

Characteristics of a God-Dependent Man (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] Thank you, God willing, at some point, maybe next month, we'll do a part two. But let me pray for us as we get started this morning.

Well, Father, again, we thank you for bringing us together as men, as brothers in Christ. And these guys are special to Greg and I, Lord. These men are the future of this church.

And so I pray that you will continue to guide them and lead them and raise them up to love you, to be men who love well, who are uncompromising in their commitment to Jesus, men who are courageous and not afraid to face the ills and ilks of our society, while at the same time being gracious men as Jesus was himself gracious.

So I pray that you would teach us the wisdom of the Lord and help us to walk therein. I pray that you'll help us to be wise stewards of what you have given us in the way of material goods and also the way that you've gifted each one of us in the Spirit.

And then finally, Father, help us to be godly fathers, godly husbands. Help us to minister to our wives in a front-line kind of mentality.

[1 : 24] That as we turn in our worship from you to the world, our wives would be first in line to receive the blessings and benefits of our closeness to you.

And we thank you, God, for the way that you teach us here at Grace and the way that you're blessing our church family and growing us, both in number and in depth of insight. We give you the glory in all these ways and ask you to help us to have great insight this morning as we share together in the Word.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Well, I'm going to revisit something with you this morning, guys. I'm sorry, I feel weird when I'm elevated like this, when we're just doing this, but it'll help you see me a little better, I guess.

I want to revisit something that's been on my heart since I went to Vermont months and months ago back in, I don't know when it was, was it the fall that I did that?

And so I've been thinking about this and finally have an opportunity now to revisit and talk more about it. I'll do a lot to set it up today and then we'll talk about a couple of the points that are part of my outline and then we'll do the rest of them another time, God willing.

[2 : 39] So what I want to talk to you about this morning are the characteristics of a God-dependent man. Characteristics of a God-dependent man. I think one of the things that we fight in life as men is this issue of self-sufficiency, self-reliance, dependence on self.

It's a wonderful thing to have self-confidence in who you are and in what you do, to be skilled at what you do. But it's another thing to go through life professing Jesus but living like it all depends on you.

And so Jesus is kind of an afterthought, I'll call you if I need you kind of attitude to life. We don't want that. Characteristics of a God-dependent man. And I want to start with a bang.

All right, let's just start with a bang. Let's see what you think about this statement. The world wants to turn you into a girl. Did you know that? Have you already experienced that?

We were talking about it this morning. The world wants to turn you into a girl. Here's one of the problems with that statement. The world doesn't even know what a girl is.

[3 : 49] Right? They're very confused. There are reasons for that. Back in the day, back in the day, during the late 1980s and early 90s when I was in my first term in seminary, androgyny was the thing.

And I'm going to use the screen up here to help us go through a little bit of this in the way of my intro. So, Derek, it's not a thing that went to sleep. There it goes.

Thank you, sir. Androgyny. And this is what it means. Androgyny is the blending of both male and female characteristics. It comes from two Greek words.

Andros, meaning man, and gune, meaning woman. This is where it comes from. In secular psychology, where I learned about this in that first term in seminary because I was majoring in psychology, in secular psychology, it's a concept that encourages the blurring and blending of sexual identity so that you end up with this kind of neutral person with no distinct maleness or femaleness.

There was a huge push during the late 80s and early 90s for androgynous or an androgynous kind of movement.

[5 : 21] We didn't have all of the watchwords and terms that we kind of morphed into today. The expressions that we use today, and I think that they are satanically driven.

There is this satanically driven confusion surrounding all of this. I'm going to show you that in a few moments. Today we deal with terms like this. Non-binary.

You've heard that. Non-binary. Gender-neutral. And transgender. Now, all these terms depict someone who is, and this is very interesting terminology in itself, identifying themselves, identifying themselves as neither male nor female, but something else, a they, a them, but rebelling against their traditional sense of male and female.

I think it's very interesting that they use terminology that says, I identify myself as. And that is very telling.

I have decided what I am. And I have no objective outside standard that I want weighing in or pressing in on me the whole time denying the reality that the world is shaping who they are.

[6 : 38] But they think that they're independent minded. And so, I'm identifying myself. I'm making this decision. I'm independent and individualistic in making this identification about myself.

I don't know about you, but walking into certain stores, particularly coffee shops, I don't know why coffee shops draw these people, but they do. You walk into a coffee shop or we were in an L.L. Bean store up in Richmond, I think it was.

We walk in and the person that comes out to help us at the cash register has a tag, a name tag, and it says them on it. And then it has some other designations and then it has something, all this on this tag.

It was about that big. Bigger than a credit card. And we didn't say anything. We see that so often. Do you see this? Out and about?

Yeah. Yeah, you try. Okay, I get you. It's hard. I know it's hard. And sometimes you struggle to find a way to say something that would be gracious, but at the same...

[7 : 48] So I'll chat them up sometime. In that instance, I was in a bad mood, so I didn't go for it. All right. It's very interesting to me when these people identify themselves, identify themselves, they have no idea of the spiritual undertones going on in that self-identification.

So I want to take you to Romans 8 to give you some ammunition to wisely discern what's going on here with this whole movement of I identify as.

I mean, you can identify as a cat. I saw a little piece on the news months ago about a grown man, like in his 50s, identifying as a baby, and he wore diapers, sucked on a bottle. a grown man identifying that way. Romans 8, 5-8. Romans 8, 5-8.

Matt, if you're there, would you read those verses for us? Yeah. So they identified, identify themselves as a certain thing, and what this verse will help you do, or this passage, these verses will help you do, is this.

[9 : 30] This will help you see the connection between self-deception and satanic deception. This is what I'm trying to put forward to you in this moment. The connection between self-deception, these people are self-deceived about this identity issue.

They're certainly not looking to the Lord. What they don't understand and realize is who is behind this. So they are self-deceived because they will stand before God and give an account. They won't be able to say, well, the devil made me do it.

That's not going to fly with the Lord. But at the same time, there is a satanic process and power going on behind all of that.

And that passage of Scripture is a key passage for understanding that. Now, of course, all of this is counter to God's Word and His design for mankind as our Creator.

And so, just a couple of verses you're very familiar with to cement this. God created man in His own image and the image of God He created him. And notice, male and female He created them.

[10 : 35] That is Genesis chapter 1. We're not even 27 verses into the beginning of the Scriptures and we're already being told that a significant, sound, and solid understanding of our identity is wrapped up in our Creator making us either male or female.

So, your sexual identity, your gender, as it were, so such a hot word today, all of that is determined by the Lord. And so, you being a male is a blessing of the Lord.

Jesus affirmed this truth in His teaching about the holiness of marriage, the sanctity of the marriage relationship. He said, but from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.

So, there's never been a time in human creation when God was not creating us male or female. There's never been another period of time or an instance where God was creating androgynous human beings.

That's a satanic concept. We are either distinctly male or distinctly female. Now, I know you guys understand this and I know that you embrace it. So, I'm just moving through this to reaffirm what I know we all believe.

[11 : 56] I'd like to take you at this point to 1 John 5, verse 19. And then I'm going to get into my meat of this stuff in just a moment. 1 John 5, verse 19.

We know that we are of God and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

So, John is concluding this first letter and the we here refers to believers. The Christians, this letter is circulated to and intended for.

We know that we, those of us who are born of God and forgiven for our sins in Jesus Christ, we are of God. We know. Now, that's a key, key statement.

We know. Because God has made that known to us. We also know that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

[13 : 09] Now, God tells us in this verse who gives birth to these lies that we've been talking about about our sexual identity and who is behind this ongoing deception of the souls of mankind.

So, I'm going to put it up here on the screen with the emphases I want to make. We know that we are of God, believers, and now the spiritual contrast is stated and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

There are those who are of God and are taking their cues for life from the Lord and then we have the whole world, the rest of the world lies in the power of the evil one.

What a contrasting set of statements in that one little verse. Then if you drop down to verse 20 of 1 John 5, and we also know, we know, that the Son of God has come and has given us something.

What has the Son of God given us as believers? Understanding. And what is the purpose? The next clause gives you the purpose. So that we may know Him.

[14 : 27] But not just know Him, know Him who is true. And we are in Him who is true. That's our spiritual union to Jesus that changes us into new creatures.

And in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Now I'm going to put this up on the screen.

Look at this. For those of us who are of God, we who belong to God through faith in Jesus, Jesus has come to give us notice how I highlight here, understanding.

For the purpose that we may know Him who is true. We are in Him who is true. And in His Son, Jesus Christ, this is the true God and eternal life.

Three different times, He mentions truth or what is true. And so you have this satanic deception and this self-deception being perpetrated in the souls of people given this idea that I started off with that the world wants to turn you into a girl and they don't even know what a girl is anymore.

[15 : 40] And then you have the satanic deception that is moving these people into what are lies. So these statements dealing with what is true are key to us understanding how to live our lives for the greater glory of God.

We have been given spiritual understanding based in the truth of who Jesus is. Jesus is the one who defines truth for us. He is the truth.

And so He manifests that truth. You'll also notice if you go back up into verse 18, the American Standard begins verse 18 with we know.

How does verse 19 begin? We know. How about verse 20? We know. Three times, He's talking about what we can know.

This is what I preached last Sunday when I talked about heavenly certainties and objective truth. God gives us the certainty of these truths.

[16 : 46] True, true, true. All based in the Lord Jesus Christ. So we don't look at these people and look down our nose and boast about how tsk, tsk, you know, you guys are so messed up and we're so together.

We are together because God has given us Christ. We can see through the deception and the fraud of the lies that the world is putting on us now because we have the truth in the Lord Jesus and we are living by Him.

So three times, John stresses the vital work of Jesus to help us have a true understanding in our knowledge of God and His ways.

Now, I'm going somewhere with all this. MacArthur drives this point home. Look what he says here. John's threefold use of the word, and this is a lathe in us, a lathe in us, true, truth, in this verse stretches the importance, stresses the importance of understanding the truth, notice, in a world filled with Satan's lies.

That's the issue. That's the rub. That's where all the tension comes in. We are living in a world filled with Satan's lies and the only way to combat them is with the truth of Christ.

[18 : 11] So guys, the world system and the unbelievers who espouse the lies that comes from hell's trashy treasury of falsehood, they have no idea of what defines a spiritual man with spiritual priorities.

I'm talking about now, guys, a Jesus man who's defined by the character of Christ, a man who is committed to self-denial. Think about that as a concept for living.

Self-denial. A Jesus man is a man who loves well. Who loves well. A Jesus man serves his family, serves his church and other people selflessly, sacrificially.

And this is our verse that we've kind of adopted for our men's ministry. You remember where it is? 1 Corinthians? Remember? What chapter? 1 Corinthians 16 verses 13 and 14.

1 Corinthians 16 verses 13 and 14. Clyde, are you there? Would you read that for us? 1 Corinthians 16 All right, so all of those commands and injunctions that you have in verse 13 are dependent on what he tells you in verse 14.

[19 : 46] You do all of that, but do it in love. But you got to do it. And we've taken these verses apart before early in our men's ministry here at Grace and talked about what that meant.

but we are commanded by the Lord as men to lead out in loving well. To love well means that we protect the people we love.

So we safeguard them on a physical level and on a spiritual level. But listen, you cannot protect this church family on a spiritual level if you're not spiritually astute yourself.

You can't safeguard them against spiritual threat if you don't recognize what spiritual threat is and if you're not prepared to meet it. So this puts the onus on you for your own spiritual walk.

You've got to be prepared to have the Lord grow you in spiritual maturity. You can't depend on other men in the church to do what you need to do for yourself in the way of growing up in Christ.

[20 : 50] You need to take responsibility for your spiritual growth. So that's why we place a very strong and very important emphasis on you being here.

So when we offer these different teaching venues and these times of meeting at Grace, we want you to be here because we want you to grow. This is our moment of investing in you.

Like today, like this morning. Wouldn't it be great if we were filling this place up with men who wanted to hear the Word on a Saturday morning? Once a month. Not too much to ask, I don't think.

Once a month. Pray for your brothers. We'd love to see more of them here. Now I'm having you kind of go around the horn here, but I want you to see some more ammunition that you have.

This is me giving you some more mags for your spiritual armament here. Titus chapter 2. Titus chapter 2.

[21 : 55] And we'll start in verse 11 and read verses 11 and 12 in particular. Titus 2 verses 11 and 12.

Dave, are you there, brother? Would you like to read that? Yes. For the grace of God has appeared in salvation for all people, praying us to renounce some Godliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, in God's body in the present day.

So while this verse isn't specifically addressed to men, it's addressed to believers, we adopt this and understand that this is a mandate for manhood.

This is at the core of who we are. While the world has no idea what manhood or godly living or godly leadership are all about, the Bible points us to Jesus. Thank God for the grace that has come in Jesus Christ.

And then, notice how it says it in the verse, verse 12. Instructs us. There's your understanding that we've been talking about from 1 John. The understanding.

[23 : 01] Instructs us to do what? First of all, we've got to deny something. Ungodliness and worldly desires. So you've got to have some self-control. You've got to have some spiritual discipline in your life to do that.

And then to replace that with live sensibly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Which tells us that a lot of how we view heaven is going to have a direct bearing on how we view life on this planet. Because He says, you need to be looking for that glory.

You need to be heavenly minded. If you're not heavenly minded, you won't have heavenly goals for earthly living. Heavenly mindedness helps you have heaven's goals for earthly living.

Heaven's priorities. How do you adopt those priorities? How do you begin to apply those priorities? Well, you've got to know what they are. What are God's priorities for manly living?

[24 : 05] What are God's priorities for being a churchman? Many, many, many of the churches out there, God help us, do not teach what it means for men to be churchmen.

They let us fly around all over the place making so many things priorities in our life, especially material gain. And they make it a kind of either or proposition.

You can be a very godly provider, be a godly man, and be a wonderful churchman. A churchman, as we've defined it, is someone who loves God's family and adopts God's priorities for living.

That's a churchman. Because the most important thing on the planet to the Lord God are the souls of His people. His church, His bride.

Other than His Word, that's the only thing that's going to survive this place being burned to a crisp at the end of time, right? Are the souls of people. Especially the souls of His people.

[25 : 10] Now, here's where we start to move into it. Look at this. How does the Bible then define a faithful man? How does the Bible define a faithful man?

Now, in short, here's how we'll do it. A faithful man is a God-dependent man. So, this is Greg and I laboring together to help remind you.

This is us doing the Peter thing, where Peter says, I'll never stop reminding you of the things that we need to hold dear in our hearts and live out.

Another way to answer the question is that a faithful man is a Jesus-pleasing man. It isn't mamby or sissy or pansy to be a Jesus-pleasing man.

You don't have to be effeminate and be in touch with your feelings to be a Jesus-pleasing man. You can be a man's man. Jesus was the greatest man to ever live.

[26 : 13] He was a man, not a woman. And he certainly was androgynous. And then finally, a Jesus-pleasing man is a spiritual leader.

In other words, guys, this is not just in your home. It certainly begins there. But a spiritual example of God-likeness worthy for others to follow.

You say, my goodness, Jeff, what in the world are you talking about? Now, it's going to get deeper. A spiritual leader is a man.

Men are called to be spiritual leaders. You will not find anything in the Scriptures that tell women to be spiritual leaders. But throughout Scripture, you will see the examples of men stepping up to the plate to be spiritual examples to those around them.

Sometimes stumbling, sometimes falling and faltering. and failing, but nevertheless, stepping up to the plate. You know, you're not going to be able to hit anything if you don't get to the plate. A spiritual example of God-likeness worthy for others to follow.

[27 : 24] We are called to conform to the image of Jesus and display His glory in the way we live. Display His character. Okay? Now, as soon as I put spiritual leadership up there on the screen and start talking about it, I think most of us are going to get like a gut check and a feeling of guilt.

And I don't want to do that to you. I'm not up here today to make you feel guilty about your lack of spiritual leadership or some of the failures you are experiencing in your leadership or anything like that.

Are you with me? That's not it. As I talk about spiritual leadership, that kind of twinge or guilt feeling that you might start to feel will likely rise a little bit and I get it.

But let me say at the outset that each of us, each of us should feel the sting of conviction about our faults and our failures in our spiritual leadership. Yes. However, none of us do spiritual leadership perfectly.

None of us. I'm not up here doing this with you because I always do it perfectly. I have to ask forgiveness of my wife from time to time because I say and do selfish or bonehead things.

[28 : 37] Fortunately, God has worked in my heart long enough now as I've walked with Him that I'm pretty fast. I'm pretty quick. I'm a lot quicker than I was to recognize it and to ask for forgiveness.

If you were to ask me, what's the main difference between Jeff 20 years ago, 30 years ago and the Jeff now who's walked with the Lord and God's worked in my heart, I would say two things in the way I deal with sin.

I recognize it faster and I repent of it faster. That's it. That's the difference. I still make mistakes. I still sin. And sometimes when I make a mistake, it's not exactly sin.

I haven't stepped over the line of actually sinning. But what I did wasn't as thoughtful as it could have been. So that's an occasion for me to say, hey, hon, please forgive me for that.

I didn't mean for that to sound as abrupt as it did. But I think it probably did. It's okay. That's okay. That does. You don't have to be in touch with your fee fees to be a man like that.

[29 : 43] Right? That's a godly man. That's a man who is serving others, who is concerned to be useful to God in serving others and be an example to others.

You know, we try to teach our kids when you hurt other people or you sin against other people and you seek out a restoration of the relationship because of what you said or did, you need to not say sorry.

Put sorry out of your vocabulary. You need to ask for forgiveness. That sounds a lot different than I'm sorry. Identify what you did wrong call it what God calls it.

If it was unkindness, call it unkind. I was unkind. And then don't do a but. Don't make excuses. But, you know, I've had a hard day at work.

But. Don't make excuses. That was unkind. And it was uncalled for. Will you please forgive me for being unkind to you in that moment? Not only was I not thoughtful about you in that moment, but I was unkind.

[30 : 47] I was mean. Please forgive me. That's a big difference between saying I'm sorry, huh? Look, I'm sorry. Okay, I'm sorry. All right. I had a hard day at work.

What? Nobody's perfect. That doesn't sound like a humble man, a repentant man. That doesn't sound like the Lord Jesus at all.

So, none of us do this spiritual leadership thing perfectly. We each have a lot of room for change, repentance, replacement in these areas of our lives.

But guys, I'm going to put this up here now for you to see to encourage you. Greg and I want to lead the way in encouraging you about this. The issue is not perfection in how you lead your family.

The issue is not perfection in how you lead and minister in this church family to help safeguard these women and these children. And maybe some of the other believers in here who are guys or men or boys, the way you help serve, set an example, minister, give to, give your life away, invest in these people.

[31 : 58] It's not about perfection. The issue is not that you make mistakes. The issue is not that you stumble, that you fail, that you show human weakness at times in your life.

Or even that you have to ask for forgiveness for sinful failures in your leadership. No. We don't highlight all those as the issues. That's not it at all.

Here's what the issue is. The issue in God's priority for your spiritual leadership is love expressed in faithfulness with perseverance. Now that's a little bit of a mouthful.

But can you see how that breaks down? What did 1 Corinthians 16 tell you? Do these things in verse 13 and then make sure you do them all in love. Right?

That's why we start out with that. Your spiritual leadership is the love of God expressed in your faithfulness with perseverance.

[32 : 57] So it's not about being perfect. It's about being faithful. It's about getting up and getting on. That's persevering. That's faithful.

You need to be faithful. You're a man that can be counted on to stay in the fight. What kind of fight, Jeff? The fight against sin.

Your sin. We can count on you to stay in the fight against your own sin. To be the kind of man that God can use as other people fight against their sin and you come alongside them.

Boy, a church full of men even our size. A church full of men like that. God can do some mighty, mighty things with men who have hearts like that.

Together with each other as a group. Yes? You with me? Alright. Pause for just a moment. Questions, comments, insights? What are you thinking? Give me a little feedback.

[33 : 55] Yes, Dave? One of the areas I kind of struggle with is when I encounter someone who's transgender. I hate to say this, but I'm kind of, this is a song, but I'm kind of and I know we're supposed to love the person and I kind of struggle with that a little bit that I see the, I don't have the crime so offensive.

Okay. So you're having a struggle to get past the offense that a transgender person presents to you in their appearance, their demeanor. Getting...

And in the way that in power structures like with your work and stuff, you're forced in some way to comply with that.

Okay. And that's why I struggle with that because I'll say a few weeks ago I had a patient who was a female trying to transition to male.

Okay. I could not call this person a male. And I kept referring her to chief. And their supervisor was like, no, this is them.

[35 : 14] And I'm like, no, it's not. This is chief. Okay. And I didn't have any problems with that. But it's really in my heart.

I'm offended. Okay. This is great. Thank you for bringing that up, Dave. And thank you for your raw honesty about it. We treasure the fact that you guys feel a sense of being able to do that in here where we can talk as brothers because that's what we need to do.

So we have a brother here. Who's dealing with this issue in his job, in his work, who is expecting him to acquiesce to, to fall in line with what they have structured as a way to support these people in what they're calling a transition from one, from their biological sex to the other sex.

In this case, going from a female to a male. All right. Let's start out this way. Let's ask a question. Can you change your sex?

All right. Why? Because we understand sex to be what? When we're talking about our sexual identity, we understand it to be what? It's gender.

[36 : 30] Meaning what? Male or female. male. All right. It's biological. What else? It's a God thing. It's a spiritual thing. Now, they're wanting to make it something else. Right. Right. So, this is what we say here at Grace.

There is no such thing as transgender. You can't transfer gender to another one. You can't do it. It's impossible. Biologically and by nature, you cannot do it.

Transgenderism is a satanic concept. It's a lie from the pit of hell. It's just like homosexuality. Lesbianism.

These are lies from the pit of hell. These are aberrations and abominations that offend a holy God who made us to delight in being male or female.

[37 : 33] Not and. Or. Now, having established that, we still haven't helped Dave with, what do I do? So, let's do this. How do you feel about or what do you think about, what do you think about Dave refusing to refer to this other person as they or them and referring to the person according to what their biological sex is?

What do you think about that? What thoughts do you have? Stand firm. with what God said about it. Okay.

You're going to lie or you're going to tell the truth. All right. Do you lose your livelihood?

That's very real, isn't it, PJ? I mean, you feel the weight and the pressure of four kids and a mortgage and whatever else and now I'm unemployed overnight.

All right. I call the person that's already messed up today but they wouldn't be called. I get it. They're their life. Okay. So we have some tension here right now in the room.

[39 : 12] We have some tension that we're trying to work through. We have a teacher about six years ago with a child who was trying to identify as something there.

Yeah. He said, no, I'm not doing that. He was fine. The principal that went there was no longer there. I mean, it's been all over so it was a lawsuit.

I mean, it went all the way up. Okay. He ended up winning it. But it took a while but it cost him his job for GoFundMe and things like that.

He's got a lot of issues for the portion for him. But he did. He still firm. Okay. He didn't lose his job.

I had to be people in the world time. I have to compromise. All right. So let's ask the question. Is it compromise? Let's put Dave in the scenario again. And now let's say Dave said, okay.

[40 : 12] And so he just simply referred to the person as they. Did he compromise? I think every situation is different. I think the only thing that matters is it's not a black and white thing.

I think you've got to look at this situation and depend and kind of determine if, is this a moment I can witness to a person? Is this a moment I can build a relationship with a person?

Is this a moment that I just need to glorify God in my actions? If they find out I'm a Christian later and how did I talk to them or act to them, it might be a time to stand firm. It might be a time to give them a situation. You know what?

Sorry, pal. You're a pal. It's just the way it is. It might be a time to go, not use your mind, use that brain and go, hey, you know what, John, find a way to work around it.

Use that brain. Find a way to work around it. Work within the confines the best that you can. Because if you get too far outside of that, you may have lost that relationship to witness to them for Christ. And I think that's the ultimate end state.

[41 : 15] In the end, how do you maintain the ability to witness to them? Okay. And your actions, your words, your mind, your body, and there's not a black and white answer. Well, I found that that's actually a very helpful answer to me because as I'm sitting here listening to you, I'm kind of thinking, well, I could have said my faith won't allow me to do that.

And now it's not that I'm being unkind or anything. It's, you know, I'm standing on my position. And I think that's the way where I can trust in God.

Right. Right. I need to start the dialogue. Hey, I'm sorry, what is your first name? Don, Bill, Jimmy, Jamie, whoever you are.

Jamie, I'm Dave. Good to meet you. Jamie, what do you need next? How can I do this? I don't know. You're right. Good. I don't know. I think I'm going to be very comfortable. Good.

I think with that, you're going to find out that one or two sentences were that they're going to be used. Sure. Sure. And I don't have to be confrontational about it.

[42 : 22] No. I can just explain to the body. They might. They might. Because they're wearing it right here. Yeah. I don't have to be with it.

change that's not a form of this one field that's not a very particular institution. They, you know, they're very, they're very specific to the hold of these communities.

They're something that we got to, you know, offer them, you know, conversations. You know, learn more about them.

And I believe that if you start off, you know, you go to the party. And what could you do that? Especially when they're a person who's supposed to be a private agent or something like that.

So everybody must know this. But you said it really is specific to them. You know, if I tell them that you're going to slow down the Bible is going to slow down.

[44 : 02] I believe that you're going to slow down. Yes. You know, we're not left without example. Read the Gospels. Your Lord's life was full of this. Every day of his life, he was being confronted with the satanic lies, trying to discredit him, trying to draw him in to some kind of confrontation where he would say something that was politically incorrect and that they could go, aha, aha, and pull him.

Read, read the accounts of your Lord, handling people in instances like this. And then look for the principle in his answer.

Look for the scriptural or biblical principle that you can draw out of his answer. Because you might say, well, that's not really exactly like what I'm facing right now. Well, what principle in his answer can you pull out of the scripture?

Maybe that's an exercise we can do moving forward. Yes. Oh, they're loaded. They're locked and loaded. Good, Jeremy.

Good.

[45 : 27] Good. Good. Good. Excellent.

Yep. So now don't compromise the truth. You're not loving them if you compromise on the truth. Right. So you have it's it's I'm not going to say tricky.

It's challenging. It will challenge your spiritual understanding, your scriptural understanding. It will challenge you and your repugnance toward what is an abomination to God.

You just want to remember God's more offended than you are. And God still still as long as they're breathing, there's hope for them to come to Christ. Right, Greg?

Yeah, we're hitting on a little bit of what I was thinking. So I want to go back a little bit to what day or hour of mutual response is, right? The offense or the repugnance.

[46 : 38] It might be helpful if we also have to figure out how to end the situation is our own heart toward that, right? They're not the end. Right. They are lost.

They are deceived. They are victims of the mechanics of teaching. And so somewhere in there, I would hope that the believers, there's some compassion that we would have that will help maneuver how that response is.

Yeah, I get it. It makes me sick. And then it's like I've got to take myself away. That's not the enemy. That person's not the enemy. I feel bad. I feel sorry. I feel bad for them. Because they're so lost.

So lost. So lost. And perhaps that would help me to handle that situation without, like you said, without compromise, but with grace.

Compassion, not compromise might be a good way to couch it. Compassion, not compromise. So I think one of the things that I hear through it, right, so the cramp is pretty obvious.

[47 : 38] Like, when we see it, it's very big, you know, to the same thing. And to me, it's just a quick signal of, I know exactly how to approach you. But thank you for putting you as soon as possible.

But now I know exactly how to approach you. I know how to address. You go into the repo too, the man's all hiding in the corner. And I know that's the mean part about pornography.

You're not talking about lying. She's a fact that she's a little boy. I'm going to do this guy and you just smile. Like, the transgender part, it's really a big deal.

[illegible]

Please realize, guys, in all of this, they don't know what to do with Christian kindness. They don't understand it. They don't understand that we can stand on our convictions and we can do it with compassion and kindness, but we will not equivocate.

[49 : 19] We will not acquiesce. We will not give up. We will not retreat. We will not go back an inch. If you bring me up to the line, I choose Jesus over you.

And what that can look like, what that can mean in any given situation, as Matt said, you're going to have to have wisdom. It's going to take spiritual wisdom because it may come down to you having to say, absolutely not, I will not do that.

For me to do that is a compromise to my faith. I will not acknowledge the lie. I will not support the lie. That's what you have to think about. What I say next and what I do next, is it going to give credence to the lie or is it going to exalt the truth in the Lord Jesus Christ?

I can do that with kindness, calmness, and compassion. I don't have to raise my voice. I don't have to have a disgusted look on my face. All right, now, how many of you were here Wednesday night?

All right, a number of you. So they heard me talk about my children on Wednesday night, my unsaved kids. Guys, this happened to me with my daughter.

[50 : 29] She sat in my living room and gave me an ultimatum. I'm no longer male or female. I'm non-binary, Dad. I'm a they and a them. And this is what you're going to refer to me as.

And so from now on, you don't refer to me as a mother, a sister, a daughter, none of that. I'm they, them. And that turned into about a 40-minute conversation with her and me and her mother in my living room at my house.

And it got to the point where I had to look at her and say, sweetie, listen, you have no reason to doubt one bit how much I love you and how much I'm devoted to you as my child.

You have brought me to a line and you know my faith and I cannot cross that line. I told you and I've told you over and over for months, if you keep pushing this, you're going to bring me right up to where my toes are right on the line and I'm going to have to tell you enough.

And that's today. That's where we are. I will not refer to you in those ways. I will not call you those things because that is giving credence to the lie that you're living under.

[51 : 51] You're not a they. You're not a them. You are a her. You are a she. You are a sister. You are a mother. I said, how about this? How about I just call you Anna Catherine?

And she went immediately. She went, Daddy, I love it when you call me by my full name like that. And I said, I do, too, because it's a beautiful name. So you're Anna Catherine. You've always been Anna Catherine.

I will. Everybody knows her as Anna Kate, but Daddy calls her Anna Catherine. That's her name. And she said, OK. I think part of the reason that she was able to receive that was I diffused the expectation she had for confrontation.

I think she expected Daddy to go ballistic. And when I didn't, and when I worked with her to find Dave what I would say would be a compromise that did not compromise my convictions, we were there.

Now, what if she would have said, absolutely not? What if she would have said, blah, blah, blah. Well, cycle forward about a month and that's exactly what did happen.

[53 : 04] She came back with her brothers and said, forget it. Deal's off. You and Mom either do this and act like this toward us or we're out of here.

And so we said, you know we can't do that. You know we can't do that. And I told all three of them, if I did what you're asking me to do, I would be the biggest lying hypocrite ever and I'd have to quit my role in life.

What I do as a pastor is who I am. It's not just a job and a paycheck. It's who I am. It's what God has wired me to be. And so you guys are asking me to walk away from everything that I believe God has made me to be as a man.

I'd have to go stand in front of all those people and say, I chose to compromise the truth in Jesus so that I could have a relationship with my children on their terms. No.

I explain that to them. You understand what you're asking of me, what you're demanding of me. You don't think I cried buckets as they walked out the door and my son said the last thing I ever heard from any of my children, you will never see your grandchildren again.

[54 : 25] That's the last thing I heard from any of my kids as they walked out of my door and I haven't seen them in over four years. Dave, there is a line. You have to determine where that line is for you and what you're willing to do to stand for truth and minister the truth.

Now, you don't know the whole story about all the months and months and months leading, if not years, leading up to that moment that we tried to take a marathon approach. But when the world puts you in a corner and says, either give credence to the lie or else, you're going to have to choose or else.

And I don't know what that will look like for you in that moment, but you need to now. This is why we're doing this with you. We're trying to help you now make those decisions and principalize your life in Scripture so that when that time comes, you're ready.

You're ready to take a wise course of action about what needs to happen. And then you need to stand on it and you have to live with the consequences. All right?

That doesn't make me a hero. It doesn't make you a hero. What does it make us? Faithful. It makes us faithful. And it's not easy. It's messy. It's hard. And it tears your heart out.

[55 : 45] I'm not the only one in here that's dealing with this. Yeah. Yeah.

Even little kids, you know, they get, oh, that's just Mr. Travis. While I've been here, you don't come in the door.

And that goes to this bathroom or any bathroom. So, Travis, are you saying that they would have been comfortable doing their business in front of you? You better believe it's going in or closing the door. Yeah. So I'll never forget how it was for me in Europe when we made our first trip to Poland years ago.

And I was at an airport and I'm in there at the urinal. And I hear a high-pitched voice and whip around at the urinal. And there's a female janitor in there with her cart going around wiping the sinks down while there's a whole row of us standing at the urinal.

And they think nothing of it. That's what I told these young ladies. And I said, you know, you don't ever come to the bathroom. If it's a woman's bathroom.

[57 : 16] If there's a male in the bathroom. I don't care whether he's dressed like a woman or not. You don't come in. Well, that'll endear you to everybody in the system, my friend.

And they look at me like, oh. You know. Right. You know, but most of them are starting to get that. You know, they'll see me in there. They know. Yeah. Like I'm almost done.

You know, I got to get the toilet paper. Yeah. You know, but you'd be surprised. They just kind of come right in. I'm like, no, no, no. Back out. When I've been here, there's no camera shift going into the bathroom.

Right. You know, you can't do that. Right. And I'm like, no. You can't do it while I'm in here. It's not happening. Yeah. Well, in your situation, you thought it through. And that's where you're prepared to stand.

And you can do that kindly. Yeah. Oh, yeah. They get it. Yeah. It's just, you know. Yeah. They're just so used to seeing what they see. Yeah. And, you know, they hear these things.

[58 : 12] People are not prepared to be honored from a Christian perspective. You're honoring them. You're not giving weight to the lie. You're honoring the Lord and you're honoring them.

One of the greatest ways that we love each other is we love each other in the truth. You can't love people apart from the truth. There's no love apart from the truth. This is why we don't worry about the fact that people out there call us a cult.

People out there say that our stance on certain doctrines is divisive. And we get a lot of criticism and we tell them, you know, doctrine does divide. But for people who want holiness in their life, doctrine is good.

The teachings of the Bible help us keep our lives where they need to be. So we just keep going. Let me do a little bit more with faithfulness with you before we end today. So I've been telling you that the issue in God's priority for your spiritual leadership is love expressed in faithfulness with perseverance.

All right. So here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to use the word faithful. Faithful because that's what we're talking about as an acronym to guide my time with you as we talk about eight biblical characteristics of God dependent men.

[59 : 31] Eight biblical characteristics of God dependent men. And I've just chosen these to fit with the acronym of of faithfulness. Right now we'll only do about one or two of them here in the next few minutes and then we'll save the rest because I wanted to do this intro with you and get you talking about some of these issues.

All right. So men. Men who are living in this love for Jesus and persevering with courage and conviction to be faithful to Jesus Christ.

That's what we're talking about. What is a God dependent man? It's a man who's living in love for Christ. A man who's persevering with courage and conviction. This isn't a man be man.

This is a man who is standing firm on conviction from scripture. Scripture has informed his heart. The love of Christ is ruling his heart. We're talking about God dependent men who are laboring in spiritual sweat to do this Titus passage to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age.

Looking for the blessed hope in the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. That last series of clauses there about the appearing, the hope and appearing of the glory of God means I'm living my life by heavenly priorities.

[60 : 57] I'm being defined by the fact that heaven is my home. This isn't my home. And finally, God dependent men who depend on God and their role and responsibilities as God honoring spiritual leaders.

Men who set their hearts to please Jesus in all they think, say and do. Now, if we could just end our time this morning with this first one.

Let me give you the first one that's an F. I think it will blend in nicely with some of the discussion you guys have been having this morning. To be faithful means, first of all, F, to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

That's the baseline. Now, you can have a profession that this is true in your life. What we are more interested in is a confession that comes from a convicted heart.

We're looking at God dependent men being men who truly follow Jesus. That is, I submit. I surrender. I obey. I am trying to live my life in conformity to Jesus Christ.

[62 : 02] Let me give you some passages that will help us through this. The first one is going to be in 1 John 2, verse 6. We'll move through these fairly quickly. I think you'll pick up on the point quickly as well.

1 John 2, verse 6 becomes this kind of foundational verse for what it means to follow Jesus. Look at this. It's very straightforward.

The one who says he abides in Jesus Christ ought himself to walk in the same manner as he walked. Now, is that sinking in?

We need to walk in the same manner as Jesus walked. And you might ask, Jeff, what man can live up to that? What man can live up to that?

But gentlemen, please hear me now. That's not the best question to ask about this verse. I understand the question, but it's not the best.

[63 : 01] A better question for this verse is this. Is it unrealistic? Is it unfair to become more like Jesus in all that you think, say, and do?

Is that unrealistic? It is perfectly biblical to think and act in terms of our life reflecting the life of Jesus. So to read a verse like 1 John 2, verse 6 and back up and say, wow, it is the expectation of heaven that in my followership of Jesus, my life will increasingly look like the life of my Lord.

That is the expectation of heaven for us as Christian men, as believers. It is perfectly biblical to think like that.

In 1 Corinthians, let me give you a little more meat for this idea of following Jesus and being conformed to him, walking like him, living like him. 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

All right. Everybody there? Verse 1. For the sake of time, I'll just read it out. Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

[64 : 26] Who wrote 1 Corinthians? Paul. So this is Paul. Be imitators of me, Paul says, the Apostle Paul, just as I also am of Christ.

So guys, when you hear me say in my sermons or teaching or whatever, follow me as I follow Jesus, this is where I get this. This is what we should be able to say to our wives with tenderness and care and concern.

Honey, follow me as I follow Jesus. Don't ask them to do that if you're not following the Lord. If you're not submitting and obeying.

If you're not dealing with sin in your life. And then, if you'll go over, hold your finger there and go over to Ephesians 5.1. Now, remember, I'm giving you more biblical substance here for what it means to be a follower of Jesus as a faithful or God-dependent man.

Ephesians 5.1. Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love. Just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for you or us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

[65 : 44] Be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in the love of Christ. That's a command. Now, look, here on the screen, I'm going to do a little more of a dive with you on this.

Let's see if it's... She may have missed it. She did. She missed it. Let me see. No. Okay, she missed it. Let me go back. All right. Well, let me just tell you this.

The Greek word that Paul uses here for imitators in both passages from 1 Corinthians 11 and Ephesians 5. In both of these passages, this word for imitators is from *mimetes*.

A Greek word *mimetes*. Now, the reason I tell you that word is this. It's where we get our English word mime or mimic. So, it means to follow or to copy the words or actions of someone.

So, you and I are being called to mimic Jesus. But this is an authentic mimicking. This is a mimicking that is being conformed to the character of Jesus as He lives in you.

[66 : 50] It's not fake. It's not false. It's not put on. It's not hypocritical. This is something that is deriving from your very nature as a new creature in Jesus. Do you see that?

Very different from faking it. I've heard people tell me in the Christian life when I first got saved, fake it till you make it. And that's wrong. You don't have to fake it.

Just be faithful. You don't have to be what you're not. You don't have to try to be more spiritually mature than you are to convince people of what? Walk with Jesus.

Submit to Jesus. Grow in the wisdom of Christ. That's a process. If you don't know how to handle this certain situation in the Lord, go into the situation and then get around people who can help you discern.

That's what we just did in our discussion. Help you discern how to move through contexts like that in the Lord. That's how you grow. That's how you become more wise. In 1 Corinthians chapter 4.

[67 : 50] That's why I had you hold your finger here. 1 Corinthians chapter 4. And we'll go from verses 14 through 17.

1 Corinthians 4, beginning in 14. He says, I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

This is Paul's heart for his people. For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

Therefore I exhort you, notice verse 16, be imitators of me. Here he is again. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways, which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

Now in this passage, in its context, Paul uses the same word, *mimetes*, in relation to being the Corinthian spiritual father.

[69 : 05] Imitate me as your father in the faith. Now there is a way that Greg and I have a similar responsibility and privilege and role. We should be able to stand before you as your friends and pastors and say, imitate our faith.

You know, this isn't my first rodeo or his. We've been in ministry and in the trenches together now for more than a decade. We've both been in ministry prior to that.

There should be this sense of which we are able to look at you and say, follow us as we follow Jesus. Share with us in these ways.

This is what Paul was saying. So I become someone's spiritual father, as it were, as I lead them in the Lord, as I become a spiritual, as it were, a mentor in their life, passing on to them what has been passed on to me.

I'm not inventing it. I'm just giving away what's been given to me, what I've grown in skill in. This is what you do. As a dad and a husband, as a churchman, you are constantly looking for someone who's just, if I can say it this way without sounding proud or hierarchical, you're looking for someone who's just a little bit behind you on the road of following the Lord because they're younger in the faith or whatever.

[70 : 30] They're a little more spiritually immature in this area or that area. And so you're looking for those people and you're kind of, you're kind of taking a step or two back and putting your arm around them and saying, hey, let's walk together, brother.

What's going on? Talk to me. And you're making that spiritual investment in their life as a brother in the Lord. That's what we do. That's what brotherhood is. So Paul says, I'm your spiritual dad.

And so imitate me as your spiritual dad. *Mimetes* me. Mimic me. Then finally, in 1 Thessalonians, and then we'll be done, 1 Thessalonians 1.

1 Thessalonians 1. 1 Thessalonians 1. Oh, let me put these others up here. There it is. 6 and 7. Paul says, You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

The reason I'm ending with this one in terms of this first one, this F, is because of how he puts forward so clearly, you have not only become imitators of us as those who have been investing in you spiritually, but you're imitating the Lord.

[71 : 58] And as a result of imitating us in the Lord, you've become an example to other believers all around the region. Now that's what we're looking for, isn't it? That's what we're looking for.

Paul uses in this passage, mimeses, mimic, to commend them for their faithful fellowship of the Lord Jesus as they embrace and obey the word of Jesus for godly living.

So imitate Jesus as your Lord. That's the point of this first one, this F. Following Jesus. Imitate Jesus as your Lord. This is what I said a minute ago, read the Gospels.

Look at how Jesus handled sticky situations where people were presenting him with secular concepts and trying to baptize them in some type of biblical Jewish idea.

And Jesus just pushed right through it because his number one goal in whatever he answered people was to honor God. This might offend you. This might hit you the wrong way.

[72 : 59] This might make you turn around and run off. I'm going to say it as kindly as I can, but I'm going to say it. I'm going to tell you the truth. I'm going to say what most honors God in this situation, not you.

This was me and my daughter. Honey, I love you with all my heart, soul, and strength. I love you so much. But I'm not going to compromise on the truth in your life. That's not love. That's caving.

And I'm not going to do that. I had made up my mind long before that moment that that would be the case. And so when it came up, I was prepared to say, I can't do that.

I won't do that. Now to sum up, we can make the following verse our prayer for our own life an example. This is how I'll end today. The things that you have learned, received, heard, and seen in me.

Practice these things and the God of peace shall be with you. Look at that, guys. What a verse. What a verse. Now, do you understand what that's challenging us with as we close here?

[74 : 08] Are you learning? Are you receiving? Are people hearing what you're learning and receiving? Are they hearing it? They are. So the issue is, what are you learning and receiving?

Because they're definitely hearing something from you. And they're definitely seeing something in you. In this case, Paul is saying, the things that you've learned, received, heard, and seen in me as I have followed Jesus and tried to be faithful to Him.

Practice these things. And the God of peace will be with you. What a mandate, huh? Alright. Well, thank you for your attention, guys, as we've gone through this material together.

Our goal is always to get you out of here before 11 and it's about 8 or so till. So, pretty good. Thank you for the discussion and thank you for being willing to wrestle together through these things.

So remember, take it home. We're not having church in the morning. Not going to be here in the morning. Be safe. We've sent out an email to encourage you in some things that you might do for family worship.

[75 : 14] Make use of the sermon from last week if you'd like. Something like that might be helpful. And just encourage each other and pray for each other.

Check the website and we'll be sending out communications about the rest of the week. I don't know that we'll be doing the Bible studies or whatever. It depends on the ice, I guess, and what they do with the roads.

Have to wait and see. They're still vacillating on... I know it's crazy. Do you know of another job in the world you can get paid the kind of money weathermen get paid and be wrong half the time?

It's crazy. Dave? I don't know if anybody here remembers a guy, John Pass, his latest TV unit. All right, so John and I were good friends in the country and John told me that it doesn't matter how accurate you are with your forecast.

The only thing that matters is that the viewers like you. It's entertainment. I never... I never thought Thank you.

[77 : 09] Thank you.

Thank you.