

It is God Working In You

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. This is the next message in our series in the book of 2 Corinthians.

Okay, take your Bible if you would and open it to 2 Corinthians chapter 1. 2 Corinthians chapter 1. I am excited about what the Word of God has to say. I have fully enjoyed already my study.

I hope that you enjoy the book of 2 Corinthians as much as I'm already enjoying it. Tonight, I want to, we'll take up where we left off this morning, but the idea in the scripture is that God is working in you.

God is working in you. It's Him that's doing a job in us. He's using whatever problems we have. He's using whatever issues we have. And He's bringing us to a point that He can do great things.

And if we get that far, He'll sure make that clear tonight. Look, if you would, we'll start in verse 12 and go ahead and read to the last, the end of the book, if you would, end of the book, end of the chapter. We won't get the book. End of the chapter. Start verse 12.

[1 : 0 3] For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly to you.

For we write none other things unto you than what you read or acknowledge, and I trust you shall acknowledge even to the end, as also you have acknowledged us in part that we are your rejoicing, even as you also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And in this confidence, I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a second benefit, and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.

When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness or the things that I purpose? Do I purpose according to the flesh that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, it was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

[2 : 1 8] For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, amen, under the glory of God by us. Now he which established us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God, who also hath sealed us and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I come not as yet unto Corinth, not as for that we had dominion over your faith, but as helpers of your joy, for by faith you stand.

Father God, I pray now that you would work in our hearts. I pray that you would draw us closer to you. I pray that you would encourage us and strengthen us. I pray you'd help us to realize that you are at work in us, and you have a great will and a great purpose and a great plan for our lives.

We are not accidents. We're not coincidences. We are your children, and you are deeply concerned and working in our lives. Help your people to see that tonight, and I'll give you praise and honor and glory for what you do.

In Jesus' precious name, amen. Well, the first thing I want you to write down, and you got it this morning, I would write this down, we can be discouraged. Would you write that down? We can be discouraged.

[3 : 27] And look at verse 8, and we'll read verse 8 again from this morning. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, in so much that we despaired even of life.

I think that there are times that Christians kind of get the idea that we never are supposed to get discouraged. We're never supposed to get depressed. We're never supposed to have sad, rough times in our life.

And we kind of think like, if you're feeling discouraged, or things aren't going your way, and you're depressed a little bit, maybe you're not spiritual. Did you read the verse that the Apostle Paul wrote under inspiration of the Holy Spirit?

He said, I don't want you to be ignorant about all the trouble I've been through. Can I just tell you, I've had more on me than I was able to bear. It has been beyond me, and I got to the point that I despaired of life.

This is not, this doesn't validate it for real, but Charles Spurgeon had great bouts with depression, and had talked about that a lot. Many other preachers had great bouts of depression.

[4 : 34] Men of God that are famous, and everybody hears about and knows about today. So, I want you to know, we can be discouraged. You may think you're the only one that ever gets discouraged.

You may think you're the only one that ever has everything going wrong, and you get discouraged. But you are not alone. Paul had trouble, and he had more that he was able to take. And having trouble is not necessarily your fault, but how you deal with it is.

Now, just let me stop and say this. There are problems that are my fault. You know, when you get a ticket for speeding, you really can't blame that on anybody but yourself. Could you say amen right there?

I'm driving down the road. You ever done this? No one in this room has ever done this. I've been known to be driving down the road, breaking the speed limit, and look back, and I see a cop. I just passed him. And then I pray. You wouldn't be laughing if you weren't guilty.

And I say, God, you know, I'm not doing much wrong. And please, if it's any way possible, that he wouldn't stop me.

[5 : 37] And here he comes. And God doesn't answer that prayer. And then I say, God, would there be any way you could have mercy? Some people, every time a cop talks to them, they don't get in trouble. By the way, can I just tell you, it's been many years since I had a ticket.

Ha! So you were sitting there thinking, I just got a ticket. I didn't. But anyway, the guy comes up to the door, and you're praying. Then he says to you, do you know how fast you were going? You know what you say, don't you? No, sure.

I'm not sure. It could have been 100, could have been 105. I'm not exactly sure. I just know it was fast. And we pray about it. And then we get in trouble, because now we owe a \$500 bill we didn't know before.

Now it's going to mess a whole bunch of stuff up. Can I just say, sometimes problems are brought on you by yourself. Come on. How about this one? Sometimes we buy a car we can't afford, we buy a house we can't afford, we spend our credit cards at the point we can't afford, and then later on, we want God to get us out of it.

Well, well, we better hurry up and get to the desserts. Did any of you, back in the old days, when you risked to get a lot of candy for Halloween, oh no, you don't do that.

[6 : 42] Back in the old days, when I was a kid, you know, we go out there and do all that wicked stuff, and they give us candy. And then a kid come home and get a belly ache, like to kill him. And you know what my mom would say, when I started eating candy, she'd say, don't eat too much of that.

You'll get sick. You know what I did? I ate too much of it, and then I asked her why I got sick. Here's what Paul said. You can be discouraged, and I've been discouraged. And he's going to make it real clear, it wasn't of his own doing.

Second thing, suffering teaches us, or taught Paul not to trust himself. Look at verse 9. You know that sometimes God allows suffering, so you'll let go. Sometimes God allows suffering, so you'll give up.

Sometimes God allows things to go wrong, so you'll trust him, so you'll look to him. Look at verse 9. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.

I really wish you'd underline in that verse, we should not trust in ourselves. And that really kind of goes against the grain. I grew up with heroes like John Wayne.

[7 : 48] I grew up with heroes like the rifleman. I grew up with heroes like men who could take a licking and keep on ticking. I grew up with guys that were tough. I grew up with a dad that could do anything.

I grew up thinking that you've got to grow up being able to do everything. And I grew up thinking, I've got to work on being as smart as I can. And sometimes we're too smart for our own good, and we're too strong for our own good, and we're too tough for our own good.

And sometimes God doesn't work in our lives because we never let go and let God do anything in our lives. We are in control. Most of us, most of us, fact is, can I just say this?

Many lay people and preachers really don't like the idea of faith, not real faith. They like saving faith. But when it comes to any other kind of faith, they're real scared because faith would mean you'd have to let go of something.

Faith would mean you'd have to let it go. And we're control freaks. How many control freaks are in this room that would confess that sin publicly, say amen?

[8 : 47] Two or three love you. The rest of you lied. You know, we control our children. We control our environment. We control everything else we can. And here's what Paul said. He said, I was pressed beyond measure.

It got to where I didn't even know if I could live or not. But I'll tell you what happened. When I got so bad off, I learned. I learned. I can't trust me.

I can't do it. I don't know how much you know, but you know, when I, I've never been sick in my life, really. I mean, I had a little issue of my eye here recently.

I always go on. I have preached with fevers. I just don't ever really get sick. I never did really get sick. The day I found out I had cancer, the day I found out I had cancer, I mean, I went into the bathroom and I urinated and blood came out and I thought that ain't nice.

That and that ain't normal and something might not be quite right here. But I went to, you know, I went home. I went to my brother's house and my niece was there and my niece said, well, she's a gardener. Everybody knows gardeners are tougher than other people.

[9 : 50] Everybody knows you'll get well quicker than everybody else. Everybody knows your recovery will be a lot faster, whatever the doctor tells you. You know, it's kind of like that pump it up. You know, come on, just be honest.

I trust me. You trust you. And you know, when we got out, when they brought me home from the hospital and they, did they roll me out in a wheelchair?

Cause I don't even remember. They rolled me to the door in a wheelchair. See, I don't even remember. I said drunk, I never knew what was going on. And they got me out there and then Mark and Robert helped me get in the van. And I told Mark, I said, do not put me in that van if it ain't got good air conditioning.

I hate being hot. And that van does not have good air conditioning. He said, it's got good air conditioning. It did not have good air conditioning. And then on the way home, I said, don't jerk. He said, the roads are smooth here.

They're not as smooth after you've had surgery as they are before you had surgery. And then I got home and I was certain that I'd be able to go to the bathroom and I'd be able to take care of my needs. You know, I mean, I'm a gardener, right?

[10 : 45] And before, for a solid week, they lifted me out of bed. And I figured out one thing. I mean, I would lay there. I would lay there wanting to go to the bathroom. It was about I was dying and saying, I am not going to ask.

I am not going to ask. Okay, come on. Get me. I got to go. You know? See, here's what Paul said. I've been so bad off. I finally figured it out. I can't trust me.

And sometimes, sooner or later in your life, you're going to get a big enough problem. You're going to say, God, this is beyond me. I was able to fix that. I was able to control that. I was able to handle that. I was able to deal with that.

But this issue is above me. But that's a lesson God wants you to learn right now. Right where you are with whatever it is that you can't trust you. You can only trust him. Would you agree with that?

If you would say amen. That's a lesson I ought to learn. But it's hard to learn because I can't take my hands off my stuff. Paul probably felt like he would surely die in the service of the king. So the suffering was expected.

[11 : 42] But he knew he couldn't trust himself. He was a man and he would make mistakes. He knew he had to only trust in Jesus. This verse, 2 Corinthians 12, verse 9.

I hope you'll write it down and we'll get to it and preach on it in a while. But look at what 2 Corinthians 12. Look at what it says, verse 9. And he said unto me, Paul is going to ask the Lord three times to relieve him of this affliction he has.

Something's wrong with Paul. Nobody knows for sure what it is. Something's wrong with Paul. It's a thorn in the flesh, he calls it. And he goes to God and he says, God, please help me. He needed to call Benny, but Benny didn't come.

He needed to call somebody that could do something to take that problem away, but it didn't happen. And the Lord spoke to him and said to Paul, my grace is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect in weakness.

My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. You know what Paul was saying in 2 Corinthians 12, verse 9?

[12 : 44] God said, I don't show my power unless you're weak. I don't show my power unless you're weak. Do you know why some people can't get saved? Some of your friends won't accept Christ because they are just too good.

They are good to their neighbors. They're good to people. They're good moral people. They're really good, outstanding, outstanding, I mean really hardworking, good moral people. They've never done anything wrong.

But God's power is made perfect in what? Weakness. And we don't like that. We might say another country is weak. We might say another people group is weak.

But we aren't weak. Learned a long time ago. You know, preaching, if you preach and you ever tell women they're the weaker vessel, you better hope they've been in church while so they don't get mad.

Because women will even say to you, don't believe that. We're not weaker. We don't like being weak. When's God's power perfect in our weakness? When do I need God?

[13 : 41] When he lets things happen to me so I realize how much I need him. And Paul said, and then I will gladly glory in my infirmities. Go with me to verse 10 if you would.

2 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 10. Who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver. And whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. Ye also helping together by prayer for us that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons.

Thanks may be given by many on our behalf. I won't stay there long because I did tell you this morning. But that has got to be. Go back if you would to verse 10. Look at verse 10. That has got to be one of the most exciting verses.

And a verse you need to remember. Follow the flow of the scriptures. God starts off through Paul saying he's the father of mercies. He's the God of all comfort.

Paul goes on to say I've been in a lot of trouble and things have been going wrong. I've been pressed out of measure. I got to the point I didn't even wonder. I wondered if I would even live. I didn't know if I could make it through. I mean this time I really didn't know if I could make it.

[14 : 41] And then I figured out I can't trust me. And then he says this right here. He said but I know this. God has helped me in the past.

God is a helping God. And God will help me in the future. You should write that down. You should underline it in the verse. Look at the verse. Make sure you see that. Verse 10. Who delivered us from so late a death?

I deserve to go to hell. How many of you were on your way to hell? Realized you were a sinner. Realized you couldn't save yourself. Realized there was nothing good in you. Realized you were too weak. But you trusted a great, strong, powerful, perfect God.

And he saved you. Say amen. He delivered you from a great death. Not only that. If we go back and look at other things. Paul had been through all kinds of stuff. And God had gotten him out of it. Go back through your life.

Go back to that car wreck when you should have died. Go back to that financial issue that was about to put you under. Go back to that time when your life was in a chaos. And you had no idea what would work out. And somehow God worked it out.

[15 : 40] And you know he did. Fact is if people sat around with you very long. And talked to you very long. And asked you about anything great God's done. You'll bring that story up. Because you remember how great God was. How many of you could tell me a story like that.

If I gave you a chance. How many of you know a story where God showed himself powerful in your life. Raise your hand. Let me see it. Yeah you do. You know why you do. Not because you're so good. But because he is so good. And he is so powerful.

And so here's what Paul says. Boy he delivered us. But I love this part. And doth deliver. That means and he does deliver. That means and he's still in the delivering business.

That means he's still in the delivering business. Paul said I know what he did. And I know he still does. But the big thing you're going to get out of the verse is this.

Paul said you know I know what it's like to be in trouble. He's writing this verse. He's in problems. And he writes this passage. The Corinthians actually think he's suffering because of things he's done wrong. They think the reason he's been going to jail.

[16 : 37] Getting beaten and everything else is going on. Is because he isn't the man of God he ought to be. And now he writes this letter. And he says hey guys. God got me out of it in the past. God gets me out of it now. And God will get me out of this.

God is at work. One thing I can tell you. From the years I've been saved. I've been saved 50 years. I can tell you something about the 50 years. God has done great things in my life. And I'm telling you that a lot of times when I got in the middle of a mess.

I remember the day we lost the land. The Bible college land in Peru. And all the Peruvian guys. We were all. Everybody was crying and upset. Because we lost us 30 something acres of land. It was on a hillside.

It was ugly. You couldn't hardly get to it. The roads weren't built into it. They still aren't built into it well. And it was like it was over. Now any of us that know we're in Peru back then.

And know about the Bible college. We were like. That was the end of it that day. It wasn't but a few years later. One day God gave us. God gave us 10 acres of land.

[17 : 34] 5 acres of land. Whatever it is. 2 hectares. 5 acres of land. He gave us 5 acres of land. Flat. Closer. Closer to town. All the things going on. And God poured out.

And God up in heaven was saying. Hey I delivered you in the past. I'm delivering. I'm still a deliverer. And I will deliver. I saw God do great and mighty things. You've seen God do great and mighty things.

You are pressed beyond measure. You're hurting. But you have a great God. Who sees and knows your need. Look if you would at verse 11. In verse 11 Paul said. You help together. You help together by prayer for us.

You help together. Would you underline that? You help together by prayer for us. That the gift bestowed upon us. By the means of many persons. Thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

Would you underline this? You help together by prayer. When I stand to preach. If you pray for me. You're helping me. You're right here with me. When our missionaries are standing somewhere around the world.

[18 : 31] And they stand up to preach. And you pray. You help. This morning when brother Hugh left the service. And all I knew was something was wrong. And he didn't feel right. And our class stopped. And we had a word for prayer. Or a word of prayer for him.

Paul said. You help together. You're senders. Do you understand what Paul was saying? Paul was saying. Man I've had it rough. I've been through all kinds of battles. I've been through issues. Things have gone wrong in my life.

My life's been a mess. But God delivers. And you help. You say. I didn't help. I wasn't there. God said. You help. You help together by prayer. Your prayer.

You're getting a hold of God. Do you pray for each other? Do you pray for each other? There are people in our church that are going through issues. Do you pray for each other? There are people in our church that would love to have a baby.

Can't have a baby. Are you helping them? There are people in our church that are having financial problems. Are you helping them? There are people in our church that are going through all kinds of problems. Are you helping each other? You help together by prayer.

[19 : 26] You say. Well prayer doesn't do much. Well God thought something different about it. He wrote something different in the Bible. Can you say amen? You help together by prayer. You realize if you look at the wall back there, not all the pictures are even up there yet.

All the mysteries God's given us. And then about 25 others that we support. You realize you help them. And it's not just about giving money for them. Giving money is one help, but another help is getting involved in them through prayer.

And prayer helping them. Paul said, you help us. Go with me to verse 12. They got some issues with Brother Paul. They think that Brother Paul kind of didn't tell them the truth about coming to visit them.

He had told them at the end of 1 Corinthians that he was going to come by and visit and spend the wintertime with them. And some of them were kind of upset about that apparently. And Paul was having other kinds of problems. And some of them thought Paul, when he said something, didn't mean it.

And sometimes he flippantly used the idea of God's will when he would talk. That's what it's going to. That's what it's headed towards over in verses 17. He said, when I spoke, did I use lightness?

[20 : 32] Do you think I was just lightly saying I was going to come by and see you? Do you think I was just lightly saying these things? Do you think I make plans according to the flesh? Do you think I say yes when I mean no? That's not what happens, Paul said.

It's for real. And this is what Paul writes down. And I hope you get this. Look at the testimony of Paul's conscience in verse 12. And underline that if you would. Verse 12, underline the testimony of our conscience.

Read verse 12 with me if you would. For our rejoicing is this. The testimony of our conscience. That in simplicity and godly sincerity. Not with fleshly wisdom.

But by the grace of God. We have had our conversation or our manner of living. The way we live in the world. And more abundantly to you. Paul said, I have a good conscience.

My conscience bears witness with me. That I have done and am doing what is right. My conscience bears witness.

[21 : 31] Paul's conscience approves his actions. I'd like to talk to you just a second about your conscience. I'd like to talk to you about a Bible conscience. Do you have your Bibles open? Do you have a piece of paper? Maybe you can look some of this up later.

And study it out just a little bit. In Romans chapter 2 and verse 15. Your conscience is that inner faculty. That knows and approves or disapproves of what you're doing. In Romans 2:15 the Bible says.

Which show the work of the law written in their hearts. Their conscience also bearing witness. And their thoughts. So meanwhile accusing or else excusing them. Look at the word conscience.

Their conscience. Did you know that God inside of you has written his rules. His law. What's right and what's wrong. What's good and what's bad. And something inside of us knows that.

By the way wherever you go around the world. They know that. God put it in their heart to know. Even people who are sinning and doing wicked things. They know God put it in their heart. I remember when I first went to China.

[22 : 29] Like in 1999. And none of our young men that are there now. Were even thought of. And I was praying about how we would reach China. And how God would do something to send somebody. Out of our ministry to go to China. And do something over in China.

And I visited. And while we were in China. I sat down with a sheet of paper. And I tried to think of. How would you reach the Chinese. So I thought maybe we ought to use creation. And show them there's a God through the book of creation.

Let's start in Genesis. Come all the way through the Bible. Show them that way. I thought about maybe we ought to show them. The faultiness of humanism. And show them how great God was. And we talked about how the word of God would work.

And then Jake Talby arrived over there. You know what Jake Talby found out? He said I was going to try all the things you said try. But I walked up the guy. And I said you're a sinner. You have sinned against the holy God. And the guy said yeah I know.

Didn't believe in God. Didn't know about the Bible. But in his heart he knew. He'd done wrong. God tells us we need him. God has written that in our hearts.

[23 : 28] Our conscience is not the law of God. But a witness to the law. You can hinder the effectiveness of your conscience. Boy I hope you'll listen to me. 1 Timothy 4.2 You can hinder the effectiveness of your conscience.

Speaking lies and hypocrisy. Having their conscience seared with a hot iron. Your conscience can get so tough. That it doesn't feel moved.

We live there much more than they used to live there in the old days. You know. You think about what it would take a lady to make a lady blush today. Or what it would make a man blush today.

And compare that to people living in the 1850s. And it's probably a very different thing. We watch too much of it on TV. We hear too much of it in jokes. We read too much about it in magazines. You can sear your conscience.

You can continue to do wrong until your conscience doesn't bother you. Can I just add for you. Man the internet has become a place that helps you have a conscience that's hard and seared and burned.

[24 : 33] All of a sudden looking at porn and looking at sex. And looking at women. And looking at things going on on the television. It's so easy to get to it on the internet. It's so easy to get to.

It begins to harden us. And defile or sear our conscience. Look at what it says in Titus 115. Titus 115.

Unto the pure all things are pure. But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. Even their mind and conscience is defiled. Paul looks at them and says, I'm going to tell you Corinthians.

I did not use likeness when I talked to you. And I wasn't fooled when I said I wanted to come last summer. I did say, or last winter. I did say if the Lord wills. And I did say it's what I wanted to do. And I wasn't sure that was going to happen.

And y'all can be mad at me if you want. But my conscience is okay. And as a Christian we ought to keep a clear conscience. I'm going to show you a couple of verses about that before we get back into the flow of the passage.

[25 : 33] But we have to be careful to keep our conscience sensitive. And to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. It becomes easy to go to church and hear so much preaching. And to hear so much Bible that you just let it fall on dull, deaf, dead ears.

That don't pay attention to what God's saying. It's so easy to have your emotions hardened and your heart hardened. And to be tough against the things of God.

To be tough against the things of God. In Acts 24. Acts 24, 16. Paul said, herein do I exercise myself. He said, I work at it. I exercise myself to have a conscience.

Always a conscience void of offense. Toward God and toward men. So I'm going to leave the conscience a little bit. But just let me say this to you. We ought to keep a sensitive conscience.

We want to say, hey man. I don't want to get used to dirty talk. I don't want to get used to sex scenes. I don't want to get used to internet filth. I don't want to get used to pornography.

[26 : 38] I don't want to get used to lying and stealing and cheating. I don't want to get used to it. Everybody else may do it. But I don't want to get there. I want to exercise my conscience. I want a conscience that has a good testimony and says, you're still serving Jesus.

How many of you agree with that? Say amen. It's going to take work. In the day and time we live in, it's going to take work. That's why you're going to need the Bible. That's why you're going to need preaching. Because everything in our life, everything in our world.

Hey, let me just explain to you. Truth. Truth has become so relative in the world. Evolution is no longer a theory. They talk about it's a fact that people believe.

Homosexuality is no longer a sin. It's a lifestyle that people are born with. Hey, adultery is okay. Everything's okay. We've got to be careful to keep a clear, clean conscience.

We have to exercise ourselves to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. You need to come into church and say, God, speak to me. God, speak to me. God, let your word talk to me. God, let me be sensitive.

[27 : 35] Let me be like a child. Let me pay attention. Let me hear. If we don't, we're asking for problems in our spiritual life.

What's really going on in the passage, back to the passage. Is the Corinthians are kind of accusing Paul of not keeping his word. You know, they didn't mind right to his face saying it. They'd written some ugly letters.

They wrote a letter to him. They said, you might be tough when you write letters, but your bodily presence is weak. We don't talk respectful of you. They talked about the way he spoke, talked about the way he looked, talked about the way he wrote letters.

And this is what he said in 1 Corinthians chapter 16. As he ended the last letter, the last letter we have in scripture. In verse 5, he said, And Paul said, Hey guys, I'm going to go by and see you.

And I think I'd like to spend the winter with you. And I'd like to spend some extra time with you. And I'd like to share some more Bible with you. I'd like to preach the truth to you. And I'd like to spend some time in prayer with you. And I'd like to be there if the Lord permit.

[29 : 02] And they held it against him that he didn't do that. They accused him of being careless with the will of God. Chapter 1, verse 17. Look at it. When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?

Did I just throw it around flippantly that I was coming? Or the things that I purposed, do I purpose according to the flesh that with me there should be yea, yea and nay, nay? They thought Paul was making plans for selfish reasons for himself.

But Paul still had a clear conscience. I want to say just a couple of things to you about the will of God. And in verse 1 Corinthians 16, 7, if the Lord permit.

And I'll show you another verse in just a minute. Can I just say this? We do use lightness often about the will of God. It's God's will we buy that house.

It's God's will we buy that car. It's God's will we go in debt. It's God's will we get divorces. Some even go so far as to say it's God's will we sin. It's even written in some books.

[30 : 12] Hey, I can't help it. God made me this way. We ought never use lightness. And Paul said, I didn't. Did I use lightness? Did I use lightness? And I want you to understand you ought to be very careful.

Do you know what God's will is? God's will is found in these pages. God's will is found in these pages. And it's often hard to know exactly what God wants you to do. Where God wants you to be.

And you need to be very careful about being flippant and light with the word of God and the will of God for your life. You know, anytime you're mad at somebody in the church, it's just God's will you quit. No, it's not.

Not in here. Anytime you're you and your wife can't get along, it's God's will. You get a divorce. No, it's not. That's not in here. Anytime. I mean, it's just like anytime you want to do something, you want to blame it on God.

You want to throw out the trump card. You ever play rook? You know, it's like you throw the rook card down like I won. And you like to say, will of God, will of God.

[31 : 09] Got it? Will of God. Will of God's not enough. Even Paul had problems sometimes knowing that. Did you know that in everything you make plans with, you ought to always say, Lord willing.

You don't have to use the term. You don't have to use the term. It's so funny. I was with my son-in-law. My son-in-law has not been saved that long. We were riding down the road and everything. And they were asking me questions and everything was in Spanish.

And I said, Primera mente Dios. And I throw that around a lot. So the term that means first God, whatever God says, whatever God's will is. They'll say, well, are we going to go do this? I'd say, well, Lord willing, if everything works out, we're going to do that.

I'd like to do that if the Lord will let us do that. I'd like to. And I grew up hearing that as a kid. My granddaddy would always say, Lord willing, about everything. And here's the point that every Christian has to get a hold of.

I'm not in charge. It's God working in me. I'm not sure what's going to happen with so many things. Look, if you would, at James chapter 4. James chapter 4. There's so much more I'd like to tell you, but we're going to quit.

[32 : 07] Look at James chapter 4, verse 13. Go to now, ye that say, tomorrow, today or tomorrow, we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain.

Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. For that you ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.

But now you rejoice in your boasting. All such rejoicing is evil. Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin. And James starts it off and he says, man, aren't you something?

I'm going to go there today or tomorrow and I'm going to go to that town. I'm going to stay there one year. I'm going to buy and sell and make me some money and then I'll come back. And I got all this plan laid out. And you lay out your plan and you write it all out and you know it's all going to work out.

This is your plan. And then the Lord throws a wrench in your plans. And you are troubled beyond measure. And you're oppressed and you despair of life and you don't know where you can go because you need to learn something.

[33 : 07] You don't know. I was fully intending to preach morning and evening at the camp when I found out I had cancer. I had gotten up to go in to take my shower to get ready to go out and preach again.

And the Lord had another plan for me. And here's what Paul said. I don't use that lightly. I know God's in charge. And if God wills, I will.

And if God wills, I won't. I will trust God to direct and guide my path. Don't be so boastful. I don't have time to give you so much more.

Listen to this. God's at work in you. You're discouraged and you're depressed and things have gone wrong and you should learn you can't trust yourself. You should learn you can't trust yourself.

You should learn that things are above your control. You should learn that things are above your control. You should learn that you aren't in charge of everything. You ever met that guy who gets sick when somebody else drives?

[34 : 06] And the only reason he gets sick is because if he's driving, as long as he's under control, he's okay. He just can't ride with anybody else. We all like to be in charge.

But can I just tell you this? You don't get to pick. You know, there's so many things in your life you don't get to pick. There's so many things in your life God's just doing stuff. You know, I didn't choose who my parents were going to be.

I didn't choose where I was going to live. I didn't choose a gazillion things that happened when I was a baby. I didn't choose to be a boy instead of a girl. I didn't choose. God did. And God's at work in my life.

And I have to realize I'll do the best I can to follow up the scriptures. But I always know God's in charge. God sends problems. You know, if I were laying out my prescription of life.

Yesterday, Betty and I celebrated 39 years. And we were laying into bed last night and talking about sweet times and things that God's done in our marriage. And as we were laying there, I said, if I could, I'd go back. I'd redo a lot of things.

[35 : 05] I can think of a lot of times I could have been sweeter. I can think of a lot of times I could have been a better husband. I could think of a lot of things. Maybe if I hadn't done this, Betty wouldn't have gotten hurt that way or whatever. Moving to this place.

Moving to that house. Being in a hurry. Being hasty. Making decisions. All good decisions, quote unquote. But often maybe not handled the wisest way. But you know, you're not in charge.

And I'm not in charge. I wouldn't have chosen to have the things that have happened to my family. My daughter getting raped or running away from home. Or the things that have happened. I wouldn't have chosen those things. I wouldn't have chosen those things.

But God's in charge. And Paul said, I can't trust myself. I can only trust him. But this much I know. He delivered me yesterday. He's a delivering God.

And I don't care what comes tomorrow. He will deliver me yet again. Let's pray for prayer. Father, I love you and I praise you and I thank you for what you're doing. I pray, God, that you'd help our people to trust you.

[36 : 01] I pray, God, that you'd help us to bring this passage of scripture to life in our hearts. That we would trust you. That we would know that you are a God that hears and answers prayer. I pray you'd help us, God, to pray for others.

Pray for each other. To be a praying group. I pray, God, that you'd show your power in our lives. And I'll give you great glory and honor and praise for all that you do. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church.

For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com.