

Q&A; for September

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda, Georgia. During this time, Pastor Gardner answers various questions. Second Corinthians, and I'd just like to go through some things with you very quickly from this morning that I didn't get to say to you from the Word of God I think are important for us.

And then we'll have some questions and answers in just a minute. And so let me kind of get some things set with you for that if I could. Second Corinthians chapter 2 verse 11.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us for we are not ignorant of his devices. That's second Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 11. And this morning, had I had time, I would have gotten to the place to show you some of the horrors of not forgiving people.

It's a kind of a hard thing to forgive. People hurt us. We want to hold on to our bitterness and our resentment. It makes us into a bitter, hard, cranky, crotchety old man if we're not careful.

And we don't want that to happen. And I just want to share some scripture with you if I could. Maybe you can jot down and you can study for later on. In Exodus chapter 20 and verse 13, the Lord gave a commandment, thou shalt not kill.

[1 : 22] And you say, what's that got to do with not forgiving? A lot of times when we don't forgive, what we want is vengeance. What we want is to somehow get even with the person that has hurt us.

And so then we, it becomes anger and malice and a lack of forgiveness and a desire for revenge enters into our heart, even if we don't admit that so well.

And in Matthew chapter 5 verse 21, if you look at this, the Bible says, Jesus talking, you have heard that it was said of them of old time, thou shalt not kill.

And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. And in this section of the Bible, he says, this is what we said in the Old Testament, but y'all didn't understand it. So let me explain to you what it really meant. Let me give you full details.

And so in the Old Testament, he said, thou shalt not kill. He says, but in 22, he says, but I say unto you, but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.

[2 : 19] Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raka shall be in danger of the council. Whosoever shall say thou fool shall be in danger of hell fire. And I don't take the time. I don't have the time really to go into that with you.

But you realize anger against your brother, insulting your brother, unresolved anger. And he gave dire consequences. And you could easily say to me, well, brother Austin, that's in the kingdom.

And that's the sermon on the mountain. That doesn't apply to us. So I have another verse for you. How about first John chapter three, verse 15. When you let bitterness and anger and rank rank rancor settle in your heart.

Look what the Bible says about it. First John three 15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

First John chapter three, verse 15. It's a pretty serious thing that you and I not have this vengeful, hateful, mean spirited attitude that we could have towards other people.

- [3 : 19] It's a pretty important thing that Christians ought to learn that. Give you two or three more things. Question and answer type style tonight. Not forgiving is like putting yourself in God's place.
- You know that God said that he will take care of vengeance. Did you know God said he would take care of vengeance? Look, if you would at Romans chapter 12, verse 19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves.
- Rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, vengeance is mine. I will repay, said the Lord. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
- So he said, vengeance isn't your job. Vengeance is my job. Vengeance isn't your job. Vengeance is my job. So who hurt you? And how did they hurt you?
- It was your parent. It was your sibling. It was your friend. It was a business situation. And it was a pastor. It was a church.
- [4 : 16] And you let things settle in your heart. And you want vengeance. And you can't really get vengeance. And you end up burning yourself more than you burn anybody else. And he said, hey, vengeance is mine. Not yours.
- So it's not your place. The fact is, in Proverbs chapter 24, verses 17 and 18, he said this. Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth. Let not thine heart be glad when he stumbles. Lest the Lord see it, and it displeases him.
- And he turned away his wrath from him. So it's an amazing thing. It's an amazing thing. A Christian ought to be a forgiver. It ought not be, you hurt me, I want to get you. It ought not be, you hurt me, and I'm still vengeful towards you.
- You and I ought to forgive. We ought to trust that God will take care of issues. We ought to trust God that he would deal with that. I want to give you three other little sentences that I would like to share with you from the idea of that passage if I could.
- The first one, if you take notes, write this down. Number one, never use overkill in church discipline. You know, my whole thing, we're going through the Bible. We ought to learn what it says.
- [5 : 20] And, you know, churches ought to deal with. I mean, we ought not have adulterous church members and ignore that like it's nothing. We ought not have covetous church members and ignore that like nothing's happening.
- We ought to, as a church, push towards holiness. And we ought to, as a church, be unified in the desire to please him. But Paul writes and he says, hey, guys, don't use overkill.
- Look, if you would, in 2 Corinthians 2, verse 5. If any have caused grief. So there's a God causing problems. Verse 6, he said, sufficient is the amount of discipline, punishment that many people have inflicted on him.
- Could I just say this goes for parents too? I don't really take time to go over discipline. But could I just say that when you over discipline, you don't help, you hurt, you can go too far in discipline, you can go too light in discipline.
- For discipline to do good, it must be administered in the right amount. No discipline will leave a person thinking that all agree with their position and sin. Over discipline will cause them to be bitter and discouraged.
- [6 : 25] You don't discipline them, they say, hey, it must be okay, or they do something about this. They must agree with me. They must agree with me. Over discipline will discourage them and make them be bitter. Notice that many were involved.
- And he said it's sufficient. It's the right amount. We want to be holy. We are a royal priesthood. There ought to be a consistency about us. So don't use overkill. That's sentence number one.

We will never, ever use overkill. And I know that's not been a problem here in over six years, but I still think that you ought to know that's what's going on in the past. Number two, our goal is always restoration, not discouragement.

Look if you would at verse seven. Forgive him, comfort him, lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. So the goal was, the goal was that we would not make him be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

The goal wouldn't be, I did so much wrong, there's no way out of this. All I can do is blow my brains out. The goal wouldn't be, I've done so much wrong, I might as well never go back to church because God will never forgive me and they'll never forgive me.

[7 : 26] That's not the way it ought to be. We ought to do the opposite of that. We want to restore a brother and we want to see him following Jesus and his life back on track. Third level sentence for you.

And we'll step to the next thing. We should avoid discouraging him by confirming our love, by confirming our love. And it's what it says in the verse. I don't have time to read the verses I've read to you like three times now.

It means going overboard and letting them know that they are loved. How about this one? For parents again also. There ought to be such an atmosphere of love and acceptance that anything else gets their attention.

It ought to be that our church is so sweet and so kind and so loving that when a day comes we have to say, Now you know that ought not be so. You know that committing an adultery, stepping out on your wife, getting this divorce isn't the right thing for you to do.

It ought to be that this place is so full of love they get that idea. And they know that's wrong. When you discipline your children, it ought to be there's so much love that the very disappointment.

[8 : 28] Our oldest son Chris, when he was little, you know, we had all sorts of kids. Our daughter Stephanie, our daughter Stephanie would look at you. If you were going to discipline Stephanie, she would basically look at you and say, You can try anything you want with me, buddy.

Nothing hurts. I'm tougher than everybody else. Spank me all you want. You do what you want and I don't care. That was basically her attitude. And I'm not teasing. You could whip her and she would never, ever cry.

It was just a thing. She might go to a room later and cry, but you'd never see her. Bless God, you'll see no tears from me. With Chris, you could say, I'm disappointed. And he'd start crying. With Joy, with Joy, it was totally, she was always the funniest one.

Our daughter Joy, she'd do something wrong at church. I'd say, Honey, when we get home, you know Daddy's got this. Thank you. You know you've done wrong and you know you're going to have to get some swats. And on the way home, as soon as church was over, whenever that happened, from then on, Joy would enter angel mode.

And you've never seen anybody any sweeter in your life. She would tell me what a great message. We'd get in the car and she'd say, Dad, that was some of the best preaching you have ever done in your life.

[9 : 31] I really enjoyed it. And Dad, this point was the one I really liked. And boy, she'd just lay it on thick all the way home. And we'd be sweet and everything. We'd get to the house and I'd say, Well, honey, you're going up to your room. I'll be up there in just a minute.

And she'd say, Well, why am I going up to my room? And I'd say, Well, you know, I told you, you're going to get a spanking. And she'd say, Well, wait a minute, Dad. I mean, everything's good. We're good. I'm good with you. You're good with me.

God's good with me. God's already forgiven me. I really don't get this. And then I would walk up there and I would say, Just lay down on the bed. Take these legs. Let's get it over with. And she'd start screaming.

And I'd just start laughing. I mean, I would literally, she'd turn around and say, Why are you laughing? I said, I haven't touched you and you're already dead. So you got all kinds. But overkill, that'll hurt. Not discipline.

That'll hurt. That'd be the wrong thing. There ought to be an atmosphere of love. Make it clear that they are forgiven. And forgiven means we don't bring it back up again. Forgiveness means we don't hold it against them.

[10 : 26] Forgiveness means that we don't associate that sin with them. And let me give you one more sentence I didn't remember how many I had here. Number four. Listen to this. We never want to get into Satan's trap by it being overly harsh.

We live in a day and time when people don't want to go to a church that preaches the Bible anymore. They want to go to a church that has very little Bible preaching. Maybe has some philosophical things to say. Has a lot of music that appeals to them.

And they're just excited to be in a music service. They don't want open your Bible to certain chapters, certain verses. Yeah, next verse, next verse. They don't really want that anymore. They don't want that because church, well, one, they don't want it because they're not saved to begin with.

But also churches became very vindictive and churches became pretty harsh. And churches often overstep things. And we don't want to be guilty of that. We know, we should know that Satan loves harsh discipline and strict routine that many churches have.

Satan loves to work in and through a church. It gives great cover to his work. Did you ever think about that? If I can blame the church, boy, I can really do that. So as a church, we've got to be careful.

[11 : 33] It's easy to think that standing for righteousness is better than allowing sin to rule. It is, except when you fall into a trap. A trap of being overly harsh. For the sake of keeping people an eye on, we pick certain sins that we push too hard.

Many of our churches, we got so hung up on just a handful of little things that we wanted to nail hard. And bless God, we're going to make you fall an eye on this handful of things. But we never dealt with covetousness or pride or bigotry.

We kept it to the things that we were doing pretty good in. We got to be careful that we don't fall into it and Satan get an advantage over us because we are ignorant of his device.

We try to cause people to do certain things and live in a certain way. We drive people away if we're not careful. So Paul said, don't get in that ditch and don't get in that ditch. Don't be so tolerant of sin.

You're ridiculous. And don't be so mean. You're ridiculous. Get in the Bible. I find it amazing. You've been going here for any time. You've been through book after book. And people ask me, somebody asked the other day, somebody asked a staff member, said, do they preach against pornography at the church?

[12 : 40] Well, the truth of the matter is we just preach whatever the verses are. Pornography might get mentioned, but no, there's really not the anti-pornography, anti-anything. It's just what's the next set of verses have to say?

Does he really blast homosexuality? Does he really blast alcohol? What is it? Does he really blast? Well, you know, the truth is when you just preach this book verse by verse, it's amazing. God will get around to covering everything.

Amen. Study the Bible. And let's get on track with what the word of God says and let God's word make a difference in our life. All right there. Show me a question and we'll see.

How do you forgive a person that keeps hurting you and the people you love? You know, I happen to have experienced that quite a bit, to be honest with you.

How do you forgive a person that keeps hurting you and the people you love? I would tell you that first off, it's only going to be God's grace. It's only going to be God's grace that would ever help you forgive anybody, especially when they keep hurting you.

[13 : 36] But as you serve God and as you try to do the right thing, there will be people attacking you. And you're to forgive them as Christ forgave you, especially if they're a brother. If they were to ask, Jesus said, forgive them.

If they ask over and over in the same day, keep forgiving them. But I'll give you the best answer I possibly can. And that is try to fill your mind with the best thoughts possible about what the Lord's done for you.

And recognize the failures you have had and you have been to help you. And I'll just tell you that's a battle I fight every day of my life. There have been people that have hurt me and continue to hurt me.

Not here at this church. And you probably wouldn't know anything about that. But I would just tell you that you're going to hurt yourself if you keep living with the bitterness. It's going to eat you alive if you keep living with it.

You can grind your teeth and have an acid stomach all the time. Or you can just say, you know what, I'm going to trust that God will bless. In Romans chapter 12, which I read earlier, and you can read again Romans chapter 12, the last few verses.

[14 : 39] We're to heap coals of fire on their head by being kind to them. We're to turn the other cheek. We're to love our enemies. We're to pray for them to spitefully use us. And this forgiveness is, I don't think you are looking for an emotional release.

It's not like you're going to say, I don't feel that anymore. It's not about what you're feeling. It's about what you're doing. Most Christian things are not about what you feel. They're about straight out obedience.

You know, when the Bible says husbands love your wives, it's not talking about husbands feel a tingly Hollywood romantic feeling about your wife. It's saying husbands love your wives.

And then in Ephesians 5, it begins to tell you, love her like she was your own body. Love her like Jesus loves the church. And so it's not about a feeling. It's about obedience. And so that's how you forgive.

And I think you're going to deal with it every day. I think you're going to have a hard time with it. You're going to battle with it. You're going to have to ask God for help with it. And then tomorrow, when you get up, you're going to have to ask him again.

[15 : 37] It's just going to take grace. Next question. With young children, what is the best way to begin Bible teaching and memorizing verses? Well, we should talk to my wife about that.

I have never been the best in the world with young children. How's that one? I like them when they get old enough they can talk. And I'll have to change diapers. That's the best time to get around them. Amen. I will tell you some things that we tried.

And I don't have a Bible verse for this that trend them up in the way they should go. But I'll give you some things that we've done. You know, the first thing I did, I prayed over our children while they were in the womb. I prayed over our children.

Then I prayed when they were born. I held them in my arms. I dedicated them to the Lord. We did it at church. I also did it at home. I always ask God to take them and use them. And then, you know, if the Bible is something that you're always talking about, Bible teaching ought to be a normal part of your life.

I'm going to give you two or three little things here. But the first thing I'd say to you is, it doesn't have to be as structured as maybe you think it does. You see, if what's on your heart all the time, what's on your mind all the time is Jesus and the Bible, it's going to come up naturally.

[16 : 49] They ask a question. Your first thought is going to be, well, this is what God says about that. So just say, this is what God says about that. If something happens, you just say, this is what God says about that. This is what the Bible says about that. Let me show you this.

And you start showing them from the Bible. What Betty and I did when our children were small, we would average, I would say we averaged four to five times a week we had family devotions.

We did not have it every day. When we were younger and I was a lot more like that, it was like sit down, be quiet, don't move. Two hours later when I get through preaching, she would get up. And I found out they didn't handle that too well.

So we cut devotions down to somewhere between five and ten minutes and up to 15. And here's what we did with devotions. We took the Bible and we would take a small passage of scripture that I would choose.

And we usually read through a book. I would choose it. It might be Psalms. It might be the Gospel of John. It might be any New Testament book. I don't think we hardly ever read in any Old Testament. At one time we started, but we got to Leviticus.

[17 : 45] We kind of jumped ahead. But we would read. I would read two verses. Betty would read two verses. And then each child would read one verse if they were able to read. Or two verses depending on how well they could read.

That was a good reading class. That was a very good reading class because I heard how well they read when I never taught them anything about reading. And when they couldn't read, Betty usually sat beside them and she would say, For God, and they would say, For God, so loved, so loved, the world, the world.

And we'd work our way through a verse. And when he got, we got back around to me. And I would take one verse and I would say, I would say something about that verse. And I kept it very brief.

I think that sometimes we kind of take that way too far. And we make it like, boy, you're going to sit still and not move. And you're going to endure an hour of family devotions every day.

You set that up. You're not going to keep up with it. You don't want to do it. You don't do that well. The second thing is once you don't do that, well, you just quit. So keep it short. Keep it something you can do. Find a time of the day that worked.

[18 : 42] We did it in the morning before I left for work. It was never more than 15 minutes because I had to be at work on time. At Bible college, teaching classes every morning. So we got up at a certain time.

They were dressed by a certain time. We were eating breakfast by a certain time. We were having family devotions by a certain time. And I was walking out the door by a certain time. And we lived that way fairly regularly. We usually did devotions Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Those were the guaranteed days that we would usually get it done. Monday was the day I took off. Saturday, I often slept another 30 minutes to an hour. And so I would then go rushing off to the church to do a visitation.

And then Sunday, at that time, I was preaching six times every Sunday. And so I was gone before they woke up. And I'd suggest you do something like that. Just make the Bible fun. How do you teach them?

Bible verses, you already know that. Teach them by singing with them. Teach them by, teach them. The teachers at our church do a great job. The teachers at our church do a great job. Teach them short verses.

[19 : 42] Just get the Word of God in them. If you love the Bible, they'll love the Bible. If you talk about the Bible, they'll talk about the Bible. If God's a central part of what's going on in your life, then He's going to obviously be a central part of what's going on in their life.

And I would tell you that it's the most important ministry any of us have is raising our children. Somehow, somewhere along the way, we think our children get in our way.

Somehow, somewhere along the way, we begin to think our children get in our way. And if I didn't have these kids, I could do ministry. Are you crazy? If you did ministry, you'd do four hours of work, ministry a week.

Or maybe you'd do 40 hours a week. When God gave you 168 hours a week, you've got those kids. No place in the Bible does God ever say that you have the chance of shaping arrows, arrows in the hands of a mighty man.

And you have the opportunity to prepare children to do great things. I was just at a funeral this week. That's where I was Thursday night. One of my aunts died. And so I had my mother, who is 77, and my aunt, who was 82, in the car.

[20 : 45] And there's only four of the ten still living. And we were riding around. And we got with my first cousins that I haven't seen in forever. And people were coming in to visit the family.

And my grandparents had four preachers in the family. Four preachers in the family. Three foreign missionaries in the family. And everybody was like, wow, that's unreal.

That's a whole lot of preachers in the grandkids of a family. But the truth is, if it's your heartbeat and it's what you talk about all the time, very likely God will bring something about like that.

So I say to you, let the Bible be the center of the way you think and talk at your house. I guess one more little sentence. I was riding down the road with David when he was little.

And he probably doesn't remember this. And we were going through and it came up about something about evolution and the flood and so on as that. And we came through a place where the ground had been cut.

[21 : 41] And there were big heavy rocks sitting on top of sand. And, you know, where they cut through the mountain. And we stopped and we talked about how God did create the world. And it was just a natural thing.

We got out, spent a few minutes, got back in the car and going down the road. And you'd say, did you teach him about that? No, I didn't teach him about that. We just talked about it. I didn't teach him. I didn't set him down.

Did you ever think that Jesus, when he was running, when he was training his disciples, he never had a Bible college? Did you ever think about that? He never once said, sit down, get out your ink pens and paper and your notebooks and your books.

And let me tell you, he lived with them. He shared life with them. And guess who you get to do that with more than anybody? Your children. And 20 years from now, or 30 years from now, or 50 years from now, you may not be able to do anything.

And your children and grandchildren are carried on. Take that as the most important ministry God's ever given you. That's my opinion on that. One more question. And we'll see about having Ed preach tonight. What are the positives other than church discipline of being a member of the church?

[22 : 44] Because Christians were never, ever meant to be alone. Because Christians were never, ever meant to be alone. You don't find them alone in the New Testament.

They're always gathering together. We need each other. We need the strength. We need the unity. We need to work together. Because Jesus put us together in the church. Because Jesus formed a church.

I think I'll give you a verse or two in just a second. But let's start with this. Let's start with Matthew 16, 18. Let's just look at Matthew 16, 18. Jesus said, I will build my church.

Would you look at that? I will build my church. And he's talking to Peter. And most people focus in on the fact that it's, thou art Peter and upon this rock. But they don't realize what he said right in the middle of the verse.

I will build my church. Jesus is doing the talking. Jesus said, I will build my church. Church doesn't belong to you. Doesn't belong to me. I think maybe you don't understand what church is.

[23 : 48] You know, this isn't church right here. You do know that, right? The church isn't having a service. Because we allow lots of people to come to a service. We allow people to come to a service that aren't members of the church.

We don't make a rule about anybody having to be a member. But being a member of a church puts you in a relationship where you accept responsibility and you accept privileges.

Being a member of the church puts you in a relationship of obedience. Go to Acts chapter 2 verse 42.

Let's go at 40. We'll start in 40. Can you give me Acts chapter 2 verse 40? You know, on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people got saved. Go down. Just go one verse at a time.

Hey, stop right there. We'll start there. Acts 2 verse 41. They preached and 3,000 people got saved and they were added unto them. Unto them. That's unto the church. And they were baptized.

[24 : 44] They received the word gladly. And they were baptized. They were added about 3,000 souls. You go from, in Matthew, the church is mentioned by Jesus. The Jewish nation is being set aside. And starting from the book of Acts, you start seeing what God's doing in the church.

From Romans all the way through to you get to the tribulation period, everything's about a church. Everything's about a church. You don't find, you say, well, he wrote letters to men.

They weren't churches. No, they were pastors of churches. He wrote a letter. Paul wrote a letter to Timothy. But Timothy was working as a pastor. He wrote a letter to Titus. Titus was working. He wrote a letter to Philemon. Philemon had a church in his house.

The Bible's about a church. And so if you're going to do biblical Christianity, I guess you've heard the stories about the kids that were raised in some of the orphanages in Russia. Years ago, I heard, I've been in some of those Russian orphanages.

And, you know, there was a time when those kids were placed in there and they were pretty well left alone. And they weren't really, all they did, they made sure they got enough to eat. They made sure they got their diaper changed at certain times.

[25 : 48] But they didn't let them have much human interaction. And you know what? It handicapped them. It handicapped them socially. It handicapped them mentally. It handicapped them in every way. Because a baby needs a hug.

Because a baby needs a relationship. Because a person needs other people. And so when God, when he saved you, he saved you into him. He saved you into him.

And there's nothing, any, let's go to Ephesians chapter 5. Open your Bible to, oh, excuse me, I didn't read the next verse. I need to read Acts 2.42. Acts 2.42. I don't know it by heart or I'd start quoting.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in fellowship and breaking of bread and in prayers. And so you know what happened? They got saved. They got baptized. They joined up with the rest of the guys.

And they stayed with the rest of the guys. And they joined up and they stayed with them. Go and meet Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. Now, you could easily say, well, there's a universal church that you can't see.

[26 : 52] You could easily say there's a universal church that you can't see. We're all a member of that if we've been born again. And so you don't have to be a member of a local church. There's only one problem with that. In the Bible, in the New Testament, the word church used 118 times or so.

And I won't fight with you about the exact number. It could be one or two more or less. But about 118 times. The word means, the word church comes from a Greek word that means a called out assembly.

It's a called out assembly. The word, if you were using, if you want to use a vulgar word, a common word, that vulgar word, that just means a common of the people word, not a Bible word.

It'd just be assembly. This would be the assembly of the people of God. That's what a church is. It's the assembly of the people of God. And so when the Bible talks about a church, it's talking about people that came out.

They got saved. They came out of the world. They joined together. They assemble. The very word, the very word ecclesia means assembly.

[27 : 53] The word church means assembly. How are you going to have a church without assembling? How are you going to help a church without assembling? He said where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them.

And in Ephesians chapter five, in Ephesians chapter five, Jesus talks to the man about loving his wife. And he makes these wild statements.

He says, I want the husband to love his wife like Christ loved the church, like Christ loved the assembly, like Christ loved the body of believers, the body of believers.

And he talks about that. And so look, if you would, in Ephesians chapter five, and if you got your Bible open, verse 25, love your wives as Christ loved the church. And he gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Now skip all the way down, if you would, to verse 32, Ephesians 5, 32. And he said, this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

[29 : 00] I speak concerning Christ and the church. He said, you may think I'm talking about husbands and wives, but I'm really not. I'm really talking about Christ and the church. So just let me remind you.

The letter to the Romans is a letter to the church in Rome. The letter to the Corinthians is a letter to the Christians in Corinth. The letter to the Galatians is the letter to the Christians in Galatia.

And so on through your Bible. The letter to Timothy is a letter to a pastor. And so in the Bible, the idea is that when you get saved, you will assemble. You'll want to be around that. Fact is in 1 John, in 1 John, do you know how you know that you are born again?

You love the brethren. That's one of the ways, one of the several characteristics. A born again person loves the brethren. Sinners love sinners. Christians love Christians.

By the way, if you love somebody, you want to be around them or away from them? You want to be around them. You want to be close to them. If you love them, you want to spend time with them. And so the idea of a church, a church, when you hear people say, we want to do church for the unchurched.

[30 : 03] That's just to be blunt, honest, not possible. You can't have an assembly of sheep for pigs. It doesn't work. Now, you can reach out to them and show them how to be saved and become a part.

You can bring down the theological terms to a level they can understand it. But the truth of the matter is, we're a church. And a church is a body of baptized believers that have organized themselves together to carry out the Great Commission and obey the commands of the Lord Jesus.

You'll never do as much by yourself as you will with other Christians. All through the Bible talks about one thing, starting churches. Paul went everywhere planting churches, starting churches, preaching churches, teaching people about Jesus. When people got saved, they joined together to hear and learn.

And I guess one more thing on that. This is a great question, by the way. I don't know who asked it, but that is a great question. Trent, did you set that one up? Okay, just making sure. Never know. The Lord said in 1 Corinthians, what, 12?

Ephesians chapter 4. And one other place in the Bible, and I can't think of it right off the top of my head. He mentions the gifts. God gifted people. And he gave all these gifts to the church.

[31 : 14] And every one of the gifts were different. And, I mean, there's like, whatever number, somewhere between 8 and maybe 12 different gifts. The only way the gifts work is if we work together.

One guy is a, you got a guy in the church, buddy, I mean, he's like a prophet. He sees sin and bless God, he wants to thunder forth. That's sin and that's wicked. You got another guy in the church that says, wait a minute.

I have the gift of mercy and I want to love people and help people. Those two guys need each other. That mercy guy would always be nice to everybody. Never say anything bad about sin in his life. That prophet guy would go around killing everybody.

He'd be an old, he'd be a, he'd be an old western guy carrying a six gun on his hip and just walk around. You sin, bam, that's over with you. But the mercy guy come on and say, hey, put the gun back up. I think we can help this guy.

Then you got a guy that's in administration. He's got a gift of administration. So there's all these gifts. God put us together. We need each other. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, he acts like this. What part of the body, the body, and he uses terms.

[32 : 11] He uses terms. He says, what if the whole body was an eye? Where would the hearing be? And so, you know, really, what would you think if your eye said, you know, I really think that the eye ought to get to be by himself.

I don't think he gets enough attention and we ought to have eyeballs by themselves. And the eyeball doesn't need the rest of the body. It'd be just, it's a dumb thing. Eyeballs need the head to hold it. They need the brain to make it function.

The feet need an eye. The eye needs feet. Everything goes together. And that's how God put the church together. Now, there's a move on. You know, let me just say this. When we preach and we have services, that's not really the church.

A lot of the people that come, their heart might not be in getting the gospel out. Their heart might not be. And that's why I don't really push you hard about giving because if you're part of the church and you love Jesus, this is your baby.

You want it. And so when we have the services, we don't get up. I don't get up and make some big push for all you're giving. And man, would I give my right arm for a place like you're going to look at on Wednesday night?

[33 : 08] Yes, I would. But the whole deal is God's people, the God's people, the church and how God will work through his people. So there's a lot more to the church than discipline. There is edification, building up.

But what if you leave? What if you just let me say this? That question sometimes comes from people that kind of got a little distaste for the church. Did you know that Weight Watchers wouldn't be in existence if people could watch their weight by themselves?

But ladies would rather get together and weigh each other in front of each other. And write it down and encourage each other or condemn each other. And they do better when they got, I got to go to the condemning meeting.

But if they lost a pound, they're like, whoa, I'm going to go there and I get to condemn and I'm in good shape. Everything. We need each other. So understand that. What would you do if you were all by yourself?

The truth. God has given gifted people, mature people, fathers figures, people that can help you grow in grace. You need the church. You need foundations.

[34 : 15] You need somebody to walk you through it. Some of us are like, well, I don't think I need other people and I can do it by myself. Well, really? Really? It won't last. It won't work.

And if you really love the brethren, you're going to want to be with the brethren. Let me see what time it is and then I will decide what we ought to do. I think we'll take one more question and quit. How about that? Because it's two till by my clock.

What does the word gospel mean? Well, that's a good one to end on, isn't it? That's the last question or you got more? That's the last one? Boy, did I do good. What does the gospel mean? It means good news. It means good news.

What's the good news? The good news is that you sinned against God and you deserve to go to hell when you die, but Jesus paid your sin debt for you. And we take the good news of Jesus Christ around the world.

And a tremendous privilege that we have to tell people that Jesus loves him. Did you know this, that everybody's salvation in the world is already paid for? Well, you may not be on the same theological position I am there.

[35 : 15] You might say, well, I just think some of them are paid for and the rest of them God wants to go to hell. But I really don't believe that. I think he loved the world. He gave his son to die for the world. He paid the sin debt of the world. He wants everybody to be saved. It's all paid for.

It's all paid for. On the cross, he said, it's finished. In Romans chapter 6 and verse 23, he said, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. And Jesus Christ has good news to take to the nations.

And so when we go out, we go and people either reject or receive the gospel. And they make a choice. They make a decision. And Jesus paid for it. So I carried good news. When I went to Peru, I carried good news.

When I stand up here, I have good news. When we give out gospel tracts, we have good news. Good news is you deserve to be punished, but somebody took your punishment. It's already done, already paid for. There's not a list of three things you got to do, not a list of five things, not a list of two things.

Just receive the gift. Trust Jesus and you can be saved. Tell you what, are we having some announcements? All right, let's have a word of prayer. Thank you so much for the questions and the time together.

[36 : 14] And Wednesday night at 6 o'clock, you are invited to go with Chuck and the deacons in training to look at that building and be praying about that.

And that or other things. Hey, that was a good opportunity to give. And then please don't forget the Snodes. It'll be here Thursday. Father, I love you and thank you for the chance to serve you. Thank you for the chance to open your word with your people.

And I pray, God, that you'd bring honor to your name tonight. In Jesus' name, amen. 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.

Marco ■■acs. Thank you. Thank you. Va neurotrans