

# The Three-Fold Cord Christian

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, I'm going to make myself available after the message this evening back there by the table. I'd be more than happy to answer any questions you might have.

So once we're done, I'll be standing back there. If you want to come back and fire away with all kinds of questions, feel free to do so and make ourselves available and have some fellowship afterwards.

But I just want to go ahead and get right into the sermon tonight. Go ahead and open up your Bibles to Ecclesiastes chapter 4. Ecclesiastes chapter 4. Ecclesiastes chapter 4.

I'm a very big stickler on time and not being tarry and all that kind of stuff. And being so, boy, we're pushing to get here this evening. And man, I'll tell you what, I am not used to L.A. traffic.

I'm not used to big cities. I was raised in Toledo, Ohio, about, I don't know, 100,000, 150,000 people, which is like, you know, a tenth of here. I'm not sure what it is.

[ 1 : 02 ] But man, we're not used to that. And I like small cities. We're just in North Carolina traveling around a bunch of small cities out there, cashiers in North Carolina up in the mountains.

And that's my pace. So anyway, we're rushing to get out here. We try to get to a restaurant with plenty of time. We barely were able to scarf down the food and get here. So we're hacking our way through everything tonight.

I'm sorry. I apologize. But anyway, let's go ahead and go to Ecclesiastes chapter 4 tonight. Ecclesiastes chapter 4. Look at verse number 9.

Read a couple of verses here. Ecclesiastes chapter 4 and verse 9. The Bible says, A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

I want to preach a message tonight on a threefold cord Christian. A threefold cord Christian. Let's pray. Father, Lord God, I come before you in the name that's above every name, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 28 ] And God, I place myself before your throne this evening. Lord, I ask that you please have mercy upon us. Lord, it sure would be a great mercy of yours to step down and meet with us today.

But Lord, we do know that we're gathered in your name. And Lord, we want to hear from you. We desire to hear from you. Father, the irony is I have nothing for these people.

Lord, I don't have any wisdom to give them. I don't have anything profound. I don't have anything of myself that I can offer these people that will help them, that will minister to them, be encouragement, or be a reproof, rebuke, or exhortation.

Lord, I have nothing of myself. But Lord, I do have your words. So, Lord God, I'm going to lean upon your words tonight. I'm going to lean upon you. And I ask, dear God, that you please, Lord, would you please fill me with your spirit?

Lord, would you please fill my mouth with your words? Would you please bathe everything that comes out of my mouth in your precious blood, that it might have the ability to reach your people's heart? Father, would you please soften the hearts of your people and help them to respond to you in a way that's pleasing to you, Father?

[ 3 : 36 ] And God, we don't deserve your presence. We don't deserve to hear from you. We don't deserve to have you move in our midst tonight. But we need it, Lord. God, I need you, Lord. Please, dear God, help me to preach with power and conviction, with authority from your words, with humility, with compassion.

And Lord, I pray that the Lord Jesus Christ be lifted up, that you get all the glory and praise and honor that's due to your holy name. We're sure to love you, Lord. We ask all these things in Jesus Christ's name. Amen. Now, as a Christian, you ought to be striving for consistent victory in your Christian life.

You ought to be striving for perfection. You really should be. You ought to be striving to be holy. The Bible says in 1 Peter, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And as you grow in the Lord, you ought to become stronger and stronger in your Christian life.

The Bible talks about exercising your senses by reason of use and so on. Now, this passage here talks about a strong cord and it's not easily broken.

It's hard to break this threefold cord. It doesn't say that a threefold cord is never broken. It says it's not easily, it's not quickly broken.

[ 4 : 50 ] You know, a matter of fact in the Christian life is the likelihood of you being broken at one point or another in your Christian life is a very highly likely scenario.

There's a high likelihood of you and your Christian life being broken at one point or another. I don't find one character in the Bible that God used that he didn't first break them at one point.

I've heard a couple messages on broken things that God uses. And God uses broken things. But the goal should be to not be quickly, not to be easily broken.

The Bible says if you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. And the idea is to not be quickly broken, not to be soon shaken, not to fall apart at everything that comes across in your Christian life.

And if you're saved and if you're trying to do right, Christian, I hate to say it, but you're promised to have trouble. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 3.12, or rather 2 Timothy 3.12, all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

[ 5 : 57 ] And if you're doing right, if you're trying the best you can to live right, there's going to be some kind of persecution that's going to come in your Christian life. And I hate to say it, but hardship and trouble and pain and sorrow and misery, that's all a part of the normal Christian life.

It's not an abnormal thing. Another place in the Bible says think it not strange when the fiery trials come against you. It's not a strange thing. But the fact is a lot of Christians, they meet troubles and trials, and as soon as that comes into their life, they just fall apart.

But the goal of creation is not to be quickly broken. Your goal should be to not be easily broken and not easily fall apart in the Christian life. I'm not going to make light of the trouble.

I won't. I've had some trouble in my life, and I know some people that are going, presently, right now as we speak, going through the trials of a lifetime. And I wouldn't make light of that.

But, you know, terrible things happen, and they happen sometimes suddenly. And sometimes the terrible and awful and the horrible storms of life, they arise out of nowhere, and you can feel hopeless, and it seems like it's almost pointless and just comes out of nowhere.

[ 7 : 12 ] And it seems like it's more than you can bear. But, you know, as you grow as a Christian, you ought to be able to bear more and more. And God's not going to take a baby Christian and just rattle them right off the bat.

He'll give you a little bit of trouble here, a little bit of trouble there, and watch how you handle that. And He wants to strengthen you and make you stronger and stronger in this Christian life. You know, this passage here is talking about strength in numbers.

And, you know, I was preaching elsewhere this past Sunday and pointing out how the majority is almost always wrong. And that's still true.

And, you know, three is hardly a majority. But there is some strength in numbers. There's strength that comes with having a local church. There's strength in having some people beside you to help you out.

And this passage talks about strength in numbers, a threefold quarter. It's not quickly broken. Look at verse 9. It says, two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor.

[ 8 : 10 ] It's better to have two than just one. Verse 10 says, before they fall, the one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.

Again, if two lie together, then they have heat. But how can one be warm alone? Two are better than one. Christian, you don't want to fall by yourself. No man lives to himself.

No man dieth to himself. You're not an island. And you don't want to fall by yourself. It's much better if you have so many by your side to kind of give you a kick in the seat of the pants sometimes. It's good to have somebody to provoke you into love and to good works.

It's good to have somebody to be that iron that will sharpen the iron. You need that. There is some strength in numbers. There is some warmth, some heat that comes in gathering in a local Bible-believing church.

Boy, when you get around some people that believe the book and love the Lord, and you get people like that that will sing and sing those hymns out of a heart that loves God. Boy, I've been in some of those services where it steams the windows, man.

[ 9 : 14 ] It creates some heat. And I love that. I can remember when I was in basic training, I went through basic training, and it was early spring. Actually, it was still wintertime, late winter.

And I can remember going out in our last field exercise. And our drill sergeants, they were exercising some wisdom. They said, okay, soldiers, you're going to get together.

And two of you are going to have a buddy system. Two guys, you each have your shelter half. All right, so we each had half of a shelter. It has buttons on either side. And they told us, when you get ready to bunker down for the night, you two are going to take your shelter half and staff them together.

And both of you get in this little tiny shelter half. And, you know, you've got a bunch of men around and full of testosterone. And, you know, you don't want to get in a little shelter half with another man.

That's kind of weird, you know. And so, you know, about 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock at night rolls around. It gets dark. And we're all getting our shelter halves.

[ 10 : 13 ] And it's like every position, there was one inside and one kind of half outside. And most of them were on the outside. A lot of us, we took our shelter half and just kind of laid it on top of us like a blanket.

We would come around midnight. And, boy, that temperature plummets. And it starts to sprinkle a little bit. And about midnight, you know what you hear? Snap, snap, snap, snap. And people are just rustling and getting inside those tents. You know why? We found out two are better than one.

You get more heat when you get two together. And you need that. And, boy, that truth will follow all throughout life. And two are better than one. You know, if you have a husband and a wife, if the husband gets sick, the wife can make the chicken noodle soup, you know, and come to your bed and put the cloth on your head and feed you the soup and take care of you.

And when the wife gets sick, the husband says, take care of yourself. But it's always better. If one gets sick, you know, you've got the other one who's healthy to take care of their children. Just a couple months ago, everybody got sick.

And it was miserable. I mean, the whole family, we all live in an RV. Everything circulates and just sticks in that RV. And everyone got sick at the same time. And it was kind of miserable. But usually, you know, one gets sick, the other one's pretty healthy.

[ 11 : 25 ] And you can help each other out. Now, spiritually speaking, if the husband goes wayward, and I've seen this happen, the husband goes off in the world, but the wife stays right and stays in church, chances are that wife with her chaste conversation will get that husband back in church.

And vice versa, if the wife goes off, the husband stays faithful, and two are better than one. And if you're not married here today, you've got a local church. I'm sure you've got a family.

Find somebody that will be a help to you. Two are better than one. They have a good reward for their labor. You know, if you take one piece of string, you can take that one thread.

You can break it pretty easily. If you take two, it's that law of exponential growth or exponential strength. You take two pieces of string, you wind them together. You can still break them, not as easily.

But you take three cords, and you bind those three. And that exponential strength, it's a lot harder. And it's not quickly broken. It's not quickly broken. A three-fold cord is not quickly broken.

[ 12 : 25 ] You know, our three-fold cords are all through the Bible and all through creation. And you can find, and I'll give you a couple examples here, but you can find many, many, many, many, many, many more.

You know why? Because God himself is a three-fold cord. He's a trinity. You've got God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. You've got the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's the greatest three-fold cord you'll find. So there's the three-fold cord of the Trinity. There's the three-fold cord of life. You've got the body, you've got the soul, and you've got the spirit. You've got the three-fold cord of your salvation.

You've got Christ's death, his burial, his resurrection. You've got the three-fold cord of labor, just physical labor. You've got food, you've got water, you've got energy.

You've got the three-fold cord of crop. You sow the seed, you water the seed, and you reap the harvest. You've got the three-fold cord of the sun. The sun has actinic rays, it's got UV rays, it's got heat rays.

[13:24] You've got a three-fold cord of words. You've got the thought of a word, you've got the spoken word, and you've got the written word. And all throughout creation and all throughout the Bible, I mean, you can find many, many, many, many more examples.

But tonight I want to preach on the three-fold cord of the Christian. I want to show you some three very basic, simple things. Nothing deep here tonight.

Some things are very basic, very simple. It's the very foundation of the Christian life. And if you don't have these three basic, and I might say all three of these down, forget about growing.

Forget about building anything, because this is the very foundation. I'm going way back to the beginning, after you get saved. The three very basic things, and you need all three.

If you have two and not the other, all three, you'll be a weak Christian. You'll never be victorious. You'll never grow. And without all three of these, you'll be a weak and joyless Christian. Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

[14:26] 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Here's a three-fold cord of the Christian. And I'm sure you might be able to find other examples. There'll be a good three-fold cord for a Christian. But this is the one that the Lord gave me a few years ago.

But look at 1 Corinthians 13 and verse 13. The Bible says, And now abideth faith, hope, charity. These three, but the greatest of these is charity.

The greatest of these is charity. The three-fold cord of a Christian is faith, hope, and charity. So I'm going to take a few minutes this evening, and I'll go over each one of these in a little bit of detail.

The first one, the first thread, the first cord in this three-fold cord is faith.

The very first one you find as you read this passage, the first part of this three-fold cord Christian is going to be faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. You're saved by grace through faith.

So you've got to start there. The very first part of a three-fold cord Christian is faith. Look over at Romans 10 and verse 17. You cannot please God without faith.

[15:34] The Bible says, Hebrews 11, 6, Without faith, it is impossible. I mean, it is impossible. It's an impossibility to please God.

You can't even begin to put a smile on God's face until you can learn to have faith in Him. It's impossible to please Him without it.

So look at Romans 10 and verse 17. Romans 10, 17, the Bible says, So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Folks, if you want to increase in your faith, you're going to have to have a daily, daily walk in that Bible. The first part of this three-fold cord is daily Bible reading.

And it's faith. And you cannot grow in faith aside from this book. You are not going to grow in faith. The Scripture is very plain. There's no plainer Scripture on it.

[16:33] So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. And you're not going to increase your faith. If you personally, I'm not talking about your pastor or some preacher behind a pulpit reading some Scripture on Sunday and Wednesday.

I'm talking about you individually, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, by yourself reading the Bible. God wants you to have faith.

The quickest way that you're going to offend God is to simply not trust Him. Just not trust Him. We just sang a song about trusting the Lord. And folks, if you want to upset God, if you want to offend Him, if you want to grieve His Spirit, just don't trust Him.

Don't have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, how frustrating, you that have kids, how frustrating would it be if your kids never trusted you? And I heard another preacher give this illustration.

It's a very good illustration. But what if your kids came to you every day and said, Dad, are you going to put food on the table? Dad, are you going to pay the bills? Will the lights be on today?

[17:40] Will the furnace be running? Will the AC be running? Dad, are you going to be able to put gas in the car? Dad, can you feed me? Can you clothe me? How frustrating would it be if every single day your child, I mean, the child's 10, 12 years old and you've been taking care of them all their lives and all of a sudden they start questioning everything you do.

My kids never once have asked me, Dad, are you going to be able to feed us today? You know why? Because my kids trust me implicitly. You know, one of the greatest atrocities in the entire world is the fact that the most trustworthy being is hardly ever fully trusted.

The most trustworthy person that ever has existed, the Lord Jesus Christ, doesn't get all the trust and the faith that he deserves. You know what the Bible calls that? The Bible calls that an evil heart of unbelief.

Hebrews chapter 3. An evil heart of unbelief. You know, when your mind can gather all the facts, with your mind you can look around, you can gather all kinds of facts and evidence and all the details, and your mind can gather all this stuff up together, but it's the heart.

See, it's the heart, that thing that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked that causes unbelief. Your mind can say, okay, for the last 10, 15, 20 years, God's always taken care of us.

[19:10] God has always met our need. God has always been there. He's always supplied. And your mind can gather all these facts. You can sit there in your mind's eye and you can think of some miraculous things.

I've done, I've seen the Lord done some miraculous things in my life. And my mind can sit there and think of it. But it's the heart that gets in there and it's deceitful and it's desperately wicked.

It's not just wicked, it's not just filth, it's desperately wicked. And it gets in there and it begins to say, yeah, well, maybe not this time. Yeah, well, maybe you've outdone God's mercies.

Yeah, well, maybe you've outgrown God's provision and His supplication, His supplying. And it's the heart that gets in there. It's a heart. But unbelief is a heart problem.

It's a heart problem. You know, Israel, they saw God's wonders on Pharaoh and Egypt. They saw God's deliverance with their eyes.

[20:09] They saw the Red Sea departed. They saw the manna drop. They saw the quails. They saw the Jordan River being divided. They saw the walls of Jericho fall.

Yet the Bible says over in, let's see here, what is this? Deuteronomy 1.28, Numbers 32.7, Deuteronomy 4.9, over and over again, it says that their hearts were discouraged, not their minds. See, with their minds, they could say, yeah, God did all these great things, but their heart troubled them. Know why? Because their heart was not trusting God. They lost their faith and it was a heart problem.

They had a heart problem. All throughout the Old Testament, you see the Israelites had a heart problem. They had a great heart problem. They doubted God and they doubted Him from the heart. You know what that Bible says?

We have a more sure word of prophecy. That Bible is more sure than Moses coming down from heaven and giving you some prophecy physically, verbally.

[21:13] It's more sure than any prophet of old coming back down from heaven, splitting the sky and calling your name out and giving you some divine revelation and going back up and disappearing.

That book is far more sure than any prophecy you'll ever have. We have a more sure word of prophecy and it comes from the book. It comes from the book. Unbelief is a heart problem, folks. And if you want your heart to increase in faith, you must, you must, you must be faithful to reading your Bible personally, by yourself, not you and your wife, not you and your kids with your family devotions, by yourself every single day, you must read the Bible.

If you want to hear God's voice speaking to you, you must read the book. You've got to. It's the very first part of threefold cord. God will speak to you.

He'll convict you. He'll lead you by his words. And as you see God speak to your heart and certain circumstances happen in your life that are unexplainable that matches with something you read that God spoke to your, for your faith will increase and increase and increase.

Folks, the first part of the threefold cord is faith. And it's reading the Bible. You're not going to increase in faith unless you start and keep on reading the Word of God.

[22:40] The second part of that threefold cord, the Bible says, now abideth these. Faith, hope. The second part of that threefold cord is hope. Look at Psalm chapter 38. The book of Psalms and chapter 38.

Psalm chapter 38. Psalm chapter 38. Boy, it is dark in here, brother. I can't see the clock. All right. Psalm chapter 38. Look at verse 1.

And for sake of time, I'll skip a few verses here, but to get the context, look at Psalm chapter 38 and verse 1. O Lord. So you see right off the bat, David's praying.

He's talking to God. O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Look at verse 4. For my iniquities are gone over my head. Look at verse 9.

O Lord, all my desire is before thee. David is pouring his heart out to God. David's heart is torn. He's pouring his heart out to God.

[ 23 : 39 ] And he's saying, Lord, my desire is before thee. He's making a confession to God. He's just telling God very plain. He said, Lord, my desire is before thee. You see the desire of my heart.

And my groaning is not hid from thee. David's going through something. I'm not sure exactly what it is, but I have a feeling that probably stems from his great transgression.

And he's saying, my desire is before thee. My groaning is not hid from thee. You ever been there in your Christian life where you're on your face before God and you're pouring out your soul.

God, my desire is before you. Don't you see what my soul is pouring out? My groaning is not hid.

You know what's going on. You know the groanings of my heart.

Look at verse 10. My heart panteth. My strength faileth me. Boy, David is in a strait. David's at the end of his rope.

[ 24 : 38 ] He's turning his gaze toward God and he's crying out. As for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. David's in darkness. The sweet psalmist of Israel, the man that's after God's own heart is going through a season of darkness.

And his desire is being spread out before God. He's groaning. The light of his eyes is gone. He's pouring his heart out before his God.

My lovers and my friends stand aloof at my sword and my kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me and they that seek my heart speak mischief things and imagine deceits all the day long.

But look at verse 15. For in thee, O Lord, do I hope. Thou wilt hear, O Lord, my God.

You know, folks, the second part of the threefold cord is hope. Christian, you need hope in this life. And I understand doctrinally we have the blessed hope.

[ 25 : 50 ] But practically speaking, Christian, you need to develop some hope in your Christian life and you will not have the kind of hope that David had if you do not learn to turn your gaze toward heaven and lay out your prayers before him.

Cast your cares upon him for prayer. The first part of the threefold cord is faith and you get that by reading your Bible. The second part is hope.

You get that for prayer, by fellowship, by talking with Jesus Christ. And boy, David was a man, he was a great sinner, yes, but that man was a great repentant.

That man, all throughout Psalms, you'll see David's calling upon the Lord and over and over again, David calls the Lord his hope. Thou art my hope.

Over and over again through the book of Psalms. David's talking to God. He's telling him his troubles. He's confessing that his light is gone, he's in darkness and his desire is before him and all this stuff and he's pleading for God, he's pleading for mercy, he's begging for God to step in and do something.

[ 27 : 10 ] And as he talks and as he pours out his complaint, he confesses, he says, Lord, you are my hope. He doesn't turn to Asaph, he doesn't turn to anybody else, he doesn't turn to anyone else.

He says, Lord, you're my hope. He doesn't turn to anyone else that he could turn to and I'm sure there's all kinds of people that could have helped him. He says, Lord, you, thou art my hope.

And Christian, the Lord Jesus Christ is your only hope. He's your hope. You know why Christians are hopeless? You know why there's so many Christians nowadays that they just feel empty and hopeless?

I can tell you why. It's because they're not in communication with their God of hope. Christians don't pray. Christians don't have a prayer. By the way, I'm not, hey, the blessing of preaching in a church or nobody, I don't know anybody, nobody knows me.

I don't know who's praying and who's not. I don't know who's reading the Bible and who's not, so I have complete liberty. If the shoe fits, then you wear it. But folks, Christians aren't praying. You know, I know that because souls aren't getting saved like they used to.

[ 28 : 21 ] And I understand the world's getting wickeder and wickeder, but Christians don't have victory. Christians don't have separate, all this kind of stuff. And folks, the Lord Jesus Christ, he's

the God of hope.

The word hope means a desire of some good accompanied with at least the slightest expectation of obtaining that hope, that object that you hope for.

You know, we have that blessed hope. And we have the Lord Jesus Christ that if you can develop that prayer life and you can talk to him, there's some hope that comes with that.

You know, when I was deployed, and I'm not a homebody, I've never really been the type that easily gets homesick. I can adapt anywhere I go. I've never really had a problem with that.

But there were times, I mean, especially in that kind of environment, you get sort of longing for a home after a while. And I can remember, especially my last deployment, I mean, things got rough and after a while I just began to long for a home.

[ 29 : 21 ] I knew that I had 15 months that I was going to stay there. I knew that there was a certain point where we were going to start packing bags and we were going to start getting boots off ground and go back to the sites.

I knew that was a promise. I knew that was going to happen. They're not going to keep me there forever. I knew I was going home eventually. But you know, sometimes you get kind of sparing, kind of lonely and things get hard and you can't talk.

You know, all that kind of stuff goes on. But you know what I could do every once in a while? I could get that satellite phone and I could call home and I could hear my mom's voice. I could call home and hear my father's voice.

I could talk to my brothers and my sisters or I could call some friends and you know what happened when I would call home? Boy, there was some level of hope that just arose in me. Yeah, after a while, I could hear their voice and I'd wish for home a little bit sweeter.

That that longing would be stronger. But when I heard their voice, there was more of an expectation that I'm going to see them one day. And folks, as you learn to talk with Jesus Christ, as you learn to walk with Him and fellowship with Him, when you go through those lonely times, when you go through the trials and the heartaches like David did on his face and crying out to God and being in darkness and groaning, there's a certain amount of hope that will accompany your groanings and the darkness and the trials and the hardships.

[ 30 : 51 ] But, if you're not talking with Him, if you're not fellowshiping with Him, boy, I can't imagine.

You know, I think about the lost world. And the last couple years, the Lord laid this on me very heavy. And I've got some people I've been praying for every day that are going through some just unimaginable trials.

And I think about that and, you know, I have to ask the Lord almost daily, Lord, help me not to see the people as just an object in my way because I'm always in a rush. You know, I want to go.

I'm always from point A to point B type person. And people get in my way and I just want to get out of my way. Leave me alone, you know. But I keep telling people that and I'm always trying to get people out of my way and that's in my mind.

I have to ask the Lord to help me to see people as a soul, as a lost soul, as an eternal soul. The Lord's been answering that prayer. Never, every once in a while I can look at a lost soul and I think, man, that person there, they go through the same troubles that you and I go through.

[ 31 : 56 ] They had the same trials. There's death. There's pain. There's sickness. There's sorrow. There's loss. There's all unimaginable things they go through.

Being here in L.A. and walking up and down these streets and putting tracks in windows and trying to hand them out to people and you see the bums around there. They go through all that and they have no hope.

They don't, they're without God and without hope in this world. But Christian, you have the opportunity, you have the privilege of stepping into that throne room of Jesus Christ and you can take the most unimaginable trials and lay it in his hands.

Watch him take care of you. If you want your hope to be more fervent, if you want your hope to be deeper, more real, you'll need to be in constant communication with the God of hope, with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know the number one reason marriages fail is lack of communication. It's the truth. And if you, when a Christian fails, I've been, I mean, I've been around Bible-believing Christians for 36 years of my whole life.

[ 33 : 24 ] And I've got, most of my friends that I grew up with are way off in the world. You know what? When Christians fail, usually, it's because they fail to communicate with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a sad thing because you have all the opportunity in the world to develop that hope. No, God desires to hear your voice. God desires, I mean, the Lord God Almighty, the creator of the universe desires to have fellowship with you.

He wants to hear my voice. I can't imagine. I was encouraged, Brother Donovan in class in proper and deliver, he encouraged us to try to listen to yourself preach.

And I tried it one time and I could not stand it. I stutter, I mumble, I don't have a good, good speaking voice and all that kind of stuff. I can't stand my voice.

But God wants to hear your voice. God desires and loves it when he hears his children. I love it when Clarissa and John say, Daddy, can you help me with this?

[ 34 : 30 ] I love it when they come to me with their problems. I love it when I can help them out as long as they're not whining. I can't stand whining, that's my pet peeve. I cannot stand a whiner. God desires to hear your voice and he'll even hear if you whine.

He hears me whine all the time. He's a lot more gracious than I am. But you know, Christian, if he doesn't get the fellowship that he desires and that you need, mark my words, he'll dispense some trouble to you.

He'll put you in a storm. He'll bring your rock lid in around. He'll rend the rocks with the wind and he'll bring a fire and an earthquake in your life because he wants you to want him.

He wants you to turn your gaze to him. And that's what happened with David. David had to turn his gaze to God. And God desires your fellowship. Boy, I've been there.

I've been there. I've been in that point in my life where I took prayer flippantly. Well, maybe I'll pray today and maybe I won't. Maybe I'll get down on my knees and try to be fervent in prayer, be effectual for somebody else and I'll try to talk to God but sometimes I've been there where weeks go by and just kind of get down and pray through your lips real quick and just take it flippantly.

[ 35 : 47 ] What God does gives you some trouble because that trouble will make you get down on your knees and that trouble sometimes will make you get prostrate on your belly. And I can remember, boy, I'll remember, I've used this illustration almost every time I've been so far because it's one of the most pivotal points of my life.

I had so many things coming on me all at once, all kinds of different trials and attacks and just all kinds of things. I was just getting right with the Lord and I was just getting faithful to reading my Bible and praying and trying to do right and God brought a whole bunch of things to my life and boy, I was on my belly.

I was weeping so hard. My chest was bouncing off the ground. I was forming a puddle of tears there on that tile floor and I was stretching out my hands and I was crying out to God.

I was begging him for something. The Lord came in there and had some fellowship with the Lord but it came on the heels of some trouble. David's heart began to, look at Psalm 42 real quick.

Psalm 42, just one page over. Look at Psalm 42, the Bible says, as the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

[ 37 : 04 ] My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? See again, David. I'm not sure exactly what he's going through. I'm not sure what all is the back story to this but David's heart is panting.

It's peeing. It's pounding hard. Look at the heart. The deer that's running through the wilderness and his chest is heaving and his heart is pounding and he's desiring that water.

He's thirsting and David's thirsting after God. Look at verse 5. Why art thou cast down on my soul and why art thou that is quiet within me?

Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. Folks, hope in God.

David was constantly talking to God and because he was constantly enthous with the Lord when he went through his troubles he could instantly go to that throne and find hope.

If you're going through something right now I encourage you to just be consistent. Keep on praying. If everything's going well now if everything's good and all hunky-dory you have a great opportunity to develop that hope.

[ 38 : 19 ] That's the second part of the threefold cord. Then lastly the third part of this threefold cord is charity. Now up out of these faith, number one. The first part of the threefold cord is faith.

You can't even be saved without faith. So you can't even begin to develop this threefold cord without faith. And you're not going to develop faith without reading the Bible. And secondly is hope. And you gain hope by prayer. And lastly charity. Charity. Go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Probably should have had you stay there but 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

Look at the first this is one of the most convicting chapters in all of the Bible. Great chapter on charity. 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Look at the importance of charity.

Verse 1 through 3. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity I am become a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity I am nothing.

[ 39 : 27 ] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned and have not charity it profiteth me nothing. You see the importance of charity? You can have so much faith that you could tell these mountains back here to stand up and be cast in the Pacific Ocean.

You can have all the faith in the world and move mountains and do all kinds of amazing incredible things with your faith. But if you don't have charity you're nothing the Bible says.

Absolutely nothing a big old zero with the O rubbed out as one preacher put it. See the importance of charity. Look at verse 4 let's look at what charity is.

Charity suffereth long and is kind. Charity envieth not bondeth not itself is not puffed up doth not behave itself unseemly seeketh not her own is not easily provoked thinketh no evil rejoiceth not iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth beareth all things believeth all things hopeth all things endureth all things charity never faileth and so on and so forth.

Folks it doesn't say faith, hope, and love because that's not love. Love that's a much deeper meaning of just love. I can't stand it seeing people I can't stand seeing Bible believing Christians wearing those t-shirts that say faith, hope, and love.

[ 40 : 46 ] I just can't just rub something the wrong way. It's not love. Solomon loved many wives and those wives that he loved turned his heart from God.

Demas loved this present world and he forsook Paul. Diotrefes loved preeminence. Love can be a very perverted and a wicked thing.

Folks this is charity and charity is something that it doesn't bought itself. It doesn't want to have preeminence. It's not all about you it's about others. Charity is that action part of the threefold cord. The threefold cord I talked about a little bit ago we got different things about the Father the Son the Holy Spirit the Father the Holy Spirit and the Son is the action of that threefold cord.

You got labor you got food water you got energy there's always in all these threefold quarters there's two there's two better than one and a threefold quarter is not quickly broken.

[ 41 : 44 ] I like formulas I do I like one plus one equals two I like that it's simple now I know there's no formulas to the Christian life that's a guarantee but it's a pretty close pretty good formula if you'll have faith if you'll have charity or if you have faith if you have hope you'll have charity if you'll read your Bible and if you'll pray you'll have charity that's the energy that's the action part of that threefold cord.

Charity is the action of threefold cord like I said if you eat and if you drink you'll have the energy to do the work. Charity the Bible says in this passage is the greatest the greatest of these is charity. You know faith and hope they benefit you and you need them but charity benefits others. Charity goes out and it benefits the pew it benefits the pulpit it benefits the lost souls out there it benefits the missionaries and the evangelists and it benefits everyone else but you.

Faith and hope yeah they benefit you they help you in your walk with the Lord they give you the strength the faith and the hope the Bible reading the prayer it gives you that spiritual growth and the spiritual strength the spiritual wherewithal to have charity.

The charity is the greatest part because it goes outward to everyone else. charity edify 1 Corinthians 8 1 though I have all faith the Bible says and have not that passage I mean it's mind boggling you're you're exhorted to have all faith but if you have all the faith you don't have charity you're you're not profitable.

[ 43 : 31 ] Christ came to the world to seek and to save the lost but most people live like they came with this world to have pleasure for themselves. Most people live like they came with this world to take care of me.

What can I do for myself? And then they talk about wanting to be like Christ. You can't be like Christ if you're not charitable. You know a Bible believing Christian wouldn't have that a Bible reading Christian won't have that mentality of go for everything for myself.

Take care of me. The Bible says in Philippians 2:3 esteem other better than yourself. Another passage says let everyone seek everyone else's seek others' wealth.

I probably should have written that verse down but anyway you know what I'm talking about. Don't seek your own wealth seek somebody else's wealth. Well that's a hard one isn't it? Especially for a money-loving American.

John 15:13 says greater love hath no man than this than a man laid down his life for his friend. 2 Corinthians 12:15 says Paul says I will gladly spend and be spent.

[44:38] That's charity. That's charity. Charity is the very height of Christianity. Charity is the very height of Christianity. It's the bond of perfectness the Bible says in Colossians.

It's the bond of perfectness. You know it doesn't come charity doesn't come to you like faith and hope. Faith and hope are gifts from God. You get faith by reading the Bible and God increases your faith.

Philippians 1:29 says it is not only given you on the behalf of Christ to believe on him. Faith is a gift. God gives you the faith. Hope is another thing that God gives you and he gives you hope by the tribulation.

A tribulation work of patience and patience experience and experience hope. And hope make us not ashamed. but charity is something you have to work on yourself.

Charity is something you have to develop because you and I are not naturally terrible. Most people are just not naturally charitable. We're naturally selfish. We want to take care of ourselves. The Bible says you have to put on charity.

[45:48] Charity is the final and most valuable thread of the threefold cord. My text here in 1 Corinthians 13 I'm closing here. It says now abideth these.

Faith, hope, charity. The grace of these is charity. And Christian you cannot have one without the other. You can't. You got the threefold cord and I don't know how to braid.

Not to me a girly thing braiding stuff, whatever. But I read up a little bit about that and one of the most common ways to braid I'm told is you have one in the middle and two on the side.

And that one in the middle you take the left and the right and you overlap on that one in the middle over and over and over. And as you overlap the two on the sides it makes that strong cord that strong braid. That charity is that one in the middle.

That's that strength. That's that bond of perfectness. And folks you cannot have pick and choose which one you want.

[46:46] You must have prayer and you must have Bible reading. Those two go hand in hand. I preached a sermon once in a junior church and I had the kids hold their hands up with this. I said call your right hand faith and call your left hand hope.

I have them put their hands together and rub like that. They know what that is. That's friction. That's heat. What's heat? It's energy. And if you have faith, if you have hope, if you'll read your Bible, if you'll pray, you put those two together, they work together and they give you that spiritual energy that you need.

If you don't have faith, if you don't have, I'll challenge you that next week, this coming week, work the entire week and only eat food but don't drink anything.

Just eat food. Eat food. Eat until you're busted at the seams. Eat all day long. Eat all the hamburgers and the pizza. Just eat food. Eat everything.

Just don't drink a drop. You'll die of thirst. Flip that around. If you go next week and you drink until you're drowning yourself in water.

[47:52] You can drink all you want drinking five gallons of water a day but you don't eat a drop of food, eventually you'll die of starvation. You cannot have one without the other.

Christian, you tend to play to your strength. If you're a reader, you'll read all day but you won't pray. If you're a talker, you'll talk to the Lord all day but you'll never read. You've got to have both.

What I'm seeing in Christianity today is people aren't reading, they're not praying. If you have both of those, God will give you the spiritual energy you need. He'll give you the strength you need.

A steam power locomotive, they're operated by water and they have coals underneath that water, that big vat of water and it heats that water up and as that fire gets hotter and hotter, it boils that

water and that steam pressure builds up and they direct that steam to the wheels and it pushes that locomotive down the tracks.

But if you had that vat full of water but no fire, it ain't going anywhere. If you have fire but an empty hole and no water in it, it ain't going anywhere. Folks, I encourage you, please, if you're not doing it already, develop a prayer line.

[ 49 : 05 ] Talk to God. If you're not reading your Bible, you've got to read that thing. You've got to read that book. And those two will wrap around that spirit, man, and it'll strengthen you.

You'll have that charity and you'll not be quickly broken because a threefold cord, Christian, is not quickly broken. Thank you.