

1Tim 24-05-30b

We are in 1st Timothy chapter 4 and we are in verse 6 and Paul tells Timothy if you instruct the brethren in these things, these things are the apostolic message, these are the words that the Lord Jesus himself has given to Paul to communicate to the New Testament church. This refers back to all of what we have seen in the preceding context, but especially the emphasis that the Spirit places on not being deceived, on sticking with words of faith and sound doctrine. It has become a disparaged approach to Christianity in recent years to be a Bible-oriented church, to, oh, you're bibliolators, you're worshipping the text and this is the kind of thing that people say when they really don't know what they're talking about.

If they had ever been, this is like saying, oh, you're a glutton because you eat food. What? Certainly, if I did nothing but sit around and eating and if there were obvious ill effects from my eating, you know, if you really grossly overeat and don't exercise and don't put your calories into use, there will be visible signs that something is wrong. And people rightly say, well, there have been visible problems in the organized church, denominational church, you know, the mainstream, mainline Christianity has been, you go back, you know, to times when people were perpetrating slavery, going to church on Sunday, you go to the Christians in Germany and you got death camps out there and people going to church and singing hymns on Sunday.

Obviously, something is wrong. But the something that is wrong is not intake of the word of God. It is failing to reflect on it.

Do you seriously think if German Christians had gone to their German Bibles and studied the word of God that says there is neither Jew nor Greek and then said, well, why are we picking on the Jews? You know, do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Am I doing good to all if they're having to wear yellow stars and their businesses are being taken and their goods are being confiscated? They're being trained card off to camps and never heard from again. I'm not sure the whole German population knew what went on in the camps, but the families of the officers and enlisted that worked there did.

And there were a lot of faulty Christians. You can look at in more recent years and being warned and seeing that these kind of things have taken place, perpetrated by and among Christians. How does that happen? Well, would you say there's a conscience problem? Is there a conscience problem with slave owners who beat, abuse and mistreat black people and Native American people and indentured servants that have come over from maybe their British roots and they've got Irish that are indentured and working for them in their mouth? There was a lot more maltreatment than just Africans.

There were South Americans. There were Hispanics. There were Native Americans.

There were people from other parts of Europe that were looked down on and maltreated. But that has been lost to history because if you shout about one race and they were the predominantly mistreated ones, the rest of it goes largely unnoticed. But my point is if Christians were actually mistreating their fellow human beings, what are they doing with the passages of Scripture that talk about masters and slaves? Masters, be kind, be merciful, be fair, be just.

How can you have a Bible and perpetrate some of the awful things that took place allegedly by church going people? That's what happens when you have a conscience that's seared with a hot iron. That's what happens when you don't have a healthy spirit that is nourished in the words of faith and sound doctrine. Those people were not praying to the Father, illuminate me, Psalm 51, search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and see if there be any wicked way in me. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

There is nobody actively seeking to represent the Lord Jesus who never beat a slave on this earth, never oppressed a people group, never chimed in with some weird sort of social movement. That doesn't happen for healthy Christians. And I will tell you where you look at any historical example, take the Catholics and the Inquisition and take the Crusades and take any other holy wars and England and Ireland and the Catholics fighting against the Protestants, whatever you want to pick, if you go to the individual level, those people are not doing what Paul tells us we have got to do.

And how do you know when to stand up against tyranny? How do you know when to no longer honor the king? Because you have fear God comes first. This is the way. Instruct the brethren in these things to be a good representative of Jesus Christ.

You are a minister of Jesus Christ. Whatever your spiritual gift is, whatever your gender, whatever your occupation, whatever your relationships, whatever you're standing in life, as a believer in the Lord Jesus, you are his minister. You are his representative.

And to be a good one, you have the foundation. You have the guidance right here. If you don't care about being a good minister, you're not here.

You're not at Grace and Truth. Everybody that comes to our church cares and wants to accomplish this mission. Nourished in the words of faith, good doctrine, which we carefully follow, not sloppily follow, not haphazardly follow, not inconsistently follow, not follow once in a while.

It's not two meals a week and stagger around and flop with no energy and shaky hands and clouded judgment and a bad conscience. You've got to eat every day, nourishment every day. A little will go a long way, but you still have to get that little.

And to reject profane and old wives' fables, exercise yourself. Remember what we saw

that Paul strives to maintain a good conscience? Exercise yourself toward godliness. This is the same word that we saw in verse 16 of chapter 3. Great is the mystery of godliness.

And we studied all of the mysteries that Paul reveals. The mystery of eusebia. This is the very same thing.

Exercise yourself toward. This is spiritual exercise. Now, have you ever decided you needed exercise? I got to get in shape.

I need to lose some weight. Got an outfit I want to wear. Want to get back into my old uniform.

Oh, my goodness. I pulled one of my midshipman shirts out of the closet. I still have, you know, some representative pieces of uniforms from every phase of my military life.

And these shirts were sized and tailored for me in 1975. And I've got a long-sleeve WUBA shirt hanging in the closet. And I was looking for something.

I was a little bit chilly. And I thought, oh, here's a shirt. I'll just put that on.

And I can get into it, but it has no wrinkles anywhere. It more looks like it's painted on. It will still button, but I don't, you know, we used to have to give each other a tuck, take the slack at the waist and make two neat folds at each back corner so that it looks nice and there's no wrinkles coming up from your trousers.

Well, that shirt needs no – you couldn't get a hold of it if you tried to get any slack to make a tuck in the back. And so I think, well, why do I not weigh what I weighed however many years ago that was? Coming up on, what is that, 50 years? Yeah, I guess it's 50 years ago. Well, you know, time passes, things change, and gravity happens, and we accrue things.

But if I wanted to lose weight and get back into my old uniform, what would I need to do? I would have to watch what I eat, be careful to only eat things that contribute to my goal, not eat things that have excess sugar, have corn syrup, and a lot of other unhealthy additives, not a lot of processed foods, not things that contribute to being unhealthy and being overweight. I would pay careful attention to what I eat. Isn't that what he says here? Pay careful attention to what you take in.

Don't bring in and try to digest these faulty concepts. Don't accept them uncritically. Exercise yourself toward godliness.

It isn't exercise for its own sake. It's exercise with a goal. I want to represent the Lord Jesus Christ.

This godliness is all about the Lord Jesus, who was, look back at verse 16 of the previous chapter, the Lord Jesus, manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen by messengers,

preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory. He's been received up into glory. Who represents him on earth now? You do.

I do. So, to exercise ourselves toward that goal of godliness means paying attention to what we eat, A, and exercise, strive, put in some effort, do the work. Anybody that's ever tried to learn a musical instrument? There is this weird fallacy that takes place.

You see a really good book. I'm speaking from experience because I've got a shelf full of them that say, here's how to learn the neck on the guitar so that you can effortlessly play anything you want, anywhere you want. Here's a finger-style arrangement of these popular songs.

Here's how Jerry Reed played. Here's how Chet Atkins plays. Here's how Leo Kotke plays.

Here are transcriptions of the songs. So, I buy the book, and I think, wow, it's gonna be great when I can play these songs and when I can perform these techniques and when I can view the fretboard on a guitar the way I see the keyboard on a piano and have that familiarity and that ability. Well, I've got a shelf full of books, but I can't play any better than I could before I bought the books.

Why? I've read the books. I've looked at them. But you've got to do the work.

I've got to put that thing up and put my fingers where they go and pick the strings in the order that I should. I want to learn a new piano piece. I've got the music.

Put the music on the rack, sit down at the piano and do the work. Exercise myself toward playing more proficiently. More flawlessly.

Nobody wants to hear someone play an instrument and make mistakes. So, my technique is I learn very simple songs and then I play them flawlessly. And people think, wow, he can really play.

I can't really play at all. But I can play a few simple songs, and if I play them flawlessly, that is more impressive than tackling a difficult piece and making a bunch of mistakes. And I exercise myself so that when I play, I play extremely well.

Don't hit the cracks. Don't hit a sour note. Don't mess up.

And doing the simple things well is far more effective than trying to do something difficult and failing every time. The doctrines and the words of faith are simple. We don't have to climb a stairway to heaven.

We don't have to descend into Sheol. It is near. These are words that we can repeat.

They're in our mouths. They're on our lips. You can recite a memory verse and get the meaning.

The Holy Spirit does the work. if we just exercise ourselves toward godliness. Why? Bodily exercise profits a little.

This word is from oligos. If you remember your political science or whatever you learned in school about an oligarchy, there's a monarchy. Mono means one guy.

Monarchy is the king or the queen. A mon-arch. Arche is the head.

Mono is one. One leader. Monarchy.

Oligarchy. Oligos means a few. So oligarchy is there's a little cabal at the top.

There's a little small group. They rule. This is the word.

Oligos. And it goes on to say godliness is profitable for a lot. There's a few things that exercise will help you with.

Bodily exercise. This is not a slam against bodily exercise. It just says its application is very limited.

Physical exercise will enable you to do some physical things and that's good as far as it goes. There are a few things that that will really help with. But this godliness, exercise in godliness, and this is what we're talking about, doing the work, stopping and thinking and recalling and reflecting on what we have learned, what we know from the word of God.

Once you are in shape, exercise actually feels pretty good. It's being out of shape and trying to come back from it that's hard. Lactic acid gets released out of your muscles and getting back into shape when you have let yourself go, the first few workouts are very off-putting and painful and you'll have sore muscles.

And when you start trying to do it, you start climbing hills when you haven't climbed them in a while. You start running when you haven't run in a while. You start bicycling when you haven't bicycled.

You start swimming when you haven't swum. The lactic acid in your muscles is like, oh, this is a very unhappy experience. But if you stick with it, pretty soon you look forward to the workout and it feels good.

The circulation and the energy and the accomplishment of it becomes something that instead of dreading, you look forward to. And you just do it in moderation. Very few of us are going to try to run a marathon or win a weightlifting competition, but get to a place of fitness to where that workout, three or four times a week, really feels good.

It's just, wow, I love that. I feel energized, not depleted. I feel good.

It works the very same way. We are given this analog. Why do you think God didn't just make us a body that stays in shape all by itself? Why do we have to exercise? Why do our muscles build up? Why does our endurance and our cardiovascular increase with practice, with exercise? The analog for our spiritual life is direct and is mentioned here.

Exercising godliness is profitable in everything. Even your physical exercise is benefited when you've done your spiritual exercise because you're going to do it for the right reasons. You're not going to be trying to show off.

You're not going to try to beat the person at the next piece of exercise equipment or outrun somebody on the trail or flex and show off your cuts and your washboard and your abs and all the rest of it. But it is beneficial in many things because it has promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. You can't take your body with you.

You can't even get to old age with your fit body. Take a look at some of the extremely fit people of days gone by and if they're still around, they don't look like they did. Arnold Schwarzenegger doesn't look like he did.

Sylvester Stallone doesn't look like he did. These other guys that have made their name with fitness and beautiful toned body, there's only a certain amount of time you can maintain that and pixies come while you're sleeping and switch out what your body's made of and exercise won't do it anymore. You can't be what you were.

You can't do what you did. It is the ravages of time and entropy. And as we used to say at, I'll call it Navy, time, tide, and formation wait for no man.

And the formation of our body changes and nobody sticks your hand in the air and says, sure, I'd like to be debilitated and have stuff that doesn't work anymore and not be what I was and not do what I did. But it is given to us for a reason because this is the effect of sin. Adam and Eve would still be in the garden looking just as beautiful as the day God made them if not for sin.

And this fallen world, our fallen nature is ravaging us and teaching us a lesson. Guess what? You won't have to work out in your resurrection body. That thing is going to stay fit and beautiful and capable and totally functional all the time.

I will bet good folding American money that there are no gymnasiums for angels. The unfallen angels, now I don't know what the demons look like, but I wonder if they've gotten deteriorated and ugly because of what sin does to physicality. We know what it does to us.

What is it doing to the angels? Satan may have to work out to be able to go to and fro and up and down in the earth seeking whom he may devour. He may have to sharpen his teeth. He may have dentures for all I know.

But that's the reason human history can't go on indefinitely. It's the reason the fallen angels can't live indefinitely. They're disconnected from God.

And in the same way that Adam dies, if he doesn't reconnect with God, that's what happens to those who are fallen. I say all of that to say this. Godliness is profitable for all things.

It has a promise now and a promise for the life to come. We partake of eternity. We build into, we invest in eternity by this little bit of effort now.

You've heard these people talk about, if you just take \$5 a month and put it in the bank and never draw it out and let it, the magic of compounding and interest, by the time you, if you start when you're in your teenage years, \$5 a month, just send it and never touch it. The magic of compounding, you'll have tens of millions of dollars by the time you're in your 60s. You want to retire at 65.

What does that require? Faithfulness, consistency, and discipline. Do it every month and never touch it. And the magic of compounding, even at 2% or 3% interest, it builds and it compounds and it builds.

And something that you're doing in the present with just a little bit of effort, just take that five bucks, but it does take the effort. You've got to send the \$5. I've heard that compounding thing ever since I was a teenager.

Did I have the discipline to do it? No. Do I have tens of millions of dollars in the bank now that I'm in my 60s? No. Why? I heard a true thing and it would have been trivially easy to send five bucks to an interest-bearing savings account, but I didn't do it.

I can't go back, start over, and do that. That time and that opportunity is gone. As sand through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives.

Gravity happens. Sand doesn't go back up to the top and we don't get a flip on the hourglass. So, godliness.

And it isn't abstract godliness. This is exercising ourselves toward godliness. There's a name for this kind of use of language.

When he says godliness is profitable, he's talking about exercising ourselves toward godliness. And by mentioning godliness, it invokes the entire previous concept and phrase. Exercising ourselves toward godliness.

What does that look like? Again, we've got lives. We've got stuff to do. We've got jobs.

We've got relationships. We've got days to negotiate. Obstacles to overcome.

Challenges to face. What is the exercise? Don't let that be the distraction. Don't let that

be the deception that I have a good day when I get my task list done.

I have a good day when I have exercised myself two or three times that day toward godliness. Evening and morning and at noon, I am going to stop and I am going to do the effort to think of something that pertains to my identity in Christ. How does the word of God relate to the conversation I just had with somebody? The person I'm going to encounter this afternoon.

The task that is currently underway or that I'm going to tackle this afternoon. I've got a doctor's appointment. Well, how should I think about that? How concerned should I be? Is maintaining my body a stewardship? Of course.

I can't have a spiritual life if my body falls apart. Got to take care of it. Bodily exercise profits in some things.

But how can I exercise godliness in the maintenance of my body? Well, I see an analogy between my body and my spirit. So maybe I'll make sure I'm eating the right things in both areas. That I'm doing exercise in both areas.

Whatever limited amount of exercises. We get older, we can't do what we did. But we can do something.

Right? I'm going to have a conversation. I'm going to be at work. I'm going to be with family.

I'm going to be talking to someone, meeting with someone. I can pray over that in advance and ask God to bless my conscience and my heart and my good judgment to both be blessed and be a blessing in that contact. To not just go in there unprepared and thoughtless.

What do you think would happen if the president's press secretary went into a press conference without having thought about any questions that might come up or any issues that might be raised? You know that these ladies usually that have been recent press secretaries they prep themselves. They write down answers to questions they know are going to come up and they are ready. And they don't want to be caught off guard.

They don't want to be caught unprepared. Somebody gives a speech. Somebody goes into a debate.

You prepare. You anticipate what may come up and think ahead of time about what to say and how to respond. Well, how important is it in our personal lives if we have the opportunity to spend time to think and to pray and to ask God for wisdom and for judgment.

And if I need to bridle my tongue maybe a topic might come up and the man that can bridle his tongue has got his whole body in subjection. And if you can bridle the tongue and get your body in subjection how much more spiritual exercise through words of faith and sound doctrine and to be prepared and not just be shooting from the hip and off the cuff and hope we don't... How many careers have been destroyed by somebody saying something off the cuff that betrayed them and got them in trouble? Profitable. And this word for profit is the word that is used for business profit.

You increase. Your investment pays off in a greater investment. It's greater than the investment.

What you reap is greater than what you sowed. You sowed a seed. You reap a hundred seeds.

You put in some effort. You get that multiplied. If we exercise ourselves toward godliness the profit, the benefit, the blessing and the reward is multiplied by the power of God.

God blesses it. God uses it. God grows it.

And Paul emphasizes this and we saw this some weeks back when we looked at all of the faithful sayings that are worthy of all acceptance. This is one of those. Meaning if you want to think about something think about this.

This is a faithful saying. It's worthy of acceptance. So don't let it pass by and forget about it.

Bodily exercise physical effort physical accomplishments tasks that we get done by the day it's got its place. There's some benefit in it. But the exercise in our spiritual life is enormously profitable both in this life and the life to come.

Paul says and to this we labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men. We trust in the living God. What did we talk about earlier? Do you trust God? If you come to Him in prayer and say I've got a question I've got an issue I'm a little confused I'm uncertain I'm not sure how to proceed I'm not sure if I should say something or should I not I'm not sure if I should try to exert a godly influence or sit back and wait for someone to come to me I'm not sure if I should exercise this option if I should take this path if I should go down this road or not We believe and trust in the living God.

He is the Deliverer. This word Soter comes from a word group. Savior is Soter S-O-T-E-R Sozo is the verb S-O-Z-O and Soter Soterios Salvation All of these words cluster and it means deliverance.

Salvation has a gilding of Christian meaning. We think, well, you accepted Jesus as your Savior and you're going to heaven and not to hell in traditional Christianity and that's

salvation. That's really not the connotation in most of Scripture.

Most of Scripture is talking about the benefit of deliverance delivered out of this present evil age. We're going to see it in this context. Trust in the living God.

Now, let me ask you a question. Here's your quiz. Here's your pop quiz.

It's coming up right here. Read the rest of this verse. We trust in the living God.

Who is He? Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. Whoa! Universalism? Paul says God is the Savior of all men and especially of those who believe. So, there's all men and inside all men there are those who believe.

But Paul says God is the Savior of the big group and especially of the included group of believers. So, if they are the believers then the ones outside must be the unbelievers. But Paul says God is the Savior of them.

So, is Universalism true? Does all really mean all? What do you think? If I clutched my chest, had a heart attack and died right now and you didn't have anyone to answer this question, what would you do? Look at the context. And if you still didn't get complete clarity and confidence from the context, what would you do? What have we been talking about this whole evening? Ask and it shall be given. Seek and you will find.

Knock and the door will be opened. If the explanation I am about to give does not settle your mind and give you confidence, what do you do? It's the Word of God and prayer. Context is the Word of God.

Compare Scripture with Scripture. Be a Berean. Search the Scriptures and see if these things are so.

If it's a dubious interpretation or an unclear expression in this passage, go to the clear ones. What does Jesus say that clears this up? He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Right? So, whatever it means that God is the Savior of all men, it doesn't mean that everybody is going to live into the eternal future. If you have not life, what's going to happen when you die? You are not alive anymore. God can raise you and judge you, but you don't have life.

It doesn't mean you're going to have a really ugly eternal life. You're going to be bobbing around in the flames of the eternal lake of fire. Having not life means you are no more.

It's like the parrot sketch in Monty Python. All of the illustrations and adjectives and descriptions of that which is no longer alive. So, skip down to verse 16, because we've got another word from this same word group.

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Right? This is a continuation of the same exhortation we've already seen. Paul says to Timothy, take heed to yourself and to the doctrine.

Notice the relationship. I need to look at myself in the light of the word of God. I need to look at the word of God in the light of what it means to me.

How I am to proceed in its light and by its power. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them for in doing this, you will do what? You will save yourself and those who hear you.

So, what kind of saving are we talking about here? Is this eternal salvation from the lake of fire? If I take heed to myself and the doctrine, I'm saved. If I don't take heed, I'm lost and headed for the flames. What does he mean here? If I take heed to the doctrine and take heed to myself, I examine myself to see if I'm in the faith.

I go to God and ask for forgiveness and cleansing from my known sins. I confess those sins. I ask God to purge me and cleanse me.

Sprinkle my heart with the blood of Christ and believe that it has happened and those sins are removed from me. They are in the past. I will think about them no more.

I'm going to move forward. I'm going to forget those things which are behind and press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I'm not going to be dragged down by guilt and shame and blame and there's going to be consequences of what I've done wrong.

God's grace will get me through that. David had consequences for his sins even after he confessed them. But by God's grace, he lived a life and he was a man after God's own heart.

Abraham committed sins and he was forgiven and he was cleansed and he moved forward and he's the friend of God. We'll do the same. Take heed to yourself.

You will in so doing save both yourself and those who hear you. You're taking heed. You're living and communicating this words of faith and sound doctrine will deliver you and those who are in your periphery.

This is true of all of us. So what does it mean going back that God is the savior of all men especially of those who believe? In a nutshell, God so loved the world that he gave his only son. His only begotten son, his uniquely born son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

God loved the world. God is potentially, God is anxious to be the savior of the world, the savior of all men. Those who believe are no longer going to perish but will have

everlasting life.

There is no one for whom salvation is not available. God is the savior of all men, all kinds of men, slave or free, Jew or Gentile, male or female, young or old, rich or poor, all men, all kinds of men, all men everywhere. God is offering, is ready, and is potentially their savior.

But that salvation becomes real and effectual and makes a difference for those who believe. God is the savior of all men, but especially those who believe. That's when it changes from potential to reality, when it changes from an offer to a promise.

Right? It isn't that difficult. We look at this passage in the light of clear passages. There is nothing unclear about John 3.16. There is nothing unclear about 1 John 3.16. Nothing unclear here.

So, take heed. Take heed. Take heed.

Let no one despise your youth. Be an example to believers. Notice.

Be example to believers. If all men were saved, you need to be an example to everyone. Be example to those who believe because that's where it's going to make a difference.

That's where salvation is going to kick in in an effectual, meaningful, and life-changing way. Well, we'll continue here at verse 12 next time. But notice what is not on offer.

As you think about this passage, this is something you can look at until Sunday. What is not said? Think about what Christianity in the mainstream says makes you a good Christian. Think about what progressive Christianity offers.

I'll read you the other four points. Remember, study the Bible critically. Don't take it at face value.

Don't take it for true. Think about culture and what it would have meant at the time and how you can spiritualize it and allegorize it. Number two that progressives recommend, embrace inclusivity and love.

Now, love is the measure of the operation of our faith and hope, but you can't become a good Christian simply by embracing inclusivity and love. This is a distortion, right? Number three, engage in social justice. This is actually what they say.

You'll be a good Christian by engaging in social justice, following the footsteps of Jesus by advocating for social justice and standing up for the marginalized and oppressed. Is this a twisted truth? Are we to look out for widows and orphans? Absolutely. But this is not how to be a good Christian.

This is what a good Christian will do and will know how to do and where to do and when

to do. Number four, cultivate a spirituality of reflection and contemplation. Is reflection and contemplation a part of a healthy believer's life? Absolutely.

But it's not the reflection and contemplation that makes us good. What am I reflecting on? What sound words and good doctrine am I contemplating? If I'm contemplating abstracts and abstruse concepts, exploring various spiritual practices such as mindfulness, journaling, and contemplative prayer to nurture your inner life and cultivate a sense of peace and wholeness, allow yourself to listen for the voice of God speaking to you in the stillness of your heart. God speaks to us in His Word.

Do you see any of this mindfulness and abstract contemplation? There is focused contemplation. There is focused reflection. And it is in and on the Word of God, in the power of the Spirit.

Nowhere has the Holy Spirit been mentioned in any of these steps. And finally, number five, practice humility and openness. Recognize that your understanding of faith is always evolving and you don't have all the answers.

Approach your faith with humility, remaining open to new insights, perspectives, and experiences that may challenge or enrich your beliefs. Stay curious. Ask questions.

Engage in meaningful dialogue with others who may have different viewpoints, trusting that God is present in the midst of your journey of growth and discovery. This all sounds great. It's persuasive words.

It's deceptive in its earnestness and its sincerity. But notice the tone of what Paul says. Instruct the brethren in the words of faith and the good doctrine which you've carefully followed.

Reject fables. They sound good. But you're skipping the step of God's power.

God's power is not in your openness and humility. God's power is not in your mindfulness or your journaling or your contemplative prayer. God's power is not in your efforts to promote fairness and equity and working toward building a more just society.

It is not in going directly to empathy and kindness and acceptance towards all people, regardless of their background, belief, or lifestyle, building bridges rather than barriers and creating a more inclusive and loving community. It sounds good, but it is hollow because God's power is not in it. To the extent that we engage in things like this, it will be the fruit of faith in the word of God, sound words, good doctrine, and the guiding energetic presence and encouragement of the Holy Spirit.

You can go through this whole thing. It's a solid page. Holy Spirit's not mentioned once.

The doctrine of the word of God is not mentioned once. Think about the Bible critically.

Pick and choose the things that you think are meaningful and helpful.

It's deception. It's doctrine of demons. There is twisted truth.

Think about Satan talking from the tree to Eve. Well, isn't some of that true? Look at the context. Look at the outcome.

Well, God has given us wonderful sound truth to lead us, to guide us, to energize us, to cleanse us, to equip us for every good work, and focus on that. But just remember, if there's one thing you remember from tonight's lesson, it's like the Scottish guy says on the fertilizer thing for the lawn, feed it, feed it. You've got to feed the soul.

You need a meal at least once a day, preferably two or three times a day. If you don't feed your soul, you're going to be weak. What do you feed it? Sound words, words of faith, good doctrine.

A little goes a long way. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you that you have provided this wonderful spiritual enrichment that in the hands of the Holy Spirit can enable us to live a transcendent, meaningful, purposeful, fruitful life that represents the Lord Jesus and shines the light of your grace to the world.

We pray that as we reflect on these truths, God, the Holy Spirit, will bless them to our hearts. They will result in practical wisdom that redeems the time and will stand as gold and silver and precious stones at the judgment seat of Christ. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Thanks, Sam. Hey, David.

Everything going okay with you? Anything we need to send up artillery? We're in a praying mood today. We've gotten several prayer requests.