

Your Driving Force

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[0 : 00] Amen. Your driving force. What is your driving force?! What is driving you?! People are driven by things, aren't they? They're motivated, they're driven to do, to make choices in life.

Consider two things. Consider how are you being influenced and impacted and how are you influencing and impacting others? We've all got an influence on us and an influence from us. How are you being influenced? Reality is we are being influenced all of the time we're being influenced. Whether we realise it or not, it almost happens by osmosis.

It happens just by being alive in this world, in this culture that we live. By the world in which we live, we're all being influenced. And we don't often even conceive that it's happening, but it is.

Think of the world's youth culture. And that's not to pick on the youth, but they're especially vulnerable and especially impacted.

[1 : 05] Especially, how would you say, they're led easily. More easily led than potentially us older people, but we're not immune from it either.

To think, for example, of today's youth culture. Often it is that they're obsessed by image, by style, by appearances, whatever the latest fad is.

I was kind of a bit taken lately as I was just happened to be going somewhere amongst a crowd of people. And it just really struck me how odd it was that a lot of people were walking around in jeans that looked a bit like mine.

Back home today, I was doing some gardening. And my jeans are so holy that my knees get all covered in mud. Because as I'm kneeling down, pulling out the sower sobs, and my jeans look really trendy.

They look really trendy because they've got holes in them. But it just struck me. I was walking around, you see all these people that have got deliberate holes in their jeans. And I'm not picking on anyone who might have deliberate holes in their jeans who's here tonight.

[2 : 15] But it's just something that seems to happen, doesn't it? It just becomes trendy and then everybody goes and buys these holy jeans.

And whatever it be, they're driven by popularity, by the social media, by what's hip and cool at the time, by friends, so-called. It could be that we're all influenced such as this.

But the youth culture especially seems so. And we see, for example, today's teens in the schoolyard. And they face, I put to you, in my opinion, as I see it, they face a lot more pressure than some of us grey-haired people might have faced in our schoolyard time.

Temptations perhaps from drugs or all kinds of danger. Even what they can look up on their phone at any moment. The media, the movies, the TV, the music. It's often all filled with these ugly acts of violence, of cursing, of immorality.

It's like the floodgates have been opened compared to just a few short years ago where such things weren't so commonplace. And then we see this generation that's being kind of destroyed, I put to you, by rock and rap music.

[3 : 29] Some of the lyrics of the rock and rap music. You know, sometimes Julie and I go to a place where they have a screen playing. They don't even have the music, but you know what's playing.

You know, you can imagine the words that are being sung just from the visuals that are bad enough. And you see the TV, the music, filled with this cursing, violence, immorality.

We see rock and rap music full of hatred and evil and sin. It's like it's glorified and it's just bombarding the senses. And yet these are the things through the MTV that often people just turn it on and it's just running in the background.

And it's constantly sending these messages, message after message. Make no mistake, you're being influenced. You are being influenced. We are being influenced. God's word urges us to be aware of these things.

Avoid temptations and evil influences. Avoid whatever pleases ourself where it's contrary to God's best for us. Even when other people may tempt us to sin that we might love and care about, we have to say, no, I'm not going there.

[4 : 46] I'm not doing that. Whatever it is that hinders our service to God, we must decide to stop it, to stop doing it for our own good and for the good of others watching us.

So how are you being influenced? Our Lord teaches us, he shows us how to pray. In Matthew 6.13, of course, that one that we commonly call the Lord's Prayer, for God to deliver us from evil. Deliver us from evil. Can we sincerely pray this prayer, yet knowingly do things that tempt or encourage us to do evil?

There's a certain responsibility we have. When we pray that prayer, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. We've got to say, I'm not going to be led that way. Whether it be peer pressure with others leading us to give in to temptation.

Others might have a tendency to do things unhealthy and unwholesome, ungodly. We count them our friends, but we don't have to follow them down that hellward path.

[5 : 58] Because we can end up, likewise, getting more and more trapped ourselves, and more and more chained, and driven along, pulled along by that magnetic power of following others who might be chained to that sin.

And we all need to consider this in the lives that we live, the choices we make, and who we mix with. Where we mix with people in that scene, it can lead to further sin.

And as much as we might feel we're strong, and we can go certain places, we can, you know, some might go to a hotel and go to witness to people, for example, some people can do that, and God can use them.

But for others, they're placing themselves in a place where they'll be drawn to things, and drawn in a direction that can be damnable.

And so, we all need to make these choices wisely, because we're all being influenced, you know, under the influence. They call that of alcohol, don't they? What influence are we under?

[7 : 02] What is the effect of sin? You know, sin will mess you up and harm you. It's playing with fire. In Proverbs 6, 27 and 28, it tells about a man taking fire to his bosom, and shall he not be burned?

I've got that one written down. Proverbs 6, 27. I'll just refer to that. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?

Some might think they can play with fire, but it'll burn them. It'll burn us. If you're really genuine, and you want to please God, instead of playing with fire, please God.

Make that your decision. Please God. Not play with fire. It's wrong to live just to please ourself or others. Sometimes it may not be so much pleasing ourselves as our mates, our peers, our friends, those we mix and work with and associate with, but there's a great danger there.

It's wrong for us to live just to please ourself or others. If we're doing things that could harm our life, if we are in sin, it's an influence that is dangerous for us.

[8 : 23] So we've looked at how are you being influenced. It's all around us. It's constant. And then look also at how are you influencing others.

We all have an influence, a circle of influence, people we mix with and touch the lives of. Your circle of influence, the people you have contact and reach to, is different from my circle of influence.

All of us, we all have different people that we can reach and have an impact on, sometimes without even realising it. And 1 Timothy 4 verse 12, we see Paul exhorting young Timothy.

1 Timothy 4 verse 12. And there we read how Paul exhorts Timothy, Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

He tells Timothy, Don't let people look down on you because you're young. And so this especially speaks to the younger people here tonight. Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou, be you, be you, an example of the believers.

[9 : 37] Be an example in word, in conversation or the way of life, in charity, in how you love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. It encompasses all those dimensions of life.

Paul tells Timothy, set a good example. Set a good example. I like to consider how really all of us are leaders.

You know, I was saying this morning how for the ministers of the church, it tells how we're to be above reproach. It's very high standard. But really we're all leaders.

We're all ministers. We're all servants of God. In every influence that we have, the lives of people that we can touch, we're all ministers. We're all serving God. And so we're all called to aspire to this.

Because whatever circumstance of life you're in, especially even as a younger Christian, as our brother testified here tonight, that as a Christian, once you say I'm a Christian, people will look to you, to look to your example, to look where are you going, what are you doing, to walk in your footsteps, to follow you.

[10:49] And whatever capacity we know the Lord, there's others younger than us. I know in Sunday school ministries, in children's work, in youth programs, we're looked up to, we that are older.

And there's always someone younger than us really, isn't there, that look up to us, in our families, in our homes, in our lives, in our workplaces. We're all setting, leading, we're all setting an example, good or bad.

Paul says set a good example. So what kind of example are you? What sort of influence are you setting? We know our Lord tells his disciples that a tree is known by the kind of fruit that it produces. Matthew 7 verse 20, the kind of fruit that comes out of a tree, or a life, helps us identify, what it is. What is our life producing? Does an apple tree produce pears?

It might if it's been grafted onto one, but ordinarily not. And so likewise, as a Christian, the fruit that we should be producing, is godly, good fruit.

[12:00] How are we influencing others? It's a big question. And it's really important we consider this. In Matthew 18, 6 through 7, the Lord says, woe to those people whose example leads other people to sin.

I haven't got this one written down, so I'll just find that one. Matthew 18, 6 through 7, it tells how someone can offend one of these little ones that believe in him.

It would be better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck and that he was drowned in the depth of the sea. That's pretty telling words, isn't it? Having a great big heavy millstone that they would grind the meal with, hung around your neck and then thrown into the sea, better for you than to offend one of these little ones that believe in me.

It's so important that we all consider the example we're setting for others. If we do or say something that can be a blockage, an obstacle, a stumbling block for someone to know the Lord, what a tragic thing that would be for us to be a hindrance to someone to hear the gospel and to know the Lord. Matthew 5, 13 through 16, again our Lord tells how our lives should be such that they lead others to give glory to God. And of course he says, let your works, Matthew 5, 13, he says of the context here, of the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world.

[13:40] He tells, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Our lives should be such that they are sending out this dazzling, glorious light that when we walk into a place of darkness and where people don't know the Lord, they're living in darkness, we should bring God's light and life and glory and glory to God through our lives, through the good works we do, through our testimony, through our actions.

Ephesians 5, 11, it tells us, Paul says, to not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them, stand against them, oppose them, reprove them, speak against them. Don't fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. It saddens me when I hear at times Christians dabbling with things that are not good, not wholesome.

It's amazing to me when I hear of professing Christians that are toying with things that seem the world would consider harmless and of no consequence.

There's nothing in it. Harry Potter is one example. What place is a Christian to go and watch Harry Potter or buy a Harry Potter book? The basic core message of it is essentially dabbling in the dark arts of witchcraft and leading people to believe in magical sayings and superstitions and following after such a world of the occult.

[15:22] As much as we know occult means hidden and it is hidden. Sometimes it's kind of veiled and not evident, not clear to the eye but as much as Harry Potter might seem something quite harmless, what is it that underlies that?

What is the underlying message? It's promoting the works of darkness and we stand against such things. We'll oppose such things. Someone has said leadership is influence.

We're all leaders, aren't we? We're all influencing. People in our lives. What example are you going to set? What influence do you have on others? Do you encourage others to do the right or the wrong?

Do you encourage people to enter sin or to stay in sin? What we do speaks more loudly than what we say as well.

We can say, oh, don't say words like that but use them ourselves with our children. It's a conflict, isn't it? We're not being real.

[16:29] What we do speaks more loudly than what we say. As a Christian, our ultimate call is to help the lost, to find the way, to guide sinners to the Saviour, to not do anything that would hinder another coming to salvation.

Again, it's really needful for us to check ourselves. sometimes we can be just as fleshly as our worldly colleague at work, can't we?

People, I mean, I'm speaking for myself. I can just think and act somewhat like them. I'm thinking and then, wow, it wasn't a good testimony for me to act like that, to do that.

Rather to think before we do such things, what am I saying and doing? Does it measure up? Does it stack up with my testimony? Is our example turning people off such that they won't listen?

If they think we're a hypocrite or a two-faced, we're not really fair dinkum, are we putting people off? And if we claim to be a Christian yet living in some sinful fashion, what kind of message is that sending?

[17:37] You can have your foot in both camps, you can be a fence straddler, you can sort of be half a Christian or a chameleon Christian, that just changes to see who you're mixing with at the time or are you fair dinkum, that whatever you are, whatever you're doing, you're straight as a die, you're genuine and you're the real you, whether it's in church or in the workplace or whatever it be.

Is our example hindering others from getting that message across to others, to the lost sinners that need to hear the message? And could we be a barrier to the salvation of the lost?

That's a real critical consideration I'll put to you. Ask the Lord to give you that wise judgment that as you commit in devotion to God, that you want to be in line with him, even if it might conflict with what others are saying, and even it might make you a bit of a target that you're being different, yet you're being genuine.

I know a brother was telling me how they saw something unethical in a business that they were involved with, and they spoke up and took the matter up with the higher authorities and exposed something that was unethical that was going on in the business.

And they had a tough time for that. They went through the ringer for that. And it came to be known that the likelihood is that they were the one who raised the alarm, who blew the whistle and stood against something that was ethically wrong in that business.

[19:08] And they paid the price for that. But they felt that their character and testimony was such that they wouldn't be party to that which was questionable.

And that's something that our Lord calls us to. It's going to hurt. It's going to take hardship. It's going to take some loss to make a stand sometimes.

But it's the right thing to do. So we ask the Lord to give us that wise judgment in all the decisions of life, to find that fulfillment in him who is our driving force, for that life with a capital L.

This is the influence we can have. Some turn to drugs or drink. Some have said a life of drugs is a life of despair, hopelessness, guilt, sorrow, and eventual death, physically and eternally.

Jesus is the real answer. His way is a way of life, hope, salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life. The Lord Jesus sets people free. He doesn't yoke us up in a chain of bondage.

[20:08] It's like, I've put it before, that religion, the root word of the English word religion, I think it's Latin, is bind. You know, religion means to bind.

Okay, sticks bound together. It's got that connotation. Bondage, religion, is a constricting, tying up constriction. And yet, Christ comes to set us free.

He breaks the bonds. He breaks the chains. He gives us ultimate and absolute liberty in Christ. As a Christian, we're totally set free. We're totally set free in Christ.

And as we trust him, he breaks those chains of guilt, of bondage, of sin, and he changes lives. And he helps us to get victory. In 1 Corinthians 10, 13, we read that scripture that tells us how that God

will open ways that we can overcome temptation.

I've just got to turn there to refresh myself. 1 Corinthians 10, 13, they have no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted.

[21 : 18] Above that, ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. That's 1 Corinthians 10, 13. So the Lord promises a way for us to handle temptations, so that when the rubber hits the road, in the real world of life, that we can overcome all the problems of life, that the Lord will give us the victory.

And we need not escape reality by means of drugs or drink or whatever it be, some other substitute. We can have true victory in Christ, that he will help us overcome. In Philippians 4, 13, Paul says, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

I can do all things through Christ. He strengthens me. 2 Timothy 2, 22, Paul tells Timothy again to flee also youthful lust, but follow after righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Flee those youthful lusts, those things that drag us back into the world's way of thinking and acting, but follow after this, chase after this, righteousness, faith, charity, peace.

Some would fall prey to those lusts of the desires, craving, longing, the desires for what is forbidden. But the Lord wants us to run after righteousness, his way of living.

[22 : 43] Consider through the scriptures many examples we could cite that show us the example we can set, the influence we can have, the driving force, that how not only are we being influenced, but how we are influencing others.

We think, for example, of some of the Bible greats. Daniel. Daniel. He was a man, he was chosen for the palace of the king. His life was under royal command. The king told him what to wear, what to read, even what he would be called.

The king changed Daniel's name to some pagan, heathen god's name. And Daniel would get to eat and drink from the king's very own table.

Daniel and his friends were young. And far from home. But they remained true to their convictions. They remained true. True as true blue.

True blue were Israelites, not true blue Aussies. But they were Daniel and his men and his friends. They remained true to their convictions. And it was a big risk that Daniel was committed to being true and honouring the Lord.

[23 : 49] In this pagan culture, as they were taken to this virtually a pagan university, as they were brought up as future leaders of Babylon, they were schooled in the Babylonian philosophy and way of thinking.

And it would have been easy for them to give in, just go with the flow, just go with it. But Daniel chose to trust the Lord and make a stand for purity and holiness.

And God blessed his obedience. And the Lord gave these young men, we read in Daniel, knowledge and understanding. They didn't get it from the magicians and the lecturers of the Babylonian schooling that they went through, but they got their knowledge and understanding from the Lord.

And it says that they had ten times more the ability than all the magicians and enchanters in the whole kingdom of the pagan land. God's power can help us as we resist temptation that the world and the devil throws our way.

We can be strong as Daniel and his friends. Another example is Mary. Mary, she was just an ordinary teenager who obeyed God's word. Some reckon she was probably some 13 years old, living in the little town of Nazareth when Gabriel the archangel appeared to her and said, in effect, greetings, you who are highly favoured.

[25 : 10] The Lord is with you. And the angel told her, do not be afraid. You have found favour with God. Favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son and you'll give him the name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the son of the most high. This is Luke 1. I haven't got the actual direct quote here.

Luke 1. From verse 26 to 38. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And she said, how can this be? I'm a virgin. And the angel said, the Holy Spirit will come upon you. The power of the most high will overshadow you such that the one born will be called the son of God.

For nothing is impossible with God. Nothing. With God nothing shall be impossible. So here was this young lady, just a teenager.

[26 : 12] She was just a young lady, poor, yet God had chosen her. And notice how she was obedient and full of faith. She said, I am the Lord's servant.

Let me just get that scripture here. behold the handmaid of the Lord.

Be unto me according to thy word. I'm the handmaid of the Lord. I'm the servant of the Lord is what she was saying. And she was saying, may it be to me according to thy word.

She trusted God. She was willing to serve as the Lord's servant, willing to trust God for something that was inconceivable that was about to happen because she trusted what God had put in her heart, what God had told her would happen.

Influence. Joseph is another example as well. And then Samuel is another one. Samuel, he was only about 12. God spoke to him and it was night time and Samuel was trying to get to sleep and God spoke to him.

[27 : 21] Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Three times before Samuel finally recognised God's voice. Sometimes we need to hear him three times before we take action.

But Samuel did take action and he recognised God's voice. And we see these examples, Bible examples. And I like to think really if we were to translate our tells back in time, if we could time travel, go down through the time tunnel, back into the, as it were, back into Bible days, that would be ordinary people just like you and me.

That God came to Daniel, he came to Mary, he came to Joseph, he came to Samuel. Who do you follow is a question to consider. Psalm 1 verse 1, that lovely psalm, blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor walketh, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Who do you follow? The company that we keep has a big impact. Look out for that kind of company that we keep. The people we tend to spend more time with, the people we tend to hang around with, because things rub off on you, don't they?

It's like, you know, I used to speak the king's English, and I've been hanging around Aussies so much that I start to sound a bit more like an Aussie. I was still learning the lingo, but, you know, I used to be a jolly good English man, but now my language has been corrupted such that, oh, no, it's been blessed such that I can speak more like an Aussie.

[28 : 56] But, you know, when you hang around people, you start to talk like them, isn't it? You start to act like them. It amazes me when you sometimes hear, like, a New Zealander talk on the radio, and you think, it's like every vowel, it's just doesn't, it's a clash there, and you think, how can they talk like that?

But if you're living over in New Zealand, sure enough, give it time, and you'll start to talk like them. Now, the Bible says, be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners.

1 Corinthians 15, 33, evil communications. So, in other words, that company of those who are evil, the company of the godless, if you start to hang around them, you know, they're the people you spend your time with, they're the people you go out with and do this and that with, those evil communications can corrupt the good manners.

It doesn't mean that we have to be standoffish, holier than thou, and not have anything to do with those who don't know the Lord, but we want our influence to be such that we're actually making an impact on them, not vice versa.

So, we consider the friendships that we make in our life. The wrong kind of friends can get you into all kinds of trouble. We know that. You know, I see that in loved ones, people that I know, the people that they hang around with, they start to go that direction, don't they?

[30 : 13] And before you know it, it just can happen that if our friends lead us into breaking the law, doing harm to others, they're not good friends. You're driving influence.

What is it? Good friends are those who care for you, don't lead you into the wrong way of doing things. They'll respect you and your beliefs. So, choose your friends carefully, young people especially.

You know, I know someone was telling me, we're talking lately with someone, and they had a sister here, they're talking about a friend that she's had since she was four years old. She's still in contact with them, you know, through her whole lifetime, in the decades of time, that some of the people you make friends with as a youngster could be with you right through your life.

What influence will they have? Will they respect your stand for Christ, or will they try to influence you in a bad way? Search for friends who respect the morals that you stand for, that you stand for, the faith that you profess in Christ.

And watch out for the pressure of friends who can have an adverse effect, a wrong effect. Be careful about following the crowd. Now, the Bible talks about following the crowd to do evil, following the multitude to do evil.

[31 : 31] And so, good character can be corrupted by that influence. So don't hang around those people. Sometimes you've got to, sometimes it's actually better to be forthright with your faith and say, I'm a Christian now.

I'm a Christian now. I'm a different person now. Not in a way that puts them off, but in a way that, hey, challenges them. Yeah, I can see. You're different. Something's changed in you. You're not the same. You don't talk the same. You don't do the same things that were questionable. Now you're trying to make an effort to do what's right and godly and good.

They may not see that, but they may not, they may, they may reject you for standing for Christ. As we know, our Lord says, they will reject you.

But rather choose friends with good character, because good character is more important than great riches. We see that in Proverbs 22, verse 1. Excuse me, again, I should have written down the whole verse here, but in effect it says that good character is more important than great riches.

[32 : 38] Proverbs 22, excuse me, verse 1. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

A good name, a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. You know, when they say, oh, Andrew Craig, do they say, oh, Andrew Craig, or, oh, Andrew Craig, yeah.

Hopefully they'll say in a good way. And your name too, that's a good name, it's a good name. I know there's some people who hate my guts, but, I like to think that I've got a good name, despite those that oppose me and hate me, without a cause, I put to you, but, I love them still.

What is the driving force? That's the question, isn't it? What is driving us? Everyone is driven in some way. What should drive us?

God's people are driven by love. Driven by love. A love for God and a love for people. The love for God, this is the primary fuel that drives everything else.

[33 : 49] How are we to love God? God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength. It involves all of me, my heart, soul, mind, strength.

And service is the natural overflow of this. You know, someone had a need, I mentioned it this morning, that someone's got a lounge suite to give away and wanted me to announce it in the morning service.

And I said, look, we've got a lounge suite to give away to a good home, a three-seater lounge suite. And does anyone know someone that might need that lounge suite? And then afterwards I was contacted, look, there's a lady here, she's got nothing in her home, she's just got, you know, next to nothing.

No furniture, nothing. And so what a blessing that we could be the one who passes on that lounge suite, which you'll really love. Mind you, I said, look, if you really need someone, I've got a ute.

I shouldn't have said I've got a ute because that means I've dubbed myself in to help deliver it. But, you know, we should have love, shouldn't we? Such that we want to be that messenger. We want to do some practical things to help people.

[35 : 00] So show God's love in practical ways and we should love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength. It's that fuel that drives everything else. And we see the love for people.

When we see people around us, do we just discount people? Do we just see people as just another human being that's walking around? Or do we see them as an ever-living soul that will spend eternity somewhere?

Do we see their hurt, their hunger? Are we concerned about their need? Compelled to help.

Compelled to help. But the best way we can help anyone is to tell them of the Saviour, isn't it?

The best way we can help anybody because it's an eternal thing. This is an eternal dimension. As much as we can help people in practical terms, how much more to see them, trust Christ, to be maybe one day our eternal neighbour in heaven.

Wouldn't that be great? So you live next door to someone, as it were, in the mansions of glory that they'll be just down the road from you. And you think, wow, I helped them. Well, the Lord got them there, but I was the one who helped them hear the message.

[36 : 11] I was the one who introduced them to the Saviour so they could find him. And what a blessing. The love for people should be another driving force for us.

And of course, the Holy Spirit should drive us too. In Mark 1, verse 12, we see that our Lord was driven by the Spirit. Mark 1, verse 12.

Mark 1, verse 12. Immediately, the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. The Holy Spirit drove the Lord Jesus Christ into the wilderness.

We should be driven by the Spirit. Some people like to think we should be the purpose-driven church. I like to think we should be the Spirit-driven church.

We should be the Word-driven church. Not some purpose that's man-made or man-engineered, but we should be driven by the Spirit of God. That what the Holy Spirit tells us in His Word, through His prompting, we do.

[37 : 12] We're driven by the Spirit just like Christ was. By prayer, by the Word of God, by obedience to God, to be a man with a mission like John the Baptist was. He was a man with a mission, wasn't he?

I'll just flick there, John. The Gospel of John tells us about John the Baptist. Excuse me.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. John was sent from God. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for witness to bear witness of the light that all men through Him might believe.

A man sent from God. That's all we are, isn't it? Every one of us. You're a man, a woman, sent from God. God has sent you. He's given you a commission. He's given you a message. He's given you a mission.

And friends, we should be driven just like John. A man sent from God. Just to close, it's about choices really. It boils down to choices. You must choose the driving force for your life.

[38 : 28] Of course, we know God overrules and prevails, but it boils down to that human response to His prompting and wooing and driving, His drawing.

We must choose that driving force for our life. And sometimes we can make choices about driving forces that will drive us in the opposite direction from what God wants us to do.

The choices we make in life will affect us and others. So it's not just us, it's others. It's that circle of influence thing that as we're affected and impacted and influenced, there's an outflow.

There's a result. It's like the old computer saying garbage in, garbage out. We watch loads of television filled with evil. It will influence us. How we think, how we act.

It's garbage in, garbage out, isn't it? That's what can happen. Rather, try to spend time with truth, with God's word. Spend time building up your spirit, your spiritual life.

[39 : 33] Choose things to read and watch that are positive for you. And there's so many Christian books these days, it's amazing. Some are not so good, we know. But try to feed your soul with that which is going to nourish you, help you to grow.

Choose wisely. There's a certain discernment with such things. Probably avoid the ten bestsellers at Courant. Avoid the ten bestsellers because they're probably the worst ones to read.

But choose the things that are good, godly, sound, Bible teaching. Now sometimes it's not always the case but sometimes the older books are the better books because they're more grounded, they're more scriptural, they're more based on the word of God rather than some stories about all kinds of goings on in the supernatural that might be extra biblical.

In other words, not in here, sort of, some people's fanciful interpretations and stories. But rather feed your soul on that which is truth. Ground your soul on that.

And of course as a church there's a couple of books we've been promoting that are really good, solid, strong Bible study books. And so if you're interested, just come and see me. I'm not sure. Is there any left out, do you know, offhand?

[40 : 49] Maybe, maybe not. The answers book might be one left. Oh, okay. If not, we can always get more stocks. But there's a good, thick Bible study book which is very good value, which is a good, sound study resource.

Just one example of that. So let's learn from the examples of God's people through history, through the Bible pages, the examples of godly people that we can know.

There's godly people that you know in your life that have influenced you. Amen? Might be mothers and fathers, it might be brothers and sisters, might be friends and family that have influenced you to walk with God.

Think of the blessed influence they've had on you and how you can likewise be a blessing to others such that in this short span of earthly time that we have, you know, the godly ministry of the Sunday school, the children's programs, the youth group, the godly influence that we all can have in many ways through people watching and following us.

And make friends with others who sincerely follow the Lord. Make steps to encourage yourself, get around other godly men and women who can help strengthen you.

[42 : 04] Find people who hold God's standards for life, make them your friends, make that your company, the people you spend time with, the people you associate and socialise with. Choose to set a good example for yourself, for others to follow.

Choose to do what is right and true and honours the Lord. And if your peer group takes a wrong turn, remain strong. You don't have to go that way. And don't follow a multitude to do evil, as one of the proverbs.

In other words, don't go with the crowd. Don't follow the crowd. It's a bit like, you see, as some people picture it, a school of fish going all this way. We're like this little one here going the other way.

That can be what it's like sometimes, isn't it? It's like, follow the crowd, go with the flow. Sometimes we've got to swim upstream and be that little fish or two that's going in God's direction.

And I like it, how someone had put it, how there's a narrow way and a broad way. And some have pictured it where the broad way goes off like this and the narrow way goes off like that.

[43 : 09] But I've heard it said sometimes, maybe the broad way goes like that, but the narrow way is in the same, it's parallel to it, but we're going in the opposite direction.

They're going in the opposite direction, down the broad way, which leads to destruction, but we're going on the narrow way, which is almost parallel to it because we've done a U-turn and we're going God's way, which is opposite to the culture and the majority of the world that we live.

So whatever the case, let's be strong and true and steadfast. Let's choose to be different. Make that resolution. I like, there's a preacher of old, Jonathan Edwards, and he says, I am resolved, I am resolved, I am resolved.

It's quite interesting. I haven't read all of them and I'm not sure whether they're all such that I'd entirely agree with all of those resolutions, but I'm sure the majority of them would be good and godly resolutions to resolve.

I am resolved to follow the Lord. And you might want to look that up. I haven't, sort of checked that out in detail. There might be some, I'm not sure, but just the point that he says, I am resolved.

[44 : 15] And I thought that's a good thing that he made that resolution. I'm going to be steadfast, I'm going to go in this direction, I'm going to be a driving force for God. So what is your driving force?

Consider that question. How are you being influenced? We all are. It's constant. We're constantly getting anti-God messages thrust at us. We're being influenced.

But we can choose to go with the flow or be like the little fish going in the other way. Let's be a Daniel. Let's be a Mary. Let's be a Samuel.

Who do you follow? And what is the driving force? Is it love for God? Do you truly love him? If we truly, if we absolutely love him, then the choice is clear, isn't it?

The choice is clear. We can't dabble. We've got to be full on. We've got to be radical. Radical for God. Be encouraged tonight. It's choices that we make.

[45 : 15] It's choosing the right and it's going with God, even if we're in the minority. Thank you.