

# Don't Be A Stumbling Block Even To The Least

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[ 0 : 00 ] And I'm glad to see you, glad to be in the house of God with you, and looking forward to you getting to hear the wonderful passage of scripture that God has given us today.

Now, before we do that, we have right here some pictures of Nepal. You know that Paul and Amber Talby are missionaries in Nepal, and they just had a 7.9 earthquake, and they are continuing to have earthquakes about every few minutes.

And so these are just some pictures that they just sent out. Internet just came back on, and the water hasn't been restored. Electricity and Internet were back on. Their house is pretty damaged, and that's the inside of their house.

And so the structure seems to be fine, but all the interior walls on the front first floor are probably going to have to be re-stuccoed. So please be in prayer for them over in.

And, boy, they're really terrified about the earthquake. Most people slip outside. People are scared because earthquakes will do that to you. And they've had, I think, I don't know if he was making the number up, 41 noticeable tremors or earthquakes within the last so many hours.

[ 1 : 14 ] And so they're enjoying it. He is actually having a blast. He's having the time of his life. So you pray for Paul and Amber, so glad that they're here, they're there in the Paul, and that God is going to use them.

Open your Bibles now, if you would, to Matthew chapter 18. Matthew chapter 18 and verse 7. Matthew 18 and verse 7. Today, we're going to read a passage of Scripture and talk about don't be a stumbling block even to the least.

Don't be a stumbling block even to the least. No matter who they are, I want to have a sweet relationship, and I want to encourage them to serve Jesus. So read with me, if you would, Matthew 18, 7.

Verse 7.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. It's better for thee to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. Take heed that you despise not one of the least of these little ones.

[ 2 : 38 ] For I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

How think ye if a man have a hundred sheep and one of them be gone astray? Does he not leave the ninety and nine and go into the mountains and seek that which is gone astray?

And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoices more of that sheep than of the ninety-nine which went not astray. Even so, it's not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

That's going to be an exciting thing for you to look at. You'll notice that we're cutting off hands and feet and plucking out eyes but we won't have any of that in the service today.

We might learn a little bit about mortifying or putting to death certain parts and so you'll see that that truth is still for us today. Let's have a word of prayer and ask God to bless this service today.

[ 3 : 36 ] Father, we love you. We thank you so much for the opportunity to be in your house. We thank you for your people. We thank you for your word. Thank you for everybody you brought here today that's a regular attender and I thank you for anybody who's first time today and I pray you'd bless them.

I pray God that if anyone's here that's not saved that today would be the day that you would convict them of their sin and cause them to be saved. And I pray that every Christian would learn from today that we want to be careful of our testimony to love our brothers and our sisters and to love our children and to live in such a way that we would be a good testimony for your honor and glory.

And I'll give you praise for it in Jesus precious name. Amen. All right. Thank your Bibles if you would and turn with me to the book of Matthew chapter 18. Matthew chapter 18.

You remember where we are in the passage of scripture. Jesus has been talking to them and then somebody came and want to know if he'd pay the tax and the temple tax. And he said definitely I'll pay the temple tax.

And he did pay the temple tax so he didn't have to pay the temple tax. He only paid the temple tax so he wouldn't offend anybody. And then in Matthew chapter 18 verse 1 we saw that he's talking to us about their desire to be the greatest.

[ 4 : 49 ] It's the same time. And they walk in and they say well which one of us is going to be the greatest? And he said boy you guys have got it all wrong and what you're doing offends people and you ought not be like that. And then you get down to verse 7.

And in verse 7 he's going to talk to them about not offending the least. No matter how unimportant a person is. No matter how small a person is. No matter how little money a person gives.

They should not be offended. They should be respected. So read with me if you would Matthew chapter 18 and verse 7. The Bible says woe unto the world because of offenses.

For it must needs be that offenses come. But woe to that man by whom the offense comes. That word offense there is a word that means stumbling block.

It's a word that means something that would cause a Christian that's not strong to fall. Or even a stronger Christian to fall. It's the basis of a word like scandal.

[ 5 : 48 ] It's something that would cause somebody to fall. The word world here refers to the fallen world. Look at it. It says woe unto the world because of offenses.

Woe unto the world. And so it's like the world is going to bring offenses. The fallen world. The world of human beings that are in rebellion against God.

The world refers to the enemies of the church of God. The world is the people under the influence of Satan and his rebellion. And so the world already brings enough offenses.

That's what it says. It says woe unto the world because of offenses. So if you're saved there is a lot of pressure on you to turn your back on God.

That's the first thing it's in the passage. There's a lot of pressure a lot of things brought on you by the world by the fallen world by the enemies of the cross of Christ. By sin to get you to turn your back on Christ and go back to the world.

[ 6 : 48 ] Here's how the world seduces us. Look at first John chapter 2 and verse 15. A passage of scripture I would imagine that you're familiar with. The Bible says love not the world.

That's not the same world. You know the word world can mean for God so loved the world and he's talking about all the people in the world. The word world could mean even the creation and we're supposed to love the creation.

That's wonderful that God gave us a beautiful creation. But the word world is often used when it's talking about this rebellious group against God. And so he says love not the world.

Neither of the things are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. So it's don't love those that are against God. That that's against God.

The things that would draw you away from God don't love that. There are things in this world that would cause you not to serve Jesus. There are things in this world that would cause you to turn your back on serving God.

[ 7 : 46 ] So he says love not the world. Neither of the things are in the world. Verse 16. For all that's in the world. And now he lists it. So I'll know. So underline it in your Bible. What are the things in the world that would cause me to quit serving Jesus?

Number one. The lust of the flesh. The things I want. Lust just means desires. And so there are things in this world that we desire. We look at something.

We say man I'd like to have that. I want that. I would enjoy that. I want that. That's something for me. Then the lust of the eyes. Things that I look at. And I think boy that's beautiful.

That's pretty. That's what calls my attention. The pride of life is not of the Father. But it's of the world. So there's things attracting my flesh. And my person.

And my ambition. And my power. And things that I want to have happen. And the world passes away. But the word of God. But he that doeth the will of God abides forever.

[ 8 : 42 ] So just know this. When you got saved. You're in a war. And there's something in you. Or not in you. But outside of you. That's pulling you. And pushing you. And making you think about.

Maybe I won't serve God. Sometimes money. Has this draw on you. And you're like. I love God. But I need this money. And I want this money. Sometimes. It could be sex.

And it could be power. And it could be. It could be popularity. But there's a ton of things going on. All around us. That would pull us away from God. And cause us not to serve him.

That's what the world offers. It's going to do everything it can. It stands in rebellion to God. It's just going to do everything it can. To get those of us that are serving him. To quit. Look if you would at.

Matthew chapter 24 and verse 11. The world. Does everything it can. To get people to stop following Jesus. And it'll do it by persuasive words. And signs.

[ 9 : 37 ] Matthew 24 11. The Bible says. And many false prophets shall arise. Shall rise. And shall deceive many. So you're going to have false prophets. So now there's going to be all kind of false religion.

Even false sin in Christ standing up. And because of iniquity. Because of sin. Because of twistedness. That's going to be so prevalent. The love of many will wax cold.

And then there'll be false Christ. And false prophets. And great signs. And wonders. That would deceive even the elect. The people of God. So you live in a world.

Where men. There's religious stuff pulling you away from God. And there's. There's money pulling you away from God. And there's personal stuff pulling you away from God. And in every way. You're in a war. You decided to follow Jesus.

You decided to get involved in serving him. You love him. But man. Everything. In every way. Is pulling against you. So a lot of that's like. Persuasive words.

[ 10 : 35 ] You don't need this. And you don't need that. And you can serve God. And you can enjoy this. And it's going to say all these things to you. But everything's trying to pull you away. And then he says. There's also something pushing you away.

And that's persecution. Look if you would. In Matthew chapter 10. In verse 16. He said. I send you forth as sheep. In the midst of wolves. Do you realize. That all around you.

Are. Are people. Who would eat up. And destroy. Whatever loves God. Not the people. We're not talking about the people. We're talking about the rebellion. We're talking about the attitude.

That would keep a Christian. From serving God. In Matthew 24. 9. He said. They shall deliver you up. To be afflicted. And kill you. And you shall be hated. In verse 10.

And then many shall be offended. And betray one another. And hate one another. So there's this whole. System. That's at work. To pull us away from God.

[ 11 : 33 ] To pull us away from serving God. To pull us away from honoring God. To. And by the way. If you ever notice a new Christian. They get so excited about serving Jesus.

And then they have to cool off. To get as cold as the rest of us. Because new Christians are really excited about God. And then the longer they're around. The rest of us. They're like. They settle down and become.

They'll get over it. They'll get over their excitement. That's that world system. Playing in our lives. That kind of dulls. And deadens our love for God. And dulls and deadens our service.

They're brand new Christians. So they're excited about reading the Bible. We're well past that. They're brand new Christians. They can't help but go to church. They love the word of God. We're well past that. And so. There's this world system at work in our lives.

All around us. And you need to know that. The world pushes so hard. It causes the followers of Jesus. To be tempted. To question his authority.

[ 12 : 29 ] And even doubt his legitimacy. Or the legitimacy of his word. So everything. Just be honest. Everything in the world is trying to get you not to believe this book. Everything in the world is trying to get you not to surrender your life to Jesus.

Everything in the world is trying to deaden and pull us away. Jesus said whoa. Hey. Threat. Condemnation. Judgment on the world.

Because we know what the world is trying to do. This is going to be a while. When I want to give you another verse before we leave this first point. That the world brings offense. Is that.

It's kind of a necessary thing. Look if you went at 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 19. For there must be also heresies among you. That they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Now that's a crazy verse. Look at what it said in 1 Corinthians 11 19. It said there must be heresies. So the Lord allows all this garbage to happen.

[ 13 : 28 ] So he can find out who really is his. So he can find out who really is his. So heresy. False teaching. And junk is in the church.

So he can find out who is really his. I'm sure you've heard the story in the Bible of Jehu. And old Jehu had decided he would get rid of all the Baal worshipers. And so he told everybody.

You ever seen anybody worships Baal? I am the number one worshiper of Baal. All of you come and bring all of your clothes that you worship the devil in. The Baal in. And you come to the church and get there with us.

And then he walked in the room and he said. Now if you're not one of us. If you're not a worshiper of Baal. You need to get out. And so now there's only the cream of the crop left. He steps out the door and says. Lock the door and kill them all.

He was trying to find out. If you're a worshiper of Baal. I'm going to find that out. When I was a young preacher. I've always been a little on the dumb order. But I was really dumb. I was a brand new youth director.

[ 14 : 26 ] I was a pastor. I'd started my first church. And so I'd been a youth director for years. And pulled crazy stuff. And so one night in a revival. I decided to have some young men I knew.

From the Christian school I taught in. To dress up. Put on a mask over their face. And come in with guns. And rough me up in front of the church. And they were going to come in with guns.

And they didn't have them cocked. And they didn't have them loaded. And they were going to beat me up. They didn't touch anybody else. They didn't threaten anybody else. And so I'm standing in there. And here are these guys. I know what's happening. It's like a skit to me.

Well they got real guns. And they threw me against the wall. And they beat me up. This happened like 35, 40 years ago. They didn't really beat me up. They were shoving me around. And then I stepped forward. And I went ahead and preached. Well the next day.

I'm out visiting our church. Remember they all told me. We ain't never going to that church again. Never. And they said you go to that church. You could get killed. One of the men told me. He said I was ready to take a chair. And bust one of them in the head.

[ 15 : 23 ] And I found out real quick. You don't do that stuff. You know that's maybe work with teenagers. You don't do that with adults. But you do realize what God's doing. He said I like a little bit of junk to be going on.

So I know if you really love me. I like a little bit of heresy. Watch what he said in 1 John 2 and verse 19. Before we move to the real meat of the message. The Bible says they went out from us.

But they were not of us. For if they had been of us. They would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out. That they might be made manifest. That they were not of us.

Isn't that a wild passage? I know you've heard some pastor use that to say. When they leave your church to go join another church. They were not of us. That's not what this is about. This is about they were Christians.

And they were serving God. God. And then one day they just decided. They turned their back on God. And they'd walk away. And you were like. They were such good Christians. And they turned their back. And they walked away. And he said no. They never were one of us.

[ 16 : 19 ] They were never born again. They were never on their way to heaven. They were never truly saved. That's not what happened. They went out from us to show they weren't. So number one thing. I want you to look at. In that passage of scripture.

Matthew 18 7 is. The world's got offenses. There are offenses all around us. But the real meat starts in that same verse. And it says. But you shouldn't be the one that's bringing the offense.

We already got the world out there doing enough stuff wrong. We already got all the bad folks. And all the garbage going on. There's an invitation for sin on television every day.

There's an invitation at work maybe. And there's everywhere around us. There's an invitation to quit serving Jesus. And to do wrong. But look what the Bible said. Matthew 18 7. It said.

Woe unto the world. That wicked system because of offenses. Because it must needs be that offenses come. Yeah we need them. I need to find out if you're really in.

[ 17 : 17 ] But he said. But woe. To that man. By whom the offense comes. So yes there's a lot of junk out there. But it ought not be one of you. It ought not be one of you.

We know who the enemy is. But we don't need a guy dressed like us. Talking like us. And acting like us. Who would bring that into the church. So he said.

The real woe is a Christian who causes other weaker brothers to fall. The little ones can be hurt and stumble. Because they do not fully understand what's going on or being said.

If you lead others to sin. You're going to hurt yourself as well. Leading a person to sin is worse than just doing it yourself. There are many ways to cause another one to stumble.

Into sin. First illustration in the Bible. Adam and Eve. The world. Satan. Talked Eve in to eating the fruit. Adam had not yet eaten the fruit.

- [ 18 : 14 ] The devil talks Eve in to eating the fruit. Then Eve walks over and talks Adam in too. Adam wasn't even deceived. The Bible said he just did it willingly. But there Eve is convincing Adam to eat the fruit.

There's somebody bringing an offense that's going to bring big hurt. In Revelation chapter 2 and verse 14. There's a story of people that would teach the doctrine of Balaam.

In other words there were people in the New Testament still doing what old Balaam did in the Old Testament. You know about Balaam. Because you come on Sunday nights and Thursday nights. And you've read about him and heard about him. We spent time talking about him.

But he decided to cause God's people to not succeed. He tried to curse them. The curse didn't work. And when the curse didn't work he taught Balak.

The wicked king of the world. He taught him to put a stumbling block. Verse 14. Before the children of Israel. So they would sacrifice unto idols and commit fornication.

- [ 19 : 11 ] So he got them messed up. He got them to be a fornicating bunch of idol worshippers. And he accomplished his purpose. So he was one of them. And he brought sin.

Verse 29. I was sending out a few things against thee. Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel. Which calls herself a prophetess. To teach and to seduce my servants.

You cause. There's a woman in the church. That was teaching people to sin. It's this lady in the church. I don't know if her name was really Jezebel. Or they're just giving her that nickname. I remember one day in Peru.

This guy was having big problems with his wife. And they came to see me. And we're sitting in her office. And he introduced his wife to me. And her name's Delilah. And I went. Nobody would name their kid Delilah.

I said. You don't mean Delilah. I said. Not Delilah like in the Bible. He said. Yeah. I said. Oh Lord. If she lives up to her name. We got real problems. Amen. Well see. That's what's going on in the story.

- [ 20 : 10 ] There's a lady that was in the church. And if you look at the verse. She said. She was a teacher of the Bible. She said. She was a discipler. She said. She was doing it. But she was teaching people.

To commit fornication. She was like in the church. Saying. Hey. It's okay. A little sex is okay. Sex ends okay. She was bringing that offense. And she was in the church.

And is being warned against it. Are you ready for another one? We told about how you could do it inside the church. The world has offense. But it ought not be you.

The world has offense. But it ought not be you. It ought not be me. I don't mean just you. I mean us. It ought not be us. It ought to be one of them. If somebody. If it's got to be temptation. Let's let the world do it.

It's like. You know. If you're out there. And you know. Temptation's all around. Maybe you got your guard up. But maybe at church. You've lowered your guard. And you're saying. I can trust these people. It ought not be us.

- [ 21 : 06 ] Here's another one. We can provoke our children to anger. Maybe that happens in Christian families sometimes. Ephesians 6.4 says. And ye fathers.

Provoke not your children to wrath. But bring them up in the nurture. And the admonition of the Lord. Don't hurt your children. And cause them not to want to serve God. Don't do something.

That would cause your children not to want to serve God. Let me give you a few ideas. Showing favoritism. Towards one child over another. We know what that did in Esau and Jacob's life. It caused big trouble.

Don't show favoritism. That might provoke a child to wrath. Don't demand unrealistic achievements. So your kids can't ever live up to what you're asking them to.

And that will just cause them anger and hurt. And you may in your mind. You may in your mind be thinking. I'm just trying to get them to do their best. But if you go too far.

[ 22 : 03 ] And you push too hard. When they can't do it. When they can't do it. And every child is not the same. You may look at your older child. And say. My older child was great in math.

But my second child stinks in math. And so I'm mad. And I'm pushing to learn math. But the problem is. Maybe your second child. Not going to be so good in math. Maybe you ought to consider that. Or you could push too hard.

When you're a kid or grow up. Boy I've been such a bad dad at doing that. I've been such a bad pastor. I've been such a bad teacher. When I taught in school. Because sometimes. Don't we push too hard? Maybe when we shouldn't.

There's times to push. And times not to push. Or we could be showing. Something that provokes to wrath. Being critical. Being critical. By the way. They ought to be able to come into your house.

And know. And I'm home. I'm loved. I'm loved. I might be a bum. In everybody else's minds. But not my mama's. I might be the kid.

[ 22 : 58 ] That nobody else likes. But at home. I'm loved. My dad loves me. You could maybe provoke them to wrath. By being overprotective. Boy that could be a Baptist thing. Couldn't it?

Man you're so overprotective. Your kids never seen people. They even come to church. And look around and go. Wow. People. Because the only people they've ever seen. Is mama, daddy and other brothers and sisters.

Overprotective. Or over permissive. Just let anything go. It's okay. I trust my kid. Or not allowing to make their own mistakes. How many times does your kid get in trouble. And you're there to protect them.

When they need to learn from their mistakes. It's easier to learn from a little mistake. While you're little. Than it is a big mistake. When mom and dad can't be there. Or neglecting them. Or showing no interest in their opinions.

I grew up in a world and a time. When the idea was. To be seen. Children to be seen and not heard. So we don't talk to kids. We don't listen to kids. We're not interested in what kids think. That's probably not the best way to.

[ 23 : 57 ] Keep them from being. Not being provoked to anger. So as parents I could. The world's supposed to be the one that's hurting my kids. And making them walk away from God. I certainly don't want to be a dad doing that.

I certainly don't want to be a dad doing that. I certainly want to do what I can to help my kids. Another way the world does it. And we're not supposed to. It could be that we would give a sinful example as Christians.

It's a big deal. That you are always modeling. What godly people ought to do. Because everybody's watching you. In 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 12.

Paul wrote to Timothy. A young preacher out of his ministry. He said let no man despise thy youth. But be thou an example. Of the believers. And you realize how much we could.

Hurt other Christians. The world is supposed to hurt them. The world is supposed to make them want to walk away from God. But I'm afraid so many times it's been us. It's been preachers and church members.

[ 24 : 57 ] And holy deacons. And holy old ladies. In the church. And we've been just maybe not careful. With our own testimony. And being a good example. Or maybe the new thing is.

You know we don't want to be legalists. So we go so far the other way. That we're offending people. We don't want to be legalists. So we go too far the other way. Offending people. Don't make liberty for your satisfaction.

Look at what the Bible says in Romans 14 20. For meat. For food. Don't destroy the work of God. So don't say well I like. See they had this meat that was being offered to idols.

And it was a really good one. You could get a ribeye. At the store. For five bucks a pound. Or ten bucks a pound. Or fifteen bucks a pound. Or you could get one that sat. Or aged a little bit in front of the idol.

For a couple hours. You could get that for a dollar a pound. And so the one guy's doing it. Paul said look. I know there's nothing wrong with you eating that meat. But maybe that newer Christian is going to get offended by that. Be careful not to let your liberty.

[ 25 : 56 ] Look at verse 21. It's good neither to eat flesh nor drink wine or anything. That would cause my brother to stumble or be offended. Or be made weak.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 9. Don't let your liberty become a stumbling block. Verse 12. Don't wound their conscience.

Look at verse 13. Lest I make my brother to offend. So the world's tempting people. The world's doing everything it can to destroy us.

But let's don't let it happen inside of here. Let's don't let it be one of us. Let's don't let it be one of us. Let's be careful with our children. Let's be careful of our example. Let's be careful of what we teach.

Let's be careful because yeah there's going to be a lot of junk. But let's keep it out of here. That's what Jesus was telling them. Amen. Amen. How about this last one? If we don't teach them to follow Christ.

[ 26 : 53 ] In Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 24. Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 24. He said let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. In verse 25.

Exhorting one another. Did you know that did you realize everybody's watching you. And you could be in the church and saying man I hope you're reading your Bible and praying. Let me share with you something God's showing me.

Hey won't you come to church and be with me. Won't you learn to pray. Let's pray together so you can learn to pray with me. Why don't you learn to give like I give. Why don't you learn. Let me share my life with you.

That way instead of tearing them down we'd be building them up. But so many of us come to church and we say. Well I'm not. The world is making offenses and I'm not the guy making an offense. But you're not doing anything on the other side either.

You're like I'm just here. I don't encourage them to sin. But I don't encourage them to serve God. I just sit here. Could that be the same kind of offense? Why in the world do our young people walk away from God so quickly?

[ 27 : 54 ] Why in the world? Because maybe a church no one ever took the time to share with them what God was doing. What if the teenagers and the young adults and the young married couples had older people that said. Let me encourage you.

Let me motivate you. Let me help you. Because see there is trouble on the outside. There is a lot of temptation on the outside to walk away from God. And we get inside the church and we know it man.



Us preachers we've been the worst lot of all haven't we? I blame it on us first. We're jerks. We've been rude to people. We've preached hard messages. We've shown our temper. We've acted ugly.

And we've fallen in sin. And we've caused all kinds of problems. And church people want to leave. But it ain't just preachers. It's deacons and Sunday school teachers and regular church members.

Hey the world's got enough. Let's don't let it be us. The world's got enough. Let's don't let it be us. You can say well everybody else is what reason caused my kids to leave.

[ 28 : 51 ] Maybe not. Maybe you're not worried about the example. Maybe you're not sharing Christ. Third thing in this passage of scripture. Found in verse 8. We must take drastic measures with sin.

Drastic measures with sin. This passage of scripture is like highly misunderstood. And highly twisted. And not compared with other scriptures.

But Jesus said. He's talking to his guys. And you know. I remember we started off this conversation about do we pay the tax? Let's don't offend. Let's pay the tax. Then they come in bragging about who's going to be the greatest.

And he said what are you trying to be the greatest for? Instead of trying to be the greatest. Why don't you serve and think about your brother? Why don't you serve and think about your brother? And now he said don't offend anybody. And he said look.

Offenses will come from on the outside. And offenses can come on the inside. But it ought not be one of you. And then he said. And by the way. If you've got a sin problem. Let's just cut your hand off. Let's cut your foot off.

[ 29 : 50 ] Let's just pluck your eye out. Let's just throw it. Because you don't want to go to hell having two feet. That's what he's going to say. So what in the world? Lord help me. That's ridiculous.

But it's really not as ridiculous as it sounds when you understand all the scriptures and what the Bible said about it. So let me take you to Colossians chapter 3 and verse 5.

And remind you of an even stronger or possibly stronger saying that echoes the same truth. In Colossians 3, 5 he said mortify.

Do you know what mortify means? Draw a circle around the word mortify and draw it out to the margin and write mortician. Now that's pretty drastic. It's one thing to get your hand cut off.

It's another thing to mortify. To put to death. Write that in the margin. To put to death. You're going to put to death. Your members. Not just going to cut off.

[ 30 : 45 ] You're going to put to death. Your members upon the earth. Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence. Look at verse 8. Put off these. Anger, wrath, malice.

Verse 9. Put off the old man. Verse 10. Put on the new man. So here's a Bible thing. What is it that's causing you problems? What is it that's keeping you from serving God?

What is it that's taking you down the sin path? And I think to be honest we all deal with that. I think if we were telling the truth every one of us. There's junk goes on in our life.

There's stuff in our life that causes us not to walk with God. It could be things we watch. Things we listen to. Places we go. Friends we have.

And he's saying serving God's more important. Serving God's more important. My marriage is more important than me looking at Betty and saying I could eat lunch with that lady.

[ 31 : 41 ] And you shouldn't be worried about it. I should just say no, no, no. I'll cut that off. I'll mortify that. I won't do that. Loving Betty ought to be more than me being. It ought to be me being willing to say I'll never look at porn because you're worth that.

Here's what he said. We don't want to offend anybody. We want to help people serve Jesus. And if you have something that's just eating your lunch spiritually. You know the old.

You heard the old story about the cowboy. They said when he got saved he'd always. Before he got saved he'd always hitched his horse in front of the bar. And everybody knew if he was in town because his horse was hitching rail out in front of the bar.

But after he got saved he started hitching in front of the hardware store. And people say he ain't in town. They said check over on the other side. And when they checked there that's where his horse was. And he said I can't hitch up where I used to.

Because I'm not a mess up. I can't go the same place I used to go. Can't do what I used to do. I need to cut off my hand. Not literally. We're not going to cut off anybody's hand today.

[ 32 : 44 ] And you might have seen some stupid movie where somebody took a hot spoon and plucked somebody's eye out. And they're mocking Christianity. That's not what he was talking about. He was talking about what is it. It's not your hand by the way that does the stealing.

It's your heart that does the stealing. Huh. It's not your eye that does the looking. It's your heart that wants you out of the look. So he was just saying to you. Take drastic measures.

How about this one? In 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 27. The apostle Paul said. I keep under my body and bring it into subjection. Lest that by any means when I preach to others I myself become a castaway.

So get rid of habits. And situations. And relationships. Anything that causes you to stumble and fall spiritually. Sin is not more important than the Savior.

Sin is not more important than the Savior. We turn from our sin to the Savior. This is kind of an aside here. It's in the passage though.

[ 33 : 50 ] Hell is real. He just mentioned it and just went on. Because he knew they all knew. That's 2015. And y'all are kind of like. Well maybe hell doesn't exist. But if you look in Matthew chapter 25 and verse 41.

You'll find out it is real. In Matthew chapter 18. In Matthew chapter 18. He said cut off your hand. Cut off your foot. You don't want to suffer forever. And hell fire. Matthew chapter 25 and verse 41.

We find out God created hell for the devil and his angels. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand. Depart from me you cursed. Into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

In Revelation chapter 20 and verse 10. The devil and the false prophet and the beast will be cast in the lake of fire and brimstone. They will be tormented forever and ever.

You need to know. No matter how much is out of the pulpit now. No matter how much people kind of overlook hell. Jesus didn't overlook hell.

[ 34 : 53 ] He was not afraid to mention hell just like this. He mentioned hell like I could say Atlanta. I could tell you if you go 400 south and head that way you're going to Atlanta.

You'll get to Atlanta if you keep on there. I could say that. Y'all would all be like yeah well everybody knows that. He said I'd cut off my hand and I'd cut off my foot and I'd pluck out my eye for I'd want to go to never lasting fire and never lasting hell.

He just said it like it's okay. That's the truth. So there is a hell. And people go there. And they're tormented. It's everlasting. It was made for the devil and his angels.

If your name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. That is your future. Matthew chapter 18 and verse 10. Matthew chapter 18 and verse 10.

Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones. For I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven. So what happens is in church.

[ 35 : 55 ] And if you're one of those mighty apostles that wants to know who's the greatest. We're kind of like it really don't matter what the teenagers think of us. And it don't matter what that guy over there or that lady over there or that person over there thinks.

And we despise these little ones. This isn't talking about children. It is children also. But it's also just a brother or sister who doesn't have position. Let me just explain something to you about pastors.

I'm going to tell you the blunt truth. We do not want to offend money people. I mean we're going to work at it. If I think what I'm about to say is going to hurt that money guy and he's going to leave the church.

I just ain't saying it. Because good night. I know what will happen. He leaves. We're in trouble. But there's this other guy comes to church. And he's a nobody. And he can't give any money.

And all of a sudden we're like. Don't matter. I'll just rip him. Well he said no, no, no, no, no, no, no. You don't do that. You don't decide how to preach based on who's sitting there.

[ 36 : 54 ] You don't decide how to live based on who it is. To despise is to look down on them and consider them inferior. Not worth our consideration or care.

To see them as though they were worthless. We despise others when we flaunt our liberty. We despise others when we show partiality. When we give a certain seat to a guy because we think he deserves a better seat.

When we treat him differently because they have more to offer the church. We despise when we think of our needs and our wants and not those of others.

We despise when we mock externals. Somebody comes in the door. But if they're dressed in a three-piece suit driving a nice car. We're going to be like. Woo. Glad you're here. Somebody comes in smelling a little bit like they haven't had a bath.

And maybe they got a lot of marks on their body or whatever. And then we all look at them like. Yeah. We're not sure we want you. And he said. No, no, no, no. That's not how we treat people. That's not how we treat people.

[ 37 : 54 ] We despise others when we judge others that have fallen in sin. And we think. Well, they deserve it. We despise others when we use them to accomplish our purposes. And our goals.

It's easy not to worry about little people. The apostles are worried about their position and their power. They're forgetting so many others and seem to forget that others are important to God too.

You know. Fact is, sometimes a dad can let you rough up his older kid and play rough with his older kid a lot quicker than he can his little kid.

Because his little kid needs somebody to punch him, punch you for him. The older kid, he might say, you just punch. Go ahead, son. Punch him. I'll watch. Don't mess with the little kid. He said, don't you mess with my little ones.

Don't you walk around like certain people are worth more than others are. God's watching him and listening to him. He's got an angel in heaven speaking.

[ 38 : 54 ] I got one minute. And I got three pages. So watch this real quick. Now, the last of point number five is he cares about the individual. There's a wonderful truth in this passage.

Starting in verse 11, 1811. And let me just sum up the story for you real quick. Here's the story. There's a hundred sheep and one is missing. And he's more worried about the one than he is the 99.

That's the story. He's worried about the one instead of the 99. So understand that our God cares about the little people. Our God cares about the people nobody else cares about.

Our God cares about that other guy. We're all in here like, hey, there's 99 of us and we're doing good. And he's like, yeah, but there's one missing and I'm going for him. He's a sweet God. You came today and you say, I don't measure up.

And the other 99 here, they look really good. And I don't think I measure up to him. And he'd be like, yeah, but I'm worried about you more than I'm the 99. That's what he'd be saying. In Romans chapter 5 and verse 6, he said, when you were yet, when we were, when we were yet without strength, underline without strength.

[ 40 : 00 ] In due time, Christ died for the ungodly. We were without strength and ungodly. And that's when he died. 580 said, while we were yet sinners, Christ died.

Jesus isn't worried about the numbers. He's worried about the individual. You matter to him. You matter to him. He loves you this morning.

He is glad you're here. And maybe nobody else cares about you, but the God of heaven cares about you. And Jesus said, boys, let me explain something to you. I like the individual. I'm looking for him.

He doesn't want anybody to be lost. In Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 9, he said, by the grace of God, that Jesus should taste death for every man. In 1 Timothy 2, 3, he said, it's good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come into the knowledge of the truth.

Verse 6, who gave himself a ransom for all. Paul said, that's why I'm a preacher, because God wants them all to be saved. In 1 John 2, 2, he said, not for, he's a perpetuation for our sins, but not ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

[ 41 : 06 ] Did you know Jesus is the kindest person that ever walked this planet? And the Bible teaches us that. Somehow you get twisted. You've got this false idea. Your theology leads you to a kind of a rough Jesus.

Look what it says in Matthew 12, 14. Matthew 12, 14. Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him and how they might destroy him. In verse 15, the multitudes followed him and he healed all of them.

Look at it. Last part. He healed them all. And then they said, this is so he could fulfill what the prophet Isaiah said. And in verse 18, he said, he will show judgment. He'll give an answer, how to think, how to turn to the Gentiles.

Gentiles, I'm here to give you help. I'm here for you. Verse 19. Listen to this. This is wild. He will not strive nor cry. He was like, what that means is he ain't going to be yelling at nobody.

He ain't going to be fighting with nobody. Look at that. Verse 19. Verse 20, he said, a bruised reed he shall not break. You know, in other words, like you're down at the flower shop and you're fixing to stick some reeds or some kind or some kind of plant in there.

[ 42 : 16 ] And you notice a bruised part and you take the scissor and you throw it away. He said, no, no, no. He won't do that. That's ridiculous. He won't do that. You might be bruised and messed up this morning, but he ain't looking to cut you off.

He won't even hurt a bruised reed. That's what it says in the verse. Look at it. He won't break it. And there's a smoking flax and he won't quench it. You ever, you ever, back in the old days when you had candles and, or, or, or, or kerosene lamps and you get ready to put it out and it's still smoldering and the smoke's still coming up?

He said, well, there's still a little life. I ain't giving up yet. Isn't that sweet? He's a good God. Say amen there. He's a good God. But Luke chapter nine and verse 56, he said, the son of man didn't come to destroy people.

Oh, read that verse. Read that verse. The son of man has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. You want to hear a wild one? He rejoices when one gets saved.

And Luke 15, 70 said there's likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents. More than over 99 just people who needs no repentance. He cares about you.

[ 43 : 28 ] Your mama might not care. Your daddy might not care. Your neighbors might not care. No one may care about you, but he cares. You may have come hurt and bruised and about to extinguish the life in you.

You're just at the end of your rope and you're like, nobody cares. He cares for you. There's 99 good ones, but he's looking for you. That's what the passage says.

And by the way, the whole passage is don't offend people. Not even that little guy. That one that came today, you love him. That one that came today that no one else would hope for, you love him.

I want him saved. I want him to go to heaven. So you're here and you're wondering, I don't know if I fit in. This church looks like a whole bunch of people got everything together. I'll just give you a hint. Jesus is looking down saying, I ain't talking to 99.

I'm talking to you. I'm not talking to 99. I'm talking to you. I love you. You came bruised and you came hurting and you came about ready to end it all.

[ 44 : 31 ] But I'd never hurt you. I didn't come to destroy men's lives. I came to save them. And you can be saved today. And I invite you today to put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Who died on the cross and paid your sin debt for you.

I invite you. Today's the day you can be saved. Today's the day you can have all that sin and all that mess and all that bruising can be taken care of by Jesus. It can all be taken care of by Jesus.

All that smoldering wick that's about to go out. It's like my life is just a waste and burned out. And I don't know if I even deserve to live. He's here saying, I'm here for you.

I'm here for you. I'll make a difference in your life. And for you Christians, I would just say, he doesn't want us hurting even the least. He wants us to be real careful about our testimony.

Because a lot of people could get hurt. Father in heaven, would you deal with your people? Would you save somebody here today? Would you impress on their heart how much you love them?

[ 45 : 28 ] And let today be the day they put their trust in you. Would you do that, God? Would you please deal with their heart? Would you please help them to open their heart? Would you uncover their eyes and not stick their ears so that they would listen and they'd be, they'd see their sin.

They'd see their hurt and they'd realize you love them. Would you do that right now and save somebody? I beg you. With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. And you're in here in the room today and you'd say, I'm not sure that I would go to heaven if I died.

And I feel kind of like that bruised reed. I feel kind of like that smoking flax. I feel kind of like nobody cares about me. But he does. And if today you're listening and you say, I'm not going to go to heaven when I die.

I'm not sure my sins are forgiven. But today I'm ready to trust Jesus. If you hold your hand up, I'll get a counselor to come to you. He'll open the Bible and he'll show you from the Word of God how you can be saved.

We'll answer your questions and we'll help you know him. Would there be anybody like that? Would you just hold your hand up? I've got people standing by ready right now to help you if you'd let us help you. Would there be anybody?

[ 46 : 29 ] Would there be anybody? Now to our brothers and sisters in Christ, he cares about the broken, bruised reed. He cares about the little flax that's still smoking.

He cares. And I'm asking you today, are you careful that offense isn't coming from you? Are you careful that God is working in your life, that you're motivating others?

There's a whole lot in the message today. There's a whole lot. Maybe it's time for you to pray and say, God, I haven't been taken seriously. My position of blessing others and helping others and serving others.

But starting today, I will. With your head bowed and your eyes closed, you can pray in your seat or you can pray here at the front. But I'm asking you to make a decision. He spoke to you. It's not time for you to speak to him.

He dealt with your heart. Now answer him and tell him you will be used. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. For more information, log on to [www.visionbaptist.com](http://www.visionbaptist.com), where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.

[ 47 : 34 ] Thanks.