

Question and Answer

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Alright, we will have a first question. And to see if I can answer that question, in a couple of questions we'll take up an offering.

Why don't you have a beard? Because I am a manless... I am not man enough to tell my wife what to do. Like Jeff Bush should be able to pull off and get his wife to allow him to wear a beard.

Like Brother Mize, who needs to be disciplined in our church. Because he told me this morning, I walked by him, I said, are you growing a beard? He said, brother, I'll shave it by tonight if you won't discipline me.

But he hadn't shaved it. He hasn't shaved it. And so I went over to him and he left. But he came back like a bad penny. He just showed right back up. But anyway, I have... My wife doesn't like them and I probably don't look that good with or without it.

So that's why. How about a real question? Are there two judgment seats, one for believers and unbelievers? That's... Believers.

[0 : 59] Yes. There is a definite difference between the believers seat and the unbelievers seat. You know, what I'm about to say to you, there are plenty of people that would take exception and argue.

I tend to be a dispensationalist, which is not that popular because the Reformed crowd has kind of taken over. But I believe that God has worked with people in different ways.

Always salvation has been by grace. And I'm not what they would call a hyper dispensationalist. So I believe that there are two judgments. One judgment is called the judgment seat of Christ.

At the judgment seat of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10, or 10, 5. Try 5, 10. 2 Corinthians 5, 10. We're just guessing there. See what that says.

But the one for us is, We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he had done, whether it be good or bad, whether it was worth something or whether it was worthless.

[2 : 04] And so we do not get condemned. We never go to a judgment where God brings up our past. Romans chapter 8, verse 1, Canon, Romans chapter 8, verse 1, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, to them which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

So what happens is when you get saved, all your condemnation is put on Jesus. This is a beautiful thing. All your condemnation is put on Jesus. He carried our sin debt. All of our sin debt.

What we owe today, what we owe tomorrow, what we owe in the future, what we owe in the past was all put on Jesus. He carries it all. Some of you get confused when you read chapter 8, verse 1, and you think that there's a conditional clause there.

It says, Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. So you think that means as long as I do good, that there's no condemnation. That's not what that means. We don't walk after the flesh. We do not walk after the flesh.

We are of the Spirit. So I need you to go to Romans, try Romans 8 and 9. It's right in there. So we'll just see if I'm anywhere near close to it. Listen, kid.

[3 : 13] Did you put four up there? You were probably right. Smarter than I am. Go ahead. Let's go back to your verse. These kids are trying to outdo me back here. You know, the right son of a man, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

That's still confusing. Go on down about 9. Let's try 9. But ye are not in the flesh. Look at that. Underline that in your Bible. You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

If so be that the Spirit of Christ dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he's none of his. So either you're in the Spirit and you have the Spirit, or you're not in the Spirit and you're not his.

It's I'm in the Spirit and I have the Spirit, and so I do not walk after the flesh. There are two families here, Spirit family, flesh family. So there's a reward seat for us. And I believe, now let me just say this, this is some speculation.

I think a lot of good Bible teachers have believed this. I believe that we live, and there are crowns that are offered to us, things that we can overcome in temptation, being a good pastor, being a soul winner.

[4 : 17] There's five of them, and I can't name all five off the top of my head right now, at least five possibly mentioned in the Bible. And we will receive rewards. God's going to reward us. We're getting a reward.

The word for judgment seat of Christ in the Greek is bima, which is a reward seat. It's like the Olympic seat. It's the word that would be used for that seat. So you and I will be giving, we'll be giving crowns.

We'll be giving these rewards. In Revelation chapter 4, somewhere around verse 10, 11, 9, 10, 11, 12, right in there, because I think it ends right about there. We will cast our crowns.

The 24 elders cast their crowns before his feet. And so we will be rewarded for the things that we've done in the power of the Holy Spirit and his working in us. We get rewarded.

We take those and we cast them at the feet of Jesus. So we have a different judgment. You do. You need to understand the day you got saved. Three major things happened to you. John 5, 24, John 5, 24, three major things happened to you.

[5 : 14] You all know this. You use this when you, when you're teaching somebody. Verily, verily, I send you, he that, I send you, he that hears my word and believes on him that sent me three things. You have everlasting life.

I have it. I'm not going to get it. Not potential. It's mine. It's now. I have it. I own it. I possess it. I am more of an owner of my salvation, my everlasting life than I am my house.

My house is quite conditional still to be blunt honest. My house is quite conditional because of two things. Number one is conditional because I still have a mortgage to pay. And if I don't pay it, they'll come get it.

Well, they won't get it. They just put me in the street and keep the house. Number two, even if I had my house paid for, if you have your house completely paid for, you either pay your taxes or they'll take it away from you.

So you don't really, really, really, really, really have your house. You have your house on a condition. We have eternal life. Look at the verse. We have eternal life. Not because we earned it, not because it belongs to us, but because Jesus gave it to us.

[6 : 15] Amen. He said, you heard my word and you believed on him that sent me. You have everlasting life. But then it says, look at the verse, it shall not come into condemnation.

I grew up believing, scared to death. I was going to Baptist purgatory that someday they're going to throw this big screen up in my life and they were going to bring out every word I'd ever said, every word, out of word I'd ever used.

That's for lost people. And I could just imagine my life. But I knew that though I have, quote unquote, been a good boy, man, my heart's not always been good.

And as I prepared the message there, I thought about how I know God knows everything I've ever thought, every failure I've ever had in my head. And I thought that was all going to get played. But that's not going to happen to us.

We shall not come into condemnation. We shall not come into condemnation. Preachers like to guilt you and manipulate you, but you're saved. And the Lord's taken all that.

[7 : 12] But we have also third passed from death to life. So our reward seat, that's what it is, a reward seat. So I'm serving you because I want to give him back something he's done in my life. And I'll do that all through his power.

Now go to Revelation chapter 20. And I'm going to guess verse 11. Revelation chapter 20 and verse 11. And we may have to go up or down. There it is. 20, 11. I saw a great, great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

So there's a judgment seat of Christ. That's for us. Judgment seat of Christ. Your salvation doesn't depend on whether or not you agree with me on this, by the way. This is, there are differences of opinions.

And if you don't agree with me, I just think you're wrong. You might be right, but I think you're wrong. And so there's a whole movement that they're called preterist. And they think that the book of Revelation has already taken place.

I do not believe that. That is a result of the reformed crowd or the, or the Calvinistic crowd. But I believe that there's a coming a day when there'll be a great white throne and Jesus will sit on that throne.

[8 : 18] He will judge the entire world. 5, 5, 20, 11 says great white throne and him that sat on it. The earth flees away. The heaven flees away. There's no place found for him. Verse, verse 12, please.

And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God. And the books were open. And another book was open, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Now we don't get judged according to our works. We don't, we get judged according to our works in the sense of reward, but not in the sense of, okay, Austin lied, bad work. And that's not how we're getting judged.

All of my bad works were put on Jesus. And then Jesus helped me do good works. And that's a wild thought. All my bad was put on Jesus. And then he helped me do good works so he could reward me for doing good works for him that he did through me.

Paul said in, in first Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 10, I am what I am by the grace of God. Everything I am, it's because of the grace of God, but I did work harder than all of them. And his grace wasn't in vain of me, but, but, but I am what I am by the grace of God.

[9 : 20] That's Austin Gardner's translation of chapter 15 and verse 10. And, and so God's doing a work in me. I do work, but it's God doing a work in me. But these guys here, their name is not found. So go back to Rome, Revelation 20, verse 12.

Their name is not found written in the last book of life. Revelation chapter 20, verse 12. I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. The books were open. Another book was open, which is the book of life.

The dead were judged out of those things, which are written in the books according to their works. Verse 13. And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it, and the death and hell delivered up the dead, which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works.

Verse 14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Verse 15. I think it'll be the last one. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Now, let me show you something. They're judged according to their works. I'm judged according to his work. You should get that and write that down. That's good stuff. You say, did you come up with it? No. I heard it. But it's good stuff.

[10 : 18] They're judged according to their works. I'm judged according to his works. And so I'm going to heaven. You say, how do you know you're going to heaven? Because he did a good job. Because he did a good job. You say, what about you?

How good are you doing? Not that good. I'm not claiming anything for myself except this. If I glory, let me glory in the cross of Jesus Christ where all my sins were hung.

So, yeah, there's two judgments. A judgment seat of Christ. It's a good question. Judgment seat of Christ and a great white throne. There's more judgments than that actually. But those are the two main judgments that we would talk about.

One more question and we'll take up the whole, we will take up the Holy Spirit. Well, that was good. One more question. We'll have a song and take up the offering for tonight.

When do we receive the Holy Spirit? Yeah, I think that, I don't know what your question, let me, I'm going to give you two answers. If you're wondering about the book of Acts and speaking in tongues, that was an introduction of the Holy Spirit.

[11 : 21] The book of Acts is what we call a transition book. We're transitioning out of the, the kingdom age, transitioning out of Israel age into the church age. And God was doing some things.

And he had apostles and had great signs and great wonders that they did. They were called the signs of an apostle. And, and so the Holy Spirit comes on the church there in power. Exactly when they received him could have been in John chapter 20, when he breathed on them and said, receive you my spirit, or it could be there in Acts chapter two, either one, but you and I received the Holy Spirit.

The minute we are saved, go back to Romans chapter eight. And I think it was verse 11. But we received the Holy Spirit. The minute we're saved. He moves into us.

He moves into us. 10. Was it 10? You had it while I go, but in nine, try nine. And that's it. Okay.

So what happens the day I get saved, the Holy Spirit moves in. I am the temple of the Holy Spirit. That's first Corinthians three, first Corinthians six, in Romans chapter eight and verse nine, the Bible says, you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.

[12 : 28] If so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he's done of his. Now watch this. So if you're at, if the question comes, because you're thinking in terms of speaking in tongues, or the baptism of the Holy ghost, or whatever you might hear about charismatic doing, the Holy spirit was never about speaking in tongues.

That he was never about speaking. It was, he was about speaking the word with boldness. And actually they weren't seeking some experience when they stood up and spoke. They actually spoke in Hebrew and it got heard in all the different languages in Acts chapter two.

And there's like, I think it was 18 languages or so, 20 languages or so. And they heard it. I told that to charismatic one time in Peru. And he said, that can't be true. That were true. Because the gift of ears, not the gift of tongues.

But the whole point was a man spoke and they all heard it in their own language. They couldn't understand how that happened. We don't seek an experience like that. We don't seek an experience.

We don't seek. I need to get goosebumps. I need to cry. I need to roll around on the floor. I need to run the aisle. We don't seek that. We just know that we take the word of God at face value.

[13 : 39] What it says, we believe that. So speaking in tongues in the Bible was about having, was about the Holy Spirit coming on them and them speaking the gospel. It was never about a messed up language.

It's not a real language. I'll throw this at you because I don't know where the question came from. Throw the question back up one more time, Ken. But let me just say this to you. I have met plenty of charismatic missionaries and they all go to language school.

And they may have the gift of tongues, but they can't speak Spanish as good as I can. And I remember I asked one of them, I said, I said, do you have the gift of tongues? He said, yeah. I said, well, boy, you sure got a strong accent.

I said, it's a lot stronger accent than I got. And he said, hey, brother, the spirit, the gift of tongues don't help us learn languages. Okay. You don't understand that one. Didn't make a lot of sense to me. You speak it in a foreign language.

God give you a heavenly language. He can't give you an earthly language. So when do we receive the spirit? The day you get saved, he moves in. You are his temple. He lives in you. And you get all of him.

[14 : 39] The thought of praying, God, give me more of the Holy Spirit is really dumb. You get all of him. He comes in. Now, he don't have all of you. That's a different issue.

But it ain't like God says, I'll save you and I'll give you my foot. And if you're real good, I'll throw a whole leg in. And if you really keep working hard, I'll move in half my body. That's not how it works. What happens is, he comes in to rule and reign and live in us.

And we surrender our lives to him. We yield our lives to him. So you receive the Holy Spirit on the day you got saved. And if you didn't, you didn't get saved. Don't be intimidated. Don't be intimidated by people who have extra, they have all the experience, or they do all that other stuff.

You don't need to be intimidated by that. And this, let me just say this to you. You don't run on emotions. Our church is kind of an emotionalist church in a lot of ways. I preach, you don't exactly shout amen.

There's a video on the internet of a church, and they're going crazy. And this guy's running around slinging his tie, and he throws it over the pastor's head, and dives into the baptistry. And he dives into the baptistry.

[15 : 48] In a suit and shoes. And I thought to myself, boy, I'd have had to been drunk on the Holy Spirit to ruin my clothes that cost so much money. But the guy did it. So all I'm going to say to you is, we, you know, let me explain something to you.

Nothing wrong when you have any emotions, laughing, crying, or whatever. But don't blame a lot of that on God. A lot of that's your personality. What it amounts to is this. We are not feeling based.

We are faith based. We are truth based. We read the Bible. Now, should I feel? Of course I should. But you're not going to feel every day all the time. You're not going to exactly always be hyped up, and emotional, at anything.

So, that's not your goal. Your goal is this. You got saved. He moved in. You became the temple of the Holy Ghost. He dwells in you. You're going to heaven. Some days you're going to have some really emotional days.

You say, boy, God just really touched my heart. And other days, not so much. You say, Austin, how often do you feel all emotional in Jesus? Not that often. I just get up and do what I'm supposed to do.

[16:52] I just get up and obey God. And so what if I wake up on a Sunday morning, and I don't feel like coming to church? Okay, that would happen quite often. So it's not a big deal. I just get up and come to church anyway. What do you do on Monday when you got to go to work?

You know, what do you do about reading your Bible? Well, I just read it. You say, well, do you just really have this urge and feeling to read the Bible? No? Not really. Some people say to me, brother, I just want God to give me a desire to read His Word.

What? Okay, that's ridiculous. Just do what you know you're supposed to do. Amen? Spend time with God. Don't wait on God to give you some oozy-goozy feeling. You know, I'd give a better offering if God had just touched my heart.

Just tell me who you are. I'll have the deacons install electrodes in your seat, and we'll give you a feeling. We don't go by feeling. We go by obedience. Amen? And last thing on that question, because I think the Holy Spirit, when that question comes up, almost always, somebody's thinking about feelings.

You know, you won't have a good marriage if you go on feelings. You won't have a good marriage if you want feelings. Because marriages are built on commitment.

[18:00] Commitment. And that doesn't mean you don't have a good time. That doesn't mean you don't enjoy it. That doesn't mean there aren't emotional times. But you know what? What makes a marriage stay together is, I made a commitment.

And I keep my Word. And it works on every day. I get up and take the next step I'm supposed to take. But don't look for God to do big, earth-shattering things. Don't look for God to make you holy in one day.

It's just not going to happen. You're going to get up tomorrow, and you're going to have to deal with life. And the Holy Spirit came into your life not to, you know, He didn't solve their problem either.

They don't float through the air. They can put on shows at church. But really living is this. I get up and I do what God's called me to do, and led me to do, and that's what I'm going to do. Okay, brother, can a person be saved if he does not make Jesus the Lord of his life?

That's a trap question. I'm going to tell you, I don't think he can be. I don't think that you can come to Jesus on your own terms and be saved. I don't think you can say to Him, I want you to be my Savior, but you can't be my Lord, and you can't tell me what to do.

[19:11] Now, let me explain. That's called Lordship Salvation. So I want to explain what that means. There is a work-based way of saying that, and that is you've got to change all these things, and you've got to do all these things to be saved.

I do not believe that at all. I don't believe you have to change anything. But I do believe in your heart there's an attitude that says, I turn from my sin, and I turn to Jesus. I reject my sin, and I receive my King.

And that doesn't mean that you're perfect. It doesn't mean that you fixed everything. But it definitely does mean that you're accepting Him as Lord, that you are saying He's King. I mean, you can't make Jesus King.

He's King. And His way of talking to people in the New Testament was harsh. Can we just say that a flippant way of telling people to get saved is, I think, a very dangerous thing.

So people are like, just pray the prayer. Well, He was never like that Himself. A rich young ruler comes to Him and He says, what must I do? And Jesus said, well, keep the commandments. I've done that all my life.

[20 : 11] Which was a typical attitude among the religious people, the Jewish religious people. Paul said it in Philippians 3. He said, if you want to talk about me keeping the law, I was blameless. I've always done everything right.

That's pretty bad. Later on, though, Paul said, He saved me. I was the chief of sinners. Chief of sinners. And so, I would say to you that you and I come to Christ saying this, I give up.

I surrender. I yield. I turn from my way to your way. And so, no, you don't have to quit smoking, drinking, cussing, dancing, and going with them that do, which is an old-fashioned saying.

You say it as a kid, as a church. You don't have to do all that, but you do have to say this, I'm turning to Jesus. I'm turning to Jesus as King and turning to Him as Lord.

And I am really kind of against, not kind of, I'm against anybody who would just say, pray the prayer. Flippantly ask Jesus to come into your life and save you. Get some life insurance. Get some fire insurance.

[21 : 07] I don't believe that. I believe you turn to Him. He said, if you're not willing to hate your mother and your father, you can't be my disciple. And when He used the word disciple there, He was not talking about an apostle. He was talking about a saved person.

You're turning to Jesus. And He is Lord of your life. Next one. Well, as a man in Matthew 9, a believer, could Jesus just forgive his sins without Him believing?

Well, first off, let me just say that, yeah, He can do anything He wants to do. So, okay, let's clear up something. He's God. He can do anything He wants to do. There are two or three things God can't do.

I would like to clarify that. He cannot lie. The only reason He can't lie is He said He couldn't. Because if He didn't say that, He could have lied. But He can do anything He wants to because He is God Almighty. I mean, we are, you know, I think most of us never, we don't comprehend who we are.

Our world is totally insignificant. In the scheme of time, in the scheme of God, we're nothing. We're kind of like if you took a little drop of water and you put it on a slide and you looked through a microscope and you saw those little germs running around and you said, look at them little bit germs.

[22 : 17] That's about how God looks at us. We just don't measure up. But I believe He came believing. And Jesus could have forgiven His sins without it, but He doesn't do that. He believed.

He came and He believed. You say, well, does that end the story? Well, not except that Jesus said to Him, be of good cheer. And I think He, you know, I would say to you, He would not have come had He had not been believing.

He would not allow Him to take Him and He was believing. So, the answer is, yes He could, no He doesn't. Yes He could, no He doesn't. He can do anything He wants to do.

I think it would be a harsh thing for you. We need to realize this. Nobody in this room understands the Bible. Are you ready for that? We don't understand the Bible. We understand the best way we can. But we are like little microscopic ants trying to understand a super, a gigantic God who is so big that He calls the earth a footstool for Him.

Who says, with His own fingers He can dip out the ocean. I mean, He just reached out with a finger, that would be the Pacific. Those are all terms used to show us His greatness. But I don't believe He saves you without your believing He saved Him because He did trust Him.

[23 : 28] How much and what type of physical activity do you recommend between male, female friends or boyfriend, girlfriend? Get married.

And then it all bets are off. That would be the way to go. Amen. 1 Corinthians 7, verse 1 says, it's good for a man not to touch a woman.

But since you're going to be burned up with lust anyway, get your wife. That's what it says in 1 Corinthians 7, 1 and 2. It's right there. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband.

I personally am a believer in fairly short engagement periods because men and women like to do things, young men and young women like to do things that ought to be saved for marriage. And if they have a very long engagement, those things can end up happening.

So I would just say to you, honor the Lord. You know, I don't think anybody ought to draw any rules for you. I think that in my past I would have given you a specific list of things you shouldn't do.

[24 : 41] You shouldn't be holding hands, you shouldn't be hugging, you shouldn't be kissing, you shouldn't be petting, and so on. And I think you know what you shouldn't do. I grew up, I grew up in a home where that really wasn't talked about and I knew what was right and wrong.

So anything that incites an activity in you that you should not do until you're married, you should lay off of that. And so that means I would suggest that you work at being very respectful of your girlfriend.

She's not yours. My favorite passage would be 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 1-8. I won't take the time to preach that to you, but 1 Thessalonians 4, we're seeking, could you throw up maybe verse 8, 1 Thessalonians 4, 8, I'm guessing.

7, 6. I'm good. Let no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any time.

Don't go steal from your brother. The Lord is avenger of all such who do that and you've been forewarned and testified. And look, you find the verse where it says there that it's about holiness or sanctification and not fornication.

[25 : 53] There's a verse that's going to say something like that right in there. You can flip that up for me. And I'll show you. So let me just say this. You know, God, the Bible's very clear. There should be no sex before marriage.

There should be no sex before marriage. We abstain from fornication. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication. And so I would strongly suggest that you do whatever it takes to help you keep pure.

Fornication doesn't mean simply the act. Fornication is from a word that means porneal, which means sexual sin. It could involve pornography.

It could involve sexting where you send pictures of your body. That would all be something a Christian ought not want to do. You ought to keep those things. The beauty of a marriage ought to be, I save myself for my wife.

My wife saves herself for me. And we respect that about each other. And so I hope that you would, I hope that you would be very careful. Stay around, stay around other people.

[26 : 57] Don't be alone in dark alleys. Young guys have a very hard time controlling themselves. And if they don't admit that, they're lying. Guys have a hard time controlling themselves. Girls probably have a tad more control.

Guys are perverts. I am one. I know they are. So, next question. Did King Saul go to heaven? I don't know.

We get to heaven. We'll find out. I think he did. Very likely ten Bible scholars in this room don't think he did. So I think he did.

I think he was anointed. I think the Lord put his blessing on him. I don't know that he went to heaven. I think he went to heaven. I think he acted like an idiot. And he went to heaven early and he messed up.

So I personally think he went to heaven. That's not the kind of question you should... We don't fight over that. I think he went to heaven. And I think that... I think that... He, as a Christian, didn't...

[27 : 55] Or as a follower of Jesus, a follower of God, he didn't do what he ought to have done. Didn't live out his faith. But I personally believe he was saved. But I wouldn't argue with you. If you came to me and said, I don't think he was.

I'd go, okay. Follow me. Next. Now, that's the kind of question I can answer. Bible question. I couldn't answer that one. What's the difference in serve and train?

So if you look over here, be, do, serve, train. That is my personal way of evaluating or looking at ministry. The bottom level is called your private level.

Nobody knows that about you. Betty doesn't know all of that about me. That's the me way down deep inside that no one will ever know about. We all have things, if we're honest, that you don't tell everything.

So that's private. Personal, do level, that's a living out of who I am. It's a living out of who I am. And so you can see that. That's like my bee with makeup on.

[28 : 51] But serve is who you are publicly. For example, we have some pastors in this room. We have some deacons in this room. We have some Sunday school teachers in this room. We have some bus workers in this room.

We have some missionaries in this room. So it's the public position you hold that people see. So people here would know me and they'd say, that's pastor. He's the pastor of the church. He pastors people.

They might call me a preacher. They might say he preaches. They might call me a teacher. That's who I'm known as. That's the position I have publicly. When I go to people, when I go to people, I give out my business card, which I do quite often.

I never hand it to them and say, hey, my name is Austin Gardner. I train men. I never say that. I walk up to people. I say, my name is Austin Gardner. I'm pastor of Vision Baptist Church. But the goal ought to be that you would train men.

Now every dad in this room has already done that, good or bad. You're already doing that. You're a trainer. You're training your family. You're training your kids. And so train is, I have learned who I am in Christ.

[29 : 53] I've learned to live it out in how I do things. I've learned how to live it out publicly in how I serve in my church. And now I'm going to seek to train men. And so the whole ministry is built on I want to train other people.

Ladies ought to train other ladies. The older ladies in the church ought to train the younger ladies. You ought to help teach them, disciple them, grow them up, and mature them. And it's a lot more than a series of lessons.

Foundations is a great thing, but it's really not about the material that you cover. It's about sharing your life with another person and helping them grow in Christ and grow in grace.

I would like to say that men I work with, men I train, have learned how to love Jesus, love their wives, pay their bills, live life. I want to be a mentor to them and help them.

So the difference in serving training is this. I am known as a pastor, but the truth of the matter is I would spend, a large portion of my life is spent training men. I've been on the phone today with missionaries around the world.

[30 : 50] Probably three missionaries yesterday, more. I mean, I never know. I do it here. I do it there. They come to my house. I talk to them. I want to help them learn to be that. And I think you should do that. As a Sunday school teacher, you could serve as a Sunday school teacher, but a trainer would say, I'm going to do more than just teach you Bible knowledge.

I want to help you learn to live life. I want to help you learn to live life, help you learn to live it out. So that's what the difference is in serve and train. Is there a difference in discipling and training?

My goodness, the staff must have gave me these questions. Yes, there's a big difference. You know, there's a new member class in many churches where you come in and they go over the different things about the church.

They explain how the church works. They explain basic doctrines. They explain why we baptize by immersion. They explain, you know, why we believe the Bible is the word of God. They explain what we believe about salvation.

Is it by grace or not? And you teach all that. And discipling, that's what you're going to do. Discipling is foundations. And that's where we start everything. And so we start down here on the B level.

[31 : 53] And what we do is we pump them full of Bible. We do that from the pulpit. We do that from the Sunday school class. We do that one-on-one. And we teach them all the basic Bible stuff. And everybody ought to be discipld.

But some people are going to, some are going to come out on top. Some are going to say, man, I want more. I want to go further. I want to do more. And that's where training comes in.

So discipling and training are very, very, very, very close. But there's a step beyond that. In a sense, if I could give you the idea, it would be like a dad. It would be like Jeff Mize, who has now got two sons that are married.

Correct? Two sons. He discipld them to marriage time. And so he taught them lessons. He inculcated doctrine into their life.

He showed them how to live. He showed them how to be a man. He showed them all that. So that was discipling and training. But now he's in a whole different stage. He can't exactly call Ben up and say, look, boy, he shouldn't.

[32 : 55] Boy, get over here. I'm going to tell you what to do. Or John, tell Andrew that. Now, Andrew's about hard-headed enough to say, yeah, that ain't happening, Dad. Love you. But discipling days, discipling days are over.

And so he can still train him, though. And every young man would love, I think they love it that their dad is interested in their life. I think they love it that their dad, as long as he's not bossy, pushy, manipulating, trying to push him into doing things, they love, Dad can give me good advice.

Dad can train me. Dad's not trying to control me. Dad's not trying to be one of those kind of guys. So that's basically the difference. Discipling is all that basic stuff, all that teaching, all that.

And by the way, that's years of stuff. Years and years and years of stuff. But then as you grow into maturity, to have somebody that would say, you know, I'm here for you. I'll answer the phone.

I'll share whatever I know. I'll help you. If I were going to go into business tomorrow, there are men in this room that I would want to be my trainer or my mentor. I'd want to be able to pick up the phone and say, I'm starting my business.

[34 : 00] I don't know what I'm doing. And they would say, okay, I can help you with that. I've been there. I've done that. Let me show you the pitfalls, the mess ups. And I'd say, I'm going to do this. They'd say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

My suggestion, don't do that. That's going to get you in trouble. And I'd say, well, why is it going to get you in trouble? It makes sense. I read it on the internet. And they'd say, well, I did that. And it took me three years to overcome that mistake.

So don't do that. And he's, oh, okay. And so you're getting some training. And so, you know, Micah's a new dad. And Micah's a great friend and a great man of God.

In my opinion, I love him. He's a new dad. But Micah doesn't know all about raising kids. And his father-in-law and his dad and other men can help train him and say to him, Micah, here's some things. I kind of messed up on that.

And we work together. That's the beauty of a church, man. That's the beauty of a church. These other old men in the church. And when I say, oh, they're older than you. They can say, look, as long as it's a loving and sweet spirit, they can help us.

[35 : 00] And that's training. Next one. My child is asking about the Trinity. I have a hard time explaining it to myself. Any advice on explaining it to a child?

No. Because I have a hard time explaining it to myself. It is not. I can tell you some things it's not. It is not ice, water, and vapor.

That's not true. It is not. The Holy Spirit, it's not God in three different forms. It's not God as dad, husband, and son. That's not what it is. It is God is God.

God the Father is equal to the Son, equal to the Holy Spirit, not the Son, not the Holy Spirit. You say, well, that doesn't make sense. I know. God is all God.

Completely God. Creator God. All powerful God. All knowing God. The Son is creator God. Knowing God. All God. God. And the Holy Spirit.

[36 : 00] Same thing. How does that work? Not sure. I'll just take what the Bible says and go with it. So, we don't believe, we would not accept or believe that this is Austin as pastor, this is Austin as husband, and this is Austin as son.

All the same guy showing himself three different ways. No, he's God. All God. The fact is, when Jesus was down on the cross in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, it says God was in Christ.

All three of them show up at the same time. One person, one person, one God, three persons. Hard to believe. Jesus being baptized, a voice speaks from heaven, and the Spirit, like a dove, descends.

Like in the form of a dove. So, God was there. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. And so, I'm with you. I don't understand it. You can go read all the books you want. Lots of people write whole big books explaining it, and most of them don't understand it either.

So, not that big a deal. To understand it. Accept it. Believe it. But not understand it. What are the church's requirements to be a deacon? Can a deacon be divorced, remarried, the husband and one wife?

[37 : 10] Well, I don't know the church's requirements. I think you probably ought to get the handbook. We wrote that like nine years ago. So, I don't know if I can answer that. 1 Timothy chapter 3, starting in about verse 9.

8 or 9 says, And likewise must the deacons be, and it gives a list of who they are to be. There it is. 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 8. It will go down to about verse 15.

And so, go back to the question. Let me see the question now, Doc. Thank you. So, what's the church's requirements to be a deacon? I can give you some basic requirements. First off, you know what the difference in a deacon and a pastor are?

Nominal. Nominal. You know what the difference in a deacon and a good man in our church are? Nominal. You ought to all live in the same level I ought to live.

And a deacon ought to be like me, and a man in the church ought to be like me, and it ought not be that there's this, there comes the pastor, he's the holy man of God. There comes a deacon, he's not quite as holy.

[38 : 10] Here comes a regular guy, he's just a jerk. That's not the way it's supposed to be. We're just all serving Jesus. So, I want to go, can he be divorced and remarried, the husband and one wife?

I would say no. And the reason would be, the same reason I would say he can't be a pastor. I just think there's a hundred other things he can do. There are arguments about that.

Some would say that it meant to be married to only one woman. Now, it's against polygamy. It's not against that. But I would say to you that in our society and what the Bible seems to say, it would be much wiser if a man had only been married one time and was leading his home well.

He was ruling his children and ruling his house well. And so, but I want to remind you not to be too hard. Sometimes, man, we can come across like, man, we're death on divorce, but we're not death on brat kids.

And we're death on divorce, but we're not death on bully deacons or bully pastors, brawlers, and bad testimony.

[39 : 18] So, the goal about being a deacon would be, man, I'm going to be a real man of God. I'm going to lead my home well. I'm going to lead my home well. I'm going to lead my family well. I'm going to be the best dad I can.

I'm going to be the best Christian I can. I'm going to do everything I can to serve God and work that. Now, here at the church, we have deacons and we have deacons in training. And the deacons in training, you know, they're not all necessarily ever going to be deacons, but they're in there.

They want to help. They want to serve. A deacon is like a title, a position, kind of like a pastor. There are really, you know, we've got several men in our church that would quote unquote be called pastors.

Me and Trent and Robert and Brother Frick and Brother Miguel and Brother Jeff, we would all be called pastors. But in all honesty, a lot of other men in this church act in pastoral type roles.

And I thank God for that. And there ought not be in our church this hierarchy, this hierarchy, I will not make decisions for you. You know, I just got back from Peru and I had to sit down with one of the main leaders and I told him, I said, look buddy, you can't make decisions for people.

[40 : 21] I don't know who died and made you God. That's not the position. And so, so every one of us ought to be striving to live to the highest possible holiness and loving God and faithfulness.

And the truth is that when they, you know, this morning, the brother that was sitting right about where Brother Mize is right now, when he said he was a deacon, I said, we got a couple of them.

Let me just tell you this. I am honored and thrilled that we have godly men in our church. I am honored, thrilled that I sat upstairs with probably 10 or 12 guys right before church and we talked, I am honored and privileged that we have godly men.

So don't ever turn it into, well, he doesn't meet this one standard thing. Let's all work at being the most holy men of God we can possibly be. You want to hit a couple more real quick?

It's right on six. And we got a prayer meeting tonight. How can one overcome temptation? Save that to next month. Next. Because that'd take a long time. I could preach on that one. No.

[41 : 22] They do not take place at the same time. The two judges, the judgment seat of Christ, I believe, is separated by a thousand year period called the millennium. I think the judgment seat of Christ will take place during the tribulation period and the great white throne will take place at the end of the thing.

Next. You can save that other for the next time. What is the three minute rule you talk about? I'll mention that one and then save the rest of them. How about that, Cannon? You can save them for next month.

Don't trash the rest of them. Three minute rule. I don't talk about it enough. This morning in the message I tried to mention, let's be sure and talk to everybody. We got some men in our church and some ladies in our church.

The fact is, I'll just be honest, pretty much all of you guys are really good at it, which is a thrill to me. Don't run for the door. And don't run for your friend. Run for somebody you don't know.

Go shake their hand. Get to know them. And after three minutes, you can go talk to anybody. Because, I mean, like I go over here and stand, nobody ever talks to me. Unless you bring them to me, I just stand there. Three minutes, I'm out of here.

[42 : 22] Okay, so, I feel real goofy doing it. But, so the three minute rule would be, the idea would be that you would go find somebody you don't know and welcome them.

You say, hey, my name's Austin. And how long have you been attending Vision? Don't say, is this your first time? They might be a member and you don't know them. I am amazed the number of people I'll say to them, do you know so and so at our church?

And they'll say, I don't know where everybody goes to this church. And I'm like, well, good night, there ain't that many of us. But they really, they really don't know each other. And so, they don't know you. And so, shake hands, get to know them, try to make a friend.

People need friends. People need family. You live in a world where Facebook is the way you get together without ever seeing anybody. Without ever seeing anybody. You don't ever talk to anybody.

I saw a video clip this week and these three guys were sitting in the room and one guy jumps up, walks over to the other with his phone and he said, let me show you this video.

[43 : 27] He said, man, what are you doing? Sit down. Just email it to me. Text it to me. You've got to come over and get in my face. And they were sitting like three feet apart and so in a few minutes the internet went off and they were, they were, what are we going to do?

What are we going to do? And a guy shows up outside the window and he said, they said, what are you doing out there? The sun will kill you. And he said, he said, I'm kind of enjoying it. I didn't know you could go outside.

And so, making fun of, but we're too much into not really talking to people. You know, so shake their hand. Invite them to lunch maybe. Spend some time with them. Get to know them.

Connect with them. That would be a way if you could make a major ministry. People regularly make comments to me. I attended a church and not one person spoke to me.

So far, I've never heard that from vision. But I hear it quite often. So far, I've been told you people are shaking everybody's hands and I thank you. A lot of times, I'm kind of like the pastor.

[44 : 29] I'm supposed to shake your hands and they don't ever get to me because you're talking to them. That's great because this is your church more than it's my church. And this is your ministry more than it's my ministry. So a three-minute rule would be, hey, can we get around to meeting some people?

When people come in, shake their hand. Hey, get a visitor card in their hand and see if you can get the information. Valerie, I don't think I see Valerie. Is Valerie here? There's Valerie right there.

She enters all that stuff in a program called Church Management Software. Keeps up with it and you can help us shake hands with people, send them emails, send them text messages. People need people.

They need the Lord, but they need people. And so the three-minute rule would be, hey, let's see if we can't meet somebody we don't know. Let's see if we can't meet somebody. it's a fairly hostile world, really.

I mean, honestly, you could go to the store and everybody might be nice to you because they're paid to be nice to you, but they don't care about you. But maybe they could come to one place and we'd care.

[45 : 29] And we'd genuinely care. And I want you to, we're not fake. I want us to genuinely care. And I think you do. And I thank the Lord for it. Can I just say, it's been eight, eight and a half years now, eight years, almost a half.

And you have been so good about that. And I don't talk about it enough, but shake hands with them, make them feel at home, introduce them to other people. You don't have to sit with them if they feel, you know, some people don't want to give you their info.

Don't worry about it. They don't give you info. Back off. Just be nice. They don't, you know, people are so weird now. When I grew up, they'd say, yeah, I live right down here. I mean, people are, but nowadays people are like, I ain't giving you my, what are you going to do?

Come steal my house, rob my house or what? Steal from me. So it's a weird time, but if they find that we're friendly every week, they're allowed to stick. They're allowed to stick. When I went back to my home church and I grew up in, well, I didn't grow up.

I went there from seventh grade through twelfth grade, the longest we lived anywhere as a kid. My dad and mom moved around all the time. We never stayed anywhere longer than that six year period.

[46 : 31] And I can remember Don Prophet was a, he owned a gas station. He would never come to church. We prayed for him all the time. And I got there and Don Prophet's like a deacon. He runs the sound system.

He makes the recordings of all the messages. I know what happened. Those country people just loved old Don. And he came to Jesus. And that's, that made the difference. We're never going to get over that.

We're never going to get over that. I remember the time the Edwards family came to our church there and they walked in and after church, man, of course, we was a little church. If we broke a hundred, we thought we had hit heaven.

And so everybody made a beeline and shook their hand. And you know what? It's been 40 something years and they're still in that church. People need some friends. And so I would challenge, let's just love each other.

So the wonderful thing, and I want you to know something, you are more important in this church than I am. You're the one that's going, you're going to hospitals, you're talking to people.

[47 : 29] And you know, people want to come here. I got to preach. But the truth is, more than that, they'd like to know that some people care about them and they're joining up with some folks that love them just like they are.

Blemishes, pimples, whatever's going on in their life, they just love me. They just love me. And so, we're not a judgmental church. I hope we never are.

And so that three-minute rule is, go find somebody you don't know. By the way, you're a Sunday night crowd, so you probably know all of you. You all may know each other already. On Sunday morning, there might be somebody that's been coming here a year and they don't know you.

And they, Chuck is kind of like a point man on jumping to get people and shaking their hands. But maybe you, one of you ladies could just go speak to them.

I know you already do, but keep doing it. He said, that lady seems to get out of here real quick. Well, slow her down three seconds one week. Maybe five the next week. You know, maybe eight the next week. And eventually, maybe she'll say, hey, them people ain't gonna bite me.

[48 : 29] They're not gonna hurt me. And just keep doing it. You're doing good at it. You are honestly an exceptional church in every way. I'm so, I love it that, can I, I'll just, you haven't judged people about the color of their skin.

You haven't judged people about their language that they speak. You haven't judged people about separation things, things that other people might judge about. You don't like the way they dress or you don't like the way they do.

So you haven't, you've never done that. And I thank you. I thank you. I thank you that you've loved people. This is a missionary church. You act like missionaries. You act like the people I try to teach people to be.

You, you, you have, you know, you treat people like people. And if we do that, we'll get the gospel to them. And I don't know when God's going to let us see people saved, more people saved. I don't know when God's going to let our church grow.

But I know this, as long as we are loving people like we ought to and preaching the truth to them and doing the best we can to get the gospel to them, it's going to make a big difference. So that's what the three minute rule is about. Father, thank you for these wonderful people.

[49 : 27] Thank you for the privilege I have of serving with them. And I pray you'd bless their families and bless all their ministries. And I give you praise for it. In Jesus' name, Amen. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.