the vision for this, then we are going to be entertained

because we are called to be fascinated. You cannot live devoid of fascination. You have to be in the pursuit of being fascinated by God. If you do not pursue it in God, you will pursue pleasure in other directions.

THE BEST WAY TO OVERCOME DARKNESS IS TO TURN ON THE LIGHT

Top of page two. Paragraph F: the way to overcome the wrong focus. The best way to overcome darkness is to turn on the light. But this is very important, because a lot of people are trying to overcome lust, bitterness, and pride by just facing it off, or trying to renounce it. And the Lord just turns the light on, and the darkness is driven out. It says here in John 1:5, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” The light is meant to shine in the darkness, as we must realize that the darkness has not overpowered light. It cannot. Whenever light shines, darkness is always defeated.

It is the same spiritually. If we took this room, or a completely dark room, and the guy says, “Well, I’ll get light in this room.”

And you say, “OK, open a window. Take a bucket full of darkness, and pour out the darkness. A bucket full of darkness, and pour it out. Imagine taking a bucket full of darkness—pull it out, and pour it out the window.”

And the guy says, “Hey, it seems like it is just as dark as it was. It is not getting any better; we are not getting very far. Why do not you just turn the light on?” He turned the light on, and instantly, the darkness was gone. And what we do is—a lot of people focus on getting bucketfuls of darkness to dump out. If they turned the attention of their inner man away from focusing on the darkness, but rather just to go after light, they will overpower darkness. Just go after fascination with Jesus. I am not saying temptation will be automatically gone. They will lose dominance in your life. It is far easier to chase a vision to pursue Him. We can stop on occasion and say, “No,” to sin because we are going hard after Jesus. Do not just go hard to obey Him; go hard to encounter Him. Go hard after the revelation of His splendor and for our spirit to be exhilarated with Him. It is far easier to overcome darkness by turning on the light, rather than just to stand before darkness, and try to say, “No,” to it all the time.

But it takes a little while in the transition. I am talking to different people. They love Jesus and are entrenched in pornography. And I say, “Well, the key is to have a greater revelation of Jesus.” But the problem is that there is a transition time because their spirit is so dulled and so defiled with pornography. They read the Word; the Word is really boring. They love Jesus, but the Word is boring. So they long for fascination, and then there is no fascination. It is completely in vain—an empty pursuit. And so I say, “Just, by faith, get the vision to go after the superior pleasure. It may take awhile before it touches your spirit, but the pleasure will one day be there.”

They say, “OK, if that is real.”

I said, “It is not going to necessarily work for the first day. It has taken you a while to get that addicted. It did not happen in one day. It will take a while before this defilement lifts, and the pleasure begins to break in to your spirit.” I said, “Throw a little bit of fasting in. Fasting does not earn you anything. Fasting increases your capacity to experience.” Fasting increases your capacity to feel. Fasting does not earn you anything. It positions your spirit. You want to get deeper feelings in the Word? Throw fasting in when you devour the Word. If you throw fasting in, you will accelerate in your ability to feel the power of the Word. Fasting is critical. I cannot imagine—I do not want to sound like a hotshot. I cannot imagine living my Christian life without regular fasting. And I do not mean because I am disciplined. That is not what I am talking about. I do not mean because

I am godly. That is not what I am talking about either. I have done it enough over the years to know one thing for sure: fasting increases my ability to experience and feel. I do this because I love to feel. When I go in seasons where I do not fast like I did the other season, I feel dullness. I hate that feeling. I hate it. I cannot live with it. I do not like fasting, but I love feeling more.

And I tell you: you will feel more. Unmistakably, you will feel more of God's presence. I am fasting, and it might not feel like it matters, but it does make an impact. Often, I feel more after the fast is over, but it shifts something in your spirit. It changes your ability to experience. Throw fasting in. Well, you think that is not something our church teaches, or that is not something that we do. But you have to do it. You absolutely have to.

I do not mean you have to earn it. If you are going to be passionate to feel more, you have got to throw fasting into your regular lifestyle with God. Right? It is right in the center of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6. Sermon on the Mount is just basic Christianity 101. There is no such thing as Christianity without fasting, giving, and serving. That kind of Christianity does not exist. I know our nation is filled with feasting, but that is another voice. It is not the New Testament Christianity. You might say, "Well, it is what I grew up with." What you grew up with is something really deficient. Get over that, and get into the real thing. Throw yourself into it. Do not spend ten years worried about what you did not receive in fullness.

There is no such thing as Christianity without the Sermon on the Mount realities and going after them. It does not matter how big the Church is and how many television stations are on. It is not the Christianity of the Bible. The reason I say that is because some folks get enamored if the Church is really big, or the guy is really famous; it must be real. They have the absolutely wrong equation. If it sounds like the Word of God, or the Sermon on the Mount, that is what we call real.

Weak and broken people, we are not doing it well, but we are going after it hard. We are not doing it well at IHOP-KC, but we are going after it hard. We got a big grid for failing, admitting it, repenting, pushing delete, and jumping back in with full confidence within the hour. And that is how weak and broken people can keep moving forward, inch by inch. You look back after a month, you do not see that much gain. Look back a year or two; there is a lot of gain over time. But the day-by-day seems a little routine and mundane. But you look back a couple of years, you feel a lot different, and your mindset is different. That is OK. That is why I write books—so that you can go on bunny trails, and give you the book. That is why we put them on the internet, so that you can afford it. That is why we make it your right to copy, so you can teach it.

GOD'S PERSONALITY AND LEADERSHIP ARE FULL OF PLEASURE

Paragraph H. Psalm 16. Look at this. David really had a vision of this in Psalm 16:11: "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." He is talking to the Lord: "In your presence is the fullness of joy." Put "enjoyment." Whenever you see joy, put "enjoyment." At your right hand are pleasures! The throne of God is the epicenter of pleasure in all of created order. It is the epicenter of pleasure. David had the vision of the God—the God of pleasure. Again, the Devil counterfeits pleasure. The Devil did not invent pleasure. He counterfeited it. God invented it.

THE RIVER OF PLEASURE DESCRIBES THE HOLY SPIRIT

Paragraph I. Psalm 36:8: “They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You gave them drink from the river of Your pleasures.” Here is David again; he is praying, “Father, you give them drink from the river of your pleasures.” Oh, I love that verse. He says, “I want to drink from the river of Your pleasures.” And that is in the New Testament context of the Spirit of God, who searches the deep things of God’s heart to give them to our heart. Get a vision to drink the river of pleasure; again, it your relationship with the Holy Spirit and the Bible. The Bible is so alive and so living.

And at first, I remember when I first really committed myself to the Lord in a really diligent way. I was sixteen years old. I was serious. I was with a youth group where the youth leaders were all preaching on revival and world missions; we led people to the Lord, had prayer meetings, and all kinds of things. I was in a youth environment. So I am sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years old, and I am in a mess because I really love God, but I do not like the Bible at all. The Bible is so boring, really boring. I do not like prayer at all. Prayer is more boring than the Bible—much more. I mean I would endure the Bible over prayer any day. I did not like fasting, and then there was the fourth one—witnessing—that was the least of the bad things that I had to do.

I could do that simply because we had so many witnessing opportunities, as we always went out on teams. And I was thinking, “Oh, I can do the witnessing. I can put up with the witnessing.” I lived in that for so many years. I said to God, “Here is the deal. I really love You. I do not like prayer, fasting, bible study, witnessing, but I love You. I really do love You. I like meetings.” I did like meetings. I could go to meetings every day. It is just when everybody left; I was in a jam. I said, “Oh no. It is just plain, old, raw me, boring Bible, and distant God.” This is horrifying. I went to meetings every day. Well not every day, but I loved to go to meetings. Whenever there was a meeting, count me in.

Bible studies: everybody talking, laughing, having fun, flirting beforehand and afterwards in youth group—I did love that part, and I did love meetings. But here I am: I am eighteen, nineteen, or twenty years old, and I have got this vision to go hard after God. And I said, “God, I am in a jam. I do not like prayer, Bible study, fasting, and, barely, witnessing. Oh, but I love You. I do not know what to do, but I am stuck.” And He began to give me a vision, “Just stay with it. Just stay with it.”

And little by little, He began to change my understanding that He was a God who enjoyed me even then. That is when I got the revelation. Right back when I was twenty years old, I realized that He actually enjoyed me. That was my first big one. I told God, “You like me? Right now? If I was You, I would not like me right now. You really like Me?” It hit me that He liked me.

And I said, “Wow.” Then it felt more comfortable to put up with a boring Bible because if He liked me, there was a chance something good might happen. I knew God loved me. I knew God stamped my passport. I knew that Jesus died. Was this because He had to? It really shifted things. Little by little, in my early twenties—twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, it was in those days, that it all shifted. It started really changing. And I tell you, I tell twenty-year-olds: do not wait until you are thirty, forty, or fifty years old. Your life can get set in a course. When you are twenty years old, it was in that window—that twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three-year-old window in my life—for these ideas began to become clear to me. Fresh ideas began to dawn on me is a better way to say it. And it got me excited. Imagine Christianity with an exciting Bible.

I say, “That would be really cool; God, if Bible study was exciting, that would be too good to be true. That means I could walk with You and actually like it. That would be so fun.” If you would have told me—if an angel had appeared when I was twenty years old and said, “Oh, servant of God. You will do a twenty-four hour prayer and Bible thing.” Back then, the thought of twenty-four hour prayer would have been worse than death; I would have thought, “That is purgatory, whatever that is. What did I do to deserve that? I repent of whatever I have done to deserve this.” No, I would have been freaked out by this thought. If God would have told me at twenty-years old through an angel, “I want twenty-four hour prayer with singing the Bible all day long.” That thought would have been horrifying to me.

The idea that the Bible would be exciting—it was a fantastic possibility. I want to tell you twenty-year-olds; I want to tell you eighty-year-olds: the Bible can be exciting, and it can be exciting soon. It does not take two, three, four, or five years. It may take some weeks to turn a corner because there are some crusty, rusty emotions weighing down heavy on you. Just give yourself a little bit of patience. You got in that position. It took more than a week or two to get that weighed down feeling. But the Holy Spirit will move on you.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH NUMBER TWO: SETTING OUR HEARTS ON OBEDIENCE

Roman numeral IV. Let’s go to the top of page three. Foundational truth number two. I want you to leave this place—and I mean a number of you had it before you came, but for those of you who are new—I want to leave you with a vision to be exhilarated and fascinated by the Lord. Your spirit is going to be alive. Your ministry may never be really big. I do not care how big my ministry is. I want whatever size God wants it. That is His business. My goal is to encounter Him, to be faithful in the Word, and to speak the Word of God faithfully. And if there are five, 500, or 5,000 people, that is not my business. My business is to go after God, hard. It is His business to make the number big or small. I might go to prison for a while. I’m out of prison. That is His business. My business is to do it hard with my inner man and to have the right views of God in the process. So do not get fixated on how big your stuff is out there. Do not focus on money or if everybody likes you or not. Do not focus on ministry or if anybody is coming.

Do not get fixated on that. Get fixated on the look of your soul going after this thing. The favor will seem to increase. In other seasons, the favor will seem to decrease. It ebbs and flows in, when your circumstances are easy and hard. Do not lock into where your circumstances are. Fix your heart to go hard after God. You are going to be a man or woman of God with fasting and prayer. No one is good at fasting. No one is good at prayer. No one is good at the Bible. No one by nature is good at any of this. We are all folk. We are all in it together, but just stick with it. But if you have the right vision, it will be pleasurable. You must believe that it is within reach. It gives you a vision to stay with it.

EMPOWERING AND SATISFYING

OK. Foundational truth number two. Setting your heart on perfect obedience. This is critical. Paragraph B. The pursuit of ninety-eight percent obedience has limited blessing. The last two percent is where the power is on your heart. I want to say this with energy. You can say, “I will obey in every area except that one area, I am going to hold onto it.” Imagine the little guy at Christmas; he gets the new train set. Imagine the electric train set, and he plugs into it. It has got the whole power and light company of the city behind it; you have a little piece of metal on that track short circuit. The electrical power of the whole city and the power-light company cannot move that little one-pound train. You have one area in your life. I do not mean you are stumbling. You can have five areas that you are stumbling in. There might be just one area where you are not agreeing to obey in. However, that one area will completely minimize the vast majority of your experience of the power.

There is just one area. I found this some years ago. Paragraph B. A surprising dynamic happens in your emotions, when you are bringing every area into active obedience.

BRIDLING OUR SPEECH, MAKING A COVENANT WITH OUR EYES, TIME, AND MONEY

Paragraph C; your speech. Say, “I want my words to be pleasing. I mean all the time.” They will not be pleasing all the time, but you are aiming for 100 percent obedience. I set my heart to do this many years ago. My words still are not always pleasing to the Lord. But when they are not, and I know it, I call it sin. I say, “I am not going to be sloppy with My words. Holy Spirit, help me, as I do not want to go there. If I go there, it is going to change our dialogue, because I am not going to talk to You as much about the things I am talking to You about. I am going to talk to You about obeying in that area of speech.”

The Holy Spirit answers our cry for obedience, “OK, good. Let’s bring that area into leadership and under My leadership.”

COVENANT WITH OUR EYES

We must make a covenant with our eyes as in Job 31:1. We must—male and female—we must make a covenant with our eyes. We will not look on things that incite lust in our heart. I do not mean a casual attempt to stay away from it. I mean to make a covenant to never ever go there. You might go there, but you call it sin when you do. You do not say, “Well, you know, this was a tough day.”

Rather, you say, “I sinned. I am confessing it. I am renouncing it, warring against it, and returning back to commitment to obey in that area.” If you do that in every area of your life, it affects every other area of your life; look at this—your appetites. I am talking about your time. You have got twenty-four hours a day. It all belongs to the Lord. All of it is His. People wrongly think, “I got my IHOP–KC time and my personal time.” There is no such thing as personal time under the lordship of Jesus. It does not exist. There is no such thing as time out from Jesus’ leadership. There is rest time. There is physical re-cooperation time. There is down time, in terms of work, but it is all under His leadership. We do not have prayer room time and then time when we are back into the IHOP–KC world.

I said, “No. IHOP–KC will be miserable for you if you live like that. Forget it. All of your time is His.” And when that touches your spirit, there is vibrancy in your spirit. There is a spark in you.

ALL OUR MONEY IS HIS MONEY

Your money, all of your money, belongs to Jesus. Not just all of your money where you are in your early twenties, and you are broke. I am talking about all of your money for all of your life. I made a commitment to the Lord when I was in my early twenties that I would live a certain way. I committed to live a simple lifestyle for the sake of the gospel. And the Lord whispered in my heart some years ago, “I am going to give you extravagant wealth,” so I determined then that I was not going to touch it for my personal life.

The Lord says, “OK, if you are going to be that way about it, I will even give you more.” And God will tell each person what he or she wants. I want to tell you this: a life of fascination is about your speech, your appetite, your time, your money, and your eyes, when everything is brought under His leadership.

Obey in every area. Know we stumble many times, but we call it sin. We repent within the hour. We sign back up for 100 percent obedience, as there will be a spark in your spirit that is so different when we mostly obey. Do

not make the excuse, “At least I obey more than my friends do.” No, that kind of Christianity is broken. I have no desire to be more obedient or more passionate for God than the guy down the road. That means nothing to me, or to the Holy Spirit. I want to be as radically obedient in the inner man as God will empower me to be. And regardless what measure I have entered, that is where the spark comes to inner man. That is where the fascination begins, and the Word of God begins to unfold. I am not talking about attaining to maturity.

I am talking about setting the heart to go after it. I still have not attained. There are still all these areas of my heart where God is working on me. I still come up short in some of them, but I tell you that within the hour, I repent, though I try to do it within the minute. But within the hour, boom, I say, “I am back. I am obeying with my words. I am obeying You with my words.”

I imagine that the Lord answers, “I like this. I like this. You are still weak, but I like it. I like your heart. I like this. We can talk more. You can hear better.”

THREE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

Roman numeral V. Top of page four. Foundational truth number one: get preoccupied with the vision of superior pleasure. Foundational truth number two: the intention must be 100 percent obedience. That is where the spark is. Three practical principles. I am just going to do this in five minutes because it is just the idea to get your mind around it a little bit and not to really break it down.

Paragraph A. There must be a cooperation in the grace of God. God will not do our part; we cannot do His part. There is a division of labor. We have our part, and God has His part. He will not do your part. You cannot do His part. It is like the analogy that I have used over the years of the preacher and the farmer. The preacher is going to the farmer’s house after church one Sunday, and they are driving up the big long driveway of these acres of beautiful farm and all these manicured farms. These acres are beautiful. And the preacher says, “Wow. God sure blessed you with this farm.”

And the farmer said, “Preacher. When God had this farm, it was a mess.” And here is the idea: God is not going to plant the seeds, or pull the weeds. He will release the processes of life and send the rain. He will cause the life in the seed to work, but He will not plant the seed and will not pull the weeds.

If we do not do it, there will be havoc. God has a part; we have a part too. He will not make decisions for us. We cannot inspire ourselves supernaturally. God can only give the supernatural inspiration. But God will make the decision; I cannot produce the inspiration. You can read more about that. I have found out that there are three basic principles.

Paragraph B. Cooperating with the grace of God. Just look at Paragraph B. Romans 6:11-14: “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” There are three basic principles that I find in Romans 6. It is what I call the knowing principle, the resisting principle, and the pursuing principle.

THE KNOWING PRINCIPLE

Let's look at them really quickly—a minute on each one. Paragraph C. The knowing principle. There are things that we must know. We know who we are in Christ, what we receive in Him, and truth about God's heart. Like I have been talking about, the last two sessions are about truths about God's heart. There are things we must know. If the cooperation with the grace of God is going to be fully effective, we need to know the things we need to know, and they are quite straightforward in the Bible. I am not talking about mysteries that nobody knows. I am talking about those four, or five key points: who you are in Christ, what you received in him—which is the same thing—the heart of the Father, the heart of the Bridegroom, and what the heart of God is like as you relate to Him so you have confidence in your spirit. These are simple things that we must know.

THE RESISTING PRINCIPLE (ROMANS 6:12-13)

Paragraph D. We have to resist some things. We have to resist sin. We have to resist Satan. We have to resist sin-provoking circumstances. It is as if Paul said, "Do not go to places that incite sin in you." That is what Paul said in the passage that we just overlooked in Romans 6. I did not read it. Paul basically said, "Do not present your body to sin." This means do not get in the car, drive there, sit in the room, and then say "God help! God help! God help!" Do not do that. Do not go to places that incite you. Do not deceive yourself in saying, "Well, it probably will not happen this time."

The Holy Spirit whispers to you, "Well, has it happened in the last fifteen minutes?" Well, actually it has. This is going to be a new one and a different one? We believe lies and excuses thinking, "Well, I think I feel a little bit better today. I was a little down." You have been down for years. You are still down. Anyway, there are things that we have to resist. We do resist sin. We do resist Satan. A lot of people do not resist Satan. They endure Satan instead of resisting Him. The Bible says, "Rebuke him. Resist him, and he will flee." And the Devil comes in oppression with a tormenting spirit, and they never say, "In Jesus' name, go." The Devil says, "Hey, they are not driving me out. This works for me." We have to resist Satan. We really do have to resist Him, and then, paragraph E. There are things that we need to pursue. There are a few very simple things; we pursue God. We pursue people. We pursue serving. There are some things that we can actively do.

PURSUING GOD

Paragraph F. We must know truth, resist darkness, and pursue God. If we do those three principles with those two foundational truths, a right paradigm of pursuing the pleasures of God in hundredfold obedience with these three principles. I assure you that over time, you will find more liberty in your inner man—and more and more excitement in your walk with God. We will end with Paragraph G. None of these three principles can be omitted.

Now some people do two out of the three principles. Some people resist sin, there are radical Christian groups, and they even pursue God. They are going after God, but they do not know who they are in Christ. Whatever the Devil offers them, they take it.

They say, "I am resisting sin and pursuing God." But when the Devil knocks on their door to offer them a gift of a rattlesnake, they come in and say, "Thank you, God," and they let the Devil in. They do not use their authority against the Devil. They have got a heart of obedience. You have got to resist the things that you have got to resist. They pursue God in prayer meetings, and they get a wrong view of grace. They go outside the prayer meetings, and they do not resist sin.

They say, “Well, I do the IHOP–KC thing. That ought to give me a little bit of leverage to go sin a little while. I mean I do IHOP–KC. So, I mean, God ought to cancel that out.” No, it is not just that we pursue God, but we must also resist sin. You have got to do all three. If we embrace all three principles in context of those two foundational truths, I believe the Spirit will progressively and dynamically work them out in your spirit. Amen. Let’s stand.