



**Ambitious Faith-Part 9**  
**Courage to Do the Right Thing**  
**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

I suppose, if you're normal, and of course you all are, that you would prefer peace over against war. I suppose that you would prefer tranquility over conflict. I assume that would be the case, I mean that's what we would prefer and if we're normal, that's the preferred route for you and me. Unfortunately, if we go into the Christian life, thinking that's what we're going to have, we are a spiritual disaster waiting to happen. I know some people immediately protest, they say, wait a minute, Christian life, isn't that about bringing peace, and there's a lot of talk about bringing peace, and didn't Jesus bring peace and all of that? And you know what? He did. But he brought a particular kind of peace. In his first coming, he made it very clear that the reason he came was to get us connected to God, to bring us peace with God. And it is for that very reason, in a world that's not at peace with God, and even in a body that's not at peace with God, that we are filled with conflict; and unfortunately, a lot of skirmishes and battles that take place in our daily lives. And we've just got to come to grips with that as reality. Now I suppose we could look at the concentric circles that the Bible spells out for us in terms of the conflict and there's all kinds of conflicts on a variety of levels, that if you're going to be a follower of Christ, you should expect and anticipate. But I want to talk about the one this morning that Hebrews 11 addresses next for us in our series on ambitious faith. It's a kind of conflict that is probably the closest to home; it's the one that you will deal with every day of the Christian life. It's the one that on some days you will deal with ever hour of every day. It's the conflict that you and I have because of a very simple command in scripture that the Bible calls us as Christians to do. And that is, that God has said multiple times in the Bible that we are to strive to be holy just as he is Holy. Sounds easy enough, it just doesn't work out on a daily basis. As a matter of fact, the Bible says that you've got a lot of opposition as it relates to that task, at least its simple to understand, its not simple to do, but its going to be fraught with battles and clashes and conflict. Because number one, you have, according to 1 Peter 5, an enemy that's like a roaring lion and he prowls around seeking someone to devour, he wants to take you out. And his method is trying to get you to compromise, pull you into some kind of sin that will ruin your path of sanctification, that will render you ineffective. And that's the main thing he's looking to do in your life. Then you've got, according to Romans chapter 12 verse 1, a world system that's constantly trying to squeeze you into its mold. You notice that? They want you to be like them, and like them is not always like what God would like you to be and so you've got this other pressure in your life to try and put you in a path that takes you away from living according to the will of God, and that's a pressure we face on a daily basis. Thirdly, as it relates to this battle to do the right thing in life, the Bible says you've got a conflict that wages inside of you. But because we're still in this unredeemed container called our flesh, the Bible says that, according to 1 Peter 4, that there are evil desires in you that wage war against your soul. You've experienced a little of that I trust, we know what that's like. We've got desires and they're not right, and we shouldn't do that, but here's this nagging temptation to cross the line, or be quiet when we should speak up, or to take a short cut when we know we ought to go the long route, because that would be God's way, and its constantly there, it's a battle that we struggle with. Now the second flag people throw on the play is, well you know, I'm all into grace, and that's what you don't understand, I understand the grace of God and we're not under the law, and so sin is not



really a big deal to me because I know its been paid for on the cross, so its okay, I'm alright, I don't have to fight this, you make it sound like such a big deal, its paid for, its done, we're okay. Well for those of you that think grace is a kind of get out of jail free card, a license to say, well, its all right, its been paid for, then the Bible would be very clear to respond to that by saying, you don't understand grace at all. Sure enough, we don't earn our way into the family of God, and doing good things and being righteous doesn't get us right with God, but according to scripture, Paul wrote to Titus in the early church and he said, don't you understand that grace is the thing that instructs us to deny ungodliness. It's because God has granted us grace in Christ that we should have a zeal and a passion to say, I'm not going to live for sin anymore. And with the enemy of God prowling around and the world system of my own flesh rebelling against this desire to live godly, you've got to know that if you live passive in the Christian life, you're a spiritual disaster waiting to happen. I mean, you are no match if you are not ready to put up your dukes and say, I'm ready to fight this thing called sin and temptation. It is the norm of the Christian life. In the words of Romans chapter 8, you are to declare war on sin in this way; you are to put to death the misdeeds of the body. Which means that we're all saying okay, I'm all out declaring war on this. And even though people may say, I don't abuse grace and I understand I should be righteous and I want to grow in this path of sanctification, there's a lot of people that sit here this morning or will hear this message on CD, and they still don't feel the urgency to fight sin. And let me give you a quick little pre-sermon, can I do that? I've got the microphone, so here I go. Five things, real quick, reasons that sin is a big deal, okay? Number One, sin is a big deal in our lives because, here goes, because it causes pain on the cross of Christ, okay? And lets just get real clear, Christ had to pay for every specific sin that he would forgive in the people of God. As he hung on a cross, he had to be treated by the Father as though he were the guy that compromised, as though he were the guy embroiled in lust and sin, as though he were the person that had the terrible attitude or couldn't control his anger. And the Father, the Bible says, had poured out his wrath on the Son. Now I understand that's anachronistic for us, because we think, wait a minute, if I commit it tomorrow, how can it relate to the cross? You know, God saw it all from the big perspective, and the sins that we commit this week caused Christ's pain 2000 years ago and I don't want to add to that, do you? I mean I'd much rather live a godly life so I don't contribute to any more pain on that day on the cross. Secondly, it renders us ineffective in being useful for God. As Paul wrote Timothy, he said, listen, here's what God is looking for, clean vessels. And if you'd rid yourself from sin in your life then God can use you. And the more holy we are, and the more righteous we are, and the more we walk in step with God's spirit, the more God's going to reach for you like a tool out of a toolbox and say, I can use you, now I'm going to do something great in and through you. And I'd like to be as effective as I can for God. Wouldn't you like to make a difference in your neighborhood, with your neighbors, the people you interact with, with the people in your work a day world? That would be good. Well, a lot of it depends upon how clean of a vessel you are. And so, I don't want to be rendered ineffective by falling into sin on a perpetual constant basis. Thirdly, and we've talked a lot about this in the book of Hebrews, sin is a big deal because sin mitigates our eternal rewards. It takes away from our eternal rewards. And I know a lot of us believe in spiritual communism and all that. But the bottom line is, there will be a real diverse group of people in the Kingdom of God. Some that are rewarded richly and others, according to 1 Corinthians 3, who on judgment day, will suffer loss. We're not talking about condemnation, there's no purgatory, this is not a preview to hell, you're not going to be punished there or spanked on judgment day, but the Bible

says you will suffer because of the squandered opportunities to serve God faithfully. And that's all about sin. And so I really would like to keep as much of the future reward that God has planned in his grace for me in tact. Fourthly, it brings painful discipline to our lives, as Hebrews chapter 12 will show us, we're going to do a whole series on that section of the scripture but, man, I don't want, as the scripture says, to have that painful experience of God's discipline. And as I often say, you may not believe in spanking, parents, but God does, and he often will bring out the paddle and apply it to our spiritual fanny and he'll say, listen, because of your sin, you need corrective measures, and pain is a great way to do this, it gets our attention, as C.S. Lewis likes to say. I mean he shouts to us in our pain and he wants to get us back on the path of righteousness. So, much of the future of my pain, or the peaceful fruit of righteousness will depend on how I live, and I'd like to avoid as much sin as possible because I don't like spankings. Much like my kids, I'd like to avoid as many as possible. Fifthly, and we could go on all morning on this, but just by way of introduction, we've got to understand that God is not a software program, right? He is a person. And according to the scripture, our sin grieves the heart of God. And let's just think about that for a minute. Here is a God in heaven who's done everything to bring us to himself, he has offered his own Son, he's taken your sin and placed it on his Son, and when we sin, how does it feel parents, to watch your kids rebel? I mean this is a painful thing to the heart of God. So I want to say, you know what, this is not just an esoteric, philosophical abstract discussion, this is important, we've got to battle sin, we've got to declare war on sin in our lives. To get us into heaven; is that what I said? No, that's not what I said, but to walk in the path of sanctification because so much hangs on whether or not I'm going to say no to temptation this week. We've just got to feel that, and if we feel that, then I think we can all throw up our hats and say, okay, this is important, lets declare war on sin. Question is, how do we do it? Well, there's a lot of things the Bible has to say, but there are some specific tools for us in Hebrews 11 beginning in verse number 23. Open there because in this series of examples of examples of the Old Testament, we get to an example of ambitious faith, and it hones in on the issue of fighting temptation. The template for us is Moses and his parents. And the great thing about this passage is, if we look at it carefully, we'll begin to understand the ingredients for fighting temptation. And if there's good reason for me to do it, then, man, I just want to know how, and there's some great examples here for us beginning in verse 23. Hebrews chapter 11:23; and that's the issue, and it does take ambitious faith to walk a path of righteousness, he says well lets think of Moses' parents for a minute. They hid him for three months after he was born. That's because Pharaoh had said all baby boys have to be killed. And they saw he was no ordinary child, I mean, which is a head scratcher for expositors because this is more than just, he's really cute, lets save him. I mean, there was something here, we don't know what it is, its not clear but both Stephen in his sermon in Acts 7 and 8, and both the exodus passage in Exodus 2, and both this passage, thirdly, they say there's something about this kid, there was this idea that they had from God, this kid could be like the deliverer or something. I mean he's not ordinary, there's something about him. And so they said, there's no way we can give into the sin of tossing our kid into the river, we're going to do whatever we can to save him. And what did it take? Bottom of verse 23, it took them dealing with fear, they weren't afraid of the Kings edict, they had to say, you know what, we're putting that aside, because we're going to do the right thing here. Which in that case was to save the kid. Verse 24, spotlight shifts to Moses and he's grown up. He grew up, he refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. You know the story; he's raised in Pharaoh's palace. Now, he's got a choice, because he's really not an

Egyptian, he's a Hebrew, and he sees the Hebrews being mistreated, and he says, I'm going to stand with them. He chose, verse 25, to be mistreated along with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time, that was a choice. Which, by the way, that's what this sermon is all about, its about making choices. Am I going to compromise, or am I going to do the right thing? Am I going to fudge a little bit here on what God told me to do, or am I going to live passionately and say, God said it, I'm going to do it. And he said, in this case, you know what, here's an option for sin, no; even if it's pleasurable, even if there's some kind of benefit there, I know its short term, I'm going to say no to it, I'm going to stand with the people of God. Verse 26, he regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ which was still 1500 years away, he had a sense of God as redeemer, and for that, he says, you know, its of greater value than all the treasures of Egypt. Pay me whatever, I'm not going to compromise because, bottom of verse 26, he was looking ahead to his reward. Different Perspective. Lets start up there in verse number 23, it starts with two people, Amram and Jochebed, they've got a young family growing, they've got an older sister a young pre-teen perhaps and her name is Miriam, and there's a three year old toddler running around and his name is Aaron, who happened to be a Levite. The year, by the way, is 275 years after the close of last weeks sermon, which was the end of the book of Genesis. We ended with Joseph there giving instruction about his bones. And the bottom line is, we've had 275 years down there in Egypt, and they were multiplying like bunny rabbits, I mean they were growing exponentially, these Hebrew people, in God's sovereign plan, they were fertile myrtle, kids everywhere, okay, lots of kids. 275 years, it's growing like crazy and then the Bible says in Exodus chapter 1, there was a Pharaoh that rose to power that didn't know Joseph. See they were favorable to the Jews because of Joseph and what he had done to save the nation, but now they are saying, we don't even know that guy. So all the sudden now, all they saw with the Hebrews was a growing threat because they were growing like a weed, look at all these people. And because, like a lot of ancient Near Eastern Monarchs, that posed a threat for a coup-de-ta, or some kind of take over, here, they said, listen, we've got to do something about it. So Pharaoh's edict was, every baby boy, as though the girls weren't a threat, every baby boy had to be tossed into the Nile and killed. And he gave instruction to the Hebrew midwives when they gave birth to these kids, they were to kill them. If it's a girl, okay. We didn't want a standing growing army growing up to take over the Pharaoh's court. Well, enter pregnant Jochebed, got a baby, two kids, wow, what do I do now? And the Bible says, according to Hebrews chapter 11 verse 23, they got over the understandable fear of doing what the King had told them to do. And that's what, by the way, most sin feels like, pressure, doesn't it? I mean when we are tempted to sin, there's that pressure to push us down the wrong path. And in this case, it was a Kings edict, Pharaoh's edict. Now ask this question of yourself, what were the consequences of defying an ancient Near Eastern Monarchs command? Is there something attached to that, were there consequences, was there something to fear about that act of disobedience? Well, absolutely, if you disobeyed the King, this is not congress, right? This is not your parents, this is the monarch, he will kill you. And so there was a lot at stake. They had a lot of fear to overcome which, by the way would be a nice thing to jot down. If you and I are going to do right, we just have to stand up and do right and not fear the consequences. Don't fear the consequences. Because there are consequences to doing the right thing. Not just in ancient Egypt, but also today, am I right about that? I mean is there not a price to pay if today you say in your heart, this week I'm not going to compromise. And when the boss says, do this, and I know it's unethical, there's a price to pay, it could cost me my job, maybe on a lesser scale could cost me

a client, could cost me a promotion, could cost me my reputation, there's a lot of things it could cost to say, I'm going to do the right thing and say no to the pressure and temptation of compromise. Well, here's the deal, how do we deal with that fear? Because a lot of, whoa, I'm just afraid. Here's how to deal with that fear, turn back to Exodus chapter 1. Jochebed and Amram were not the first people to defy the King's edict. As a matter of fact, we have a great template and prototype that Jochebed and Amram followed in the footsteps of, and it was two Hebrew midwives. And take a look at the great example they laid down and how they dealt with it in Exodus 1 verse 15. Here they are, the King of Egypt, that's the Pharaoh, said to the Hebrew midwives, who in this case specifically were, Shiphrah and Puah, sorry, but that was their names, right? When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on their delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him. Now they didn't need the forthcoming Ten Commandments to figure out, that's not right. So they knew the right thing to do, which was not to kill them. If it's a girl, let her live. The midwives, however, feared Pharaoh, underline the word Pharaoh there, do you see it? Is that what it says? Do you think they feared Pharaoh? Oh yeah. In the next verse, they're about to lie to Pharaoh, I mean their knees knock, when they defy the King's order. But the focus here isn't on how much or how little they feared Pharaoh, the focus in this text is they feared God. Do you see? I mean if you really want to deal with the fear of man, don't just sit in the mirror and say, I shouldn't fear my boss, I shouldn't fear my boss, I shouldn't fear my boss, okay? Here's what you should learn to do. If you want to stand up to the fear of the consequences of doing right, learn to fear God. Because they feared God, they did not do what the King of Egypt told them to do. They didn't give into the pressure, and they let the boys live. Which, by the way, is exactly what Jochebed and Amram were about to do. Somehow circumvent the King's edict, because it's the wrong thing to do and I need to do the right thing. And they said, we're not going to fear you. As a matter of fact, the Hebrew midwives made it really clear; we're going to fear God more. That's so important. If you want to learn to have less of a fear of man, all you've got to focus on is saying, I need to learn to fear God. And we've dealt with this in the book of Hebrews already. I mean let's not double talk our way through this, that is, when I think about standing before the God of the Universe, naked at the judgment seat of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5, that I am going to say, I fear the accountability of God. And I'm not afraid of condemnation, I'm not going to hell, there's no purgatory, but what I'm concerned about is standing there and giving a count for the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad. I'm concerned about that. And that is a big day of accountability, and I should say in my heart and in my mind, that is going to motivate me to fear you less than I fear God. Some people marvel at the teens that get through high school, and they don't fall into drugs, and they don't smoke pot, and they don't have sex in the backseat of the car, and they don't get drunk, and they don't fall to all the temptations. And sometimes when people find out that I steered clear of all of that, they go, how in the world did that happen? You must have gone to the sissified high school in some out of the way Barstow or Blythe or something like that, right? I keep bringing up Blythe, I'm going to end up there, you realize that? You went to Sissy High, or you were some nerd with the pocket protector and no one ever offered you drugs, that's how you did it, right? No, no.. believe it or not I wasn't a total nerd in high school. I know that's hard to believe, and I didn't go to Sissified High School, big city, big high school, all the temptations, all the stuff out there, come party with us, here take a hit of this, do this, and how did Mike Fabarez and all the other people like me avoid that stuff? I don't think it wasn't that we didn't fear fitting in, I feared not fitting in, I feared being ridiculed, I feared being called an oddball,

but I had a greater fear than that, the fear of my Dad, see? That was a greater fear. And I've told you this before, Dad was a motorcycle cop, come home, big bad black outfit, big shiny gun right here, and it seemed like when he was cleaning his gun, that's when he'd ask me, so you taking any drugs at school son? Right? Talk to me about your compromise [gun cocking sound] I mean you know, it was like, I feared, with a healthy respect, the fact that I don't want to give an account to Dad and say, yes, or have him catch me doing something wrong. I had to fear this one greater than that. And I think we've got to get to the place, if you are going to tow the line with God, you have to have a healthy respect and a fear for God that says, I fear disobeying God more than I fear going along with the pressure at work, more than I fear doing what my family says I ought to do, because that's what we all do, and I know that's not the god or Christian thing to do, but you little goody two shoes, come 'on just compromise with us. You've got to say, no, I'm going to stand before God one day, and that to me is a greater concern to me than fitting in with you right now. You know how this worked out right? Exodus chapter 2, when we get specifically to the scene here in Exodus chapter 2, and we've got Moses being born, verse 2, Jochebed gets pregnant, she gives birth to a son, saw that he was a fine child, which doesn't mean, man he's a fine looking child, there was something about him right? I'm just trying to tell you. To read the commentators all the way from the beginning, something, there's some premonition that this kid is going to do something great. And so she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer, Mom's of three month olds; that's obvious, right? I cant do this anymore... she got a papyrus basket for him, I'm now in Exodus 2 verse 3, got a papyrus basket for him and they coated it with tar and pitch, which by the way, when is the last time we heard that kind of language going on in the Bible? Oh, Noah's Ark, remember that? Here we're building a mini little ark, right? Coating it with pitch, which by the way is ironic because look at what she's about to do with it, then she placed the child in it, and put it among the reeds along the banks of the Nile. And if you look back up in chapter 1, what were they supposed to do with all the Hebrew boys? Toss them in the Nile, well I'll put it with a little water-proof basket, you know, she's going to do it, but I'm going to do the right thing too, I'm going to spare the life of this kid. So she puts the kid in the basket, and it says in verse number 4, his sister, Miriam, stood at a distance to see what would happen, then Pharaoh's daughter went out to the Nile to bathe. Now who do you think orchestrated the timing of all that? Oh, is he sovereign? Yeah. He orchestrates the events, and here the baby is floating down the Nile, and here comes the Pharaoh's daughter out to bathe, and she's got all her attendants around her, walking around the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds, she sent her slave girl to get it, she opened it up, and here it was, little baby boy, and he was crying, and she felt sorry for him and said, this is one of those Hebrew babies, she said, which sounds a little funny, ooh.. little Hebrew baby, there he is. But she's feeling bad for him, ooh, he's crying, and you can see it, right? What a perfect situation, I mean the Pharaoh could not deny his daughter coming home with a pet, let alone a baby. And so she's enamored. Then the sister, Miriam, verse 7, asks Pharaoh, hey, I've got a good idea, should I go and get one of those Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you? Because they couldn't run to Wal-Mart to get some Similac, right? I mean this was like, what are we going to do? We've got to feed the kid, if we're going to keep the kid, we've got to feed the kid. And only the Pharaoh's daughter could get this kid an exemption from the death penalty and she did, and she's like yeah, wow, we've got to feed it, I guess I couldn't ask an Egyptian lady to nurse the Hebrew baby so, great idea little girl, why don't you go find somebody to nurse the baby. Hmmm, verse 8, yes, go she said. And the girl went and got the babies, mother, now that's

convenient. Hey Mom, they found the baby, Pharaoh's daughter said we need somebody to nurse it, ah, you've got a three-month old, yeah, go nurse Moses. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, hey, take this baby and nurse him for me. You can see them just there trying to hold back their laughter, their smiles, right? And I will pay you. Isn't that perfect? I'll pay you to do that. Ah, well, I don't know.. how much? I mean you know, its like, yeah, that's perfect. Trust fund, expense account, I'll nurse the baby for you. How perfect is this? Isn't that just like God? It's just like God. Because here is the bottom line, God can do more with your obedience than you can do with your compromise, and you've got to know that. God can do more with your obedience that you can pull off with all your compromise and disobedience. So its time for us to say, we're going to stand up and do the right thing, and we're not going to fear the consequences. Because so often like this, God takes the consequences of being obedient and he shows us, he proves to us, you know what, that was better, wasn't it? Just be obedient and do the right thing. Don't compromise, don't fall to sin, don't fall to temptation. And when you do the right thing, I'll work it out. So he always works it out perfectly, right? So you go in and you tell your boss, I'm not going to do what you say, I fear God more than you. And everything will work out great, he'll probably give you a raise and a promotion, right? Is that how it works? Not always, okay? Does he work it out for good in the big scheme of things? Yeah, we've learned that in this series haven't we? He works for good all these things. He works them together for good, if you love God and are called according to his purpose. But in the short run, there may be a few bumps along the way. And what you need to have is a resolve that whether this works out perfectly or not, I'm not going to compromise. I'll give you one example. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, remember those three guys? Unlike the situation in Jochebed and Amram's life, they were under pressure to do the wrong thing. This is a great story; you should look at it, Daniel chapter 3. In Daniel chapter 3, same kind of thing, they're pressured to do the wrong thing. Now remember, this is 1000 years later, five-eighty-six, they get ripped from their homeland, they get taken over to Babylon and these young teenagers now are growing up as some future prodigies that they are going to shape and mold into these great Babalonian leaders and so here they are, but their heart is still in Israel. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, much like Daniel, had made a resolve, we're not going to compromise. Even though we're in a foreign land, in a foreign place, with foreign gods, we're not going to compromise. Well, there's a real problem. Because in God's plan, here comes Nebuchadnezzar, the great Middle Eastern, Mesopotamian Monarch who says, you know what? I'm going to build this big statue and every one when we play the music, is going to have to bow down, and that was not going to sit well 1000 years after Moses, but the Ten Commandments obviously, right there near the top, I'm not supposed to be bowing down to any golden idols, I'm not going to do it. So they didn't do it and someone tattled on them, right? They get brought in, and now they're standing before the great Monarch of Babylon and he says, you know what? I'm going to give you one more chance, verse 15, give you one more chance, here's what you need to do, if you hear the sound of the music, we're going to play it, we're going to queue the tape up here, when you hear the sound of the horn, the flute, the zither, one of my favorite instruments, the zither, the lyre, that's a joke, I don't know what it is either, the harp, the pipes, and all kinds of music, this is Daniel 3:15, if you are ready then to fall down and worship the image that I have made, hey, cool, we'll just call it a big misunderstanding. No problem, little slap on the wrist, on your way, very good. But if you do not worship it, you'll be thrown immediately into the barbeque, and we will burn you, and you will get burned up. Ouch. Think about the pain for a minute, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Hmmmm. And then I've got to tell you, little Hebrew boys, what God is going to save you from that? Who's going to be able to rescue you from my hands? And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, well, I'm sure God would want us alive and we'd be better alive than dead, and I'm sure that we can bow down and really not mean it so, I guess we'll externally bow down, but in our hearts we will stand up and then we'll pray to God for forgiveness, because God is a God of grace, so okay, queue the tape, we'll do it, but we won't mean it. Is that what they did? That's the other version of the Bible, right? It didn't happen that way. They were like, ah, well, no. Hey King, Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. Translation, you're not the boss of us, right? You are not the boss of me, and we're not going to have to do what you say. We've got a bigger King and the New Testament we call it the Lordship of Christ, that's our ultimate accountability. It's not my manager, it's not my boss, it's not my CEO, it's not my mother-in-law, it's not the pressure of the neighborhood, it's not the other kids on the t-ball team, it is God. And we're going to do what he says, he's the boss of us, and if we're thrown into the blazing furnace, verse number 17, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand oh king. Next words, underline them, highlight them, bracket them, here it comes, but even if he does not, that's so important here, even if he doesn't, we want you to know, king, you're not the boss of us, we're not going to serve your gods, worship your stinking idol, done, so burn us if you have to, but we're not bowing down. Here's the deal, if you go into it with one or two problems, compromises, one saying, God, I'll do this as long as you work it quickly out for good, God isn't going to make a deal with you like that. Or, if you say well, God knows my heart, I just hate that, don't you hate that? God knows my heart, it's okay, hehehe. Stop with that. Do the right thing. Tell the people around you, it doesn't matter what you think, I'm doing the right thing. And if you want to fire me for this, fire me. If I'm going to lose a client over it, I'm going to lose a client over it. If my family is going to alienate me, I guess they're going to alienate me, but I'm going to do the right thing. It's not a license to be a jerk, I'm not asking you to be as irritating and as rude as possible. I'm just telling you, when push comes to shove, and you're being pressured to do the wrong thing, whether from people, environment, the impulses of your body, stand up, be ruthless and say, I'm not doing it, I'm not going to do it. And you know what? In the long run, God will work this out. And if in the short run he doesn't work it out? Okay, no big deal, we're going to do the right thing. Are you committed to doing right at that level? You will never beat temptation on a consistent basis in your life until you're as ruthless as that. And that is, I don't care what it costs me; I don't care what obedience costs me. Why? Because I fear God and his approval more than I fear any of the consequences that might come because of doing the right thing. Hebrews ends that way, by the way, if you're back in Hebrews 11, flip over to verse 6 of chapter 13, the last chapter of the book. What a great way to end this book. After all that he's taught about compromise and standing up for what's right, what a great way to just summarize so much of what's been said. I know it's early in the chapter, but look at verse 6. Hebrews 13:6; so we say with confidence (here's the bottom line) the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. There's the bottom line right there. What can man do to me? Now the list is long, right? Fire me, ruin my reputation, hurt me, take my money away, ah, you know alienate, a lot of things... but ultimately, I'm not going to be afraid because God is going to be my helper. I'm more concerned with pleasing him. Don't fear the consequences. If you're going to do the right thing, you've got to start with that resolve. Now, as I said, verse 24 of Hebrews 11, the focus shifts. Not to Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, the focus now goes on to Moses himself. Now Moses, when he grows up, he's got a choice to make.

He knows he's not an Egyptian. He's watching the people of God who are trying to, and albeit not perfectly, serve God. He's watching them be ridiculed and mistreated by the powers that be, which he is aligned with. I mean he's the son of Pharaoh's daughter. But he said, you know what? I'm not going to be aligned with you, because that's wrong, I'm going to be aligned with them, because that's right. Now that was going to cost him. Did that cost him? Absolutely. He ends up getting kicked out, he has to run because, you know the story, because of his premature work to redeem the people out of the land and get them out. But the bottom line is, he had to make a decision. The path was clear. Yeah, I'd like to keep my job, I like my expense account, I'd love to keep getting all the education of the Egyptians, but I've got to stand with who's right. And who's right in this case, are the people of Israel and the people that have the God, Yahweh, as their God, and so I've got to stand with them. Now that was going to cost him specifically in the next three verses, take a look at it. By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, he had refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he chose to be mistreated along with the people of God. Because he knew, if I stand with the people of God, I'm going to have this, and that's a word you should circle, mistreatment. I'm going to be mistreated, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. Because Satan always has a little carrot out there to give you. Compromise and I'll give you some goodies. This will feel good, this will be great, you'll get a raise, you'll advance, your reputation will increase, everything will go okay with you, you will avoid all the pain and the conflict, just compromise. And he says, I'm not going to do that. I don't want to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time; I'd rather stand with the people of God, because they're right. And you guys, you Egyptians that are oppressing them, you're wrong. Verse 26; he regarded (here's the other word to circle) disgrace for the sake of Christ. Which he was being a type-of, to lead the people out of bondage, he was saying, I'll be disgraced for that. It's of greater value than the treasures of Egypt? Why? Because he was looking forward to his reward. What's the point here though? Two words you circled what were they? Well, mistreated and disgraced. Because here's the deal, if you don't run with the boys, if you're not one of the guys, if you don't go along with all of the gals, if you're not the person that does all the compromising stuff that everybody else in your circle does, you will have to step out and stand with the people of God. Which means that they're going to have to know that you believe in God, you believe in God's Word, that you actually believe the things that are written in that, and that makes people do this behind your back.- Ohh, he's a little nutty. That's what they say. They roll their eyes at you. I heard a guy on TV yesterday, I've got to say, here he was, the pundit was talking about the whoever it was and he said, here's the deal, I don't mind if they're religious, that doesn't bother me. They can be church go-ers, I just cannot handle it if they are not going to believe in evolution. That was the litmus test for this guy. In other words, you know what, you can be religious, but don't start telling me that God created the world, I cant handle that, you're a nut if you believe that. Now here's the deal, we love that position of, can't I just sit here in the middle somewhere? And cant I kind of be a Christian and maybe I wont let it all out and I don't need to let everyone know what I believe. But here's the deal, the bottom line is, if the people at work could see you right now, nodding at things in church that you affirm, see? They would do this, koo-koo, right? They think that's odd, its always been that way. If you stand with the people of God and people at work really know what you believe, you will, two words, be mistreated and you will bear disgrace in that. That's just how it's going to be. How does God instruct us to handle that? You insult them back, right? Call them pinheads, that's what he tells us to do, right? What do we do when people insult us? What do we



do when people say all kinds of terrible things about us because we're followers of Christ and we stand with the people of God? What does the Bible say? Here's one for you, Matthew chapter 5 verse 11. It says, that when we are persecuted with words and people will say all kinds of bad things about us, and they malign us, and they mistreat us with their mouths, and they call us names, next verse, verse 12; we should in that day rejoice and be glad. Two reasons in that passage, because great is our reward in heaven and that's the way they treated the prophets. And the point is, those should be our heroes, the prophets. The people that stood up even though they threw them in wells and in holes and they killed them, we ought to say, we want to stand with the people of God, and some of God's heroes, the prophets, you know what? We stand with them, and we don't care. And the Bible says, you know, if you're standing with the people of God, and their heroes, just know this, they didn't care much for them. And let's get New Testament about it for a second. They didn't care much for our leader now, did they? Did the Jerusalem post speak well of Jesus Christ, help me with that one. No. What did the leaders want to do? Kill him. Did they? They did. They stripped him naked, they beat him, they put a crown of thorns on his head and they pinned him up to a Roman execution rack. That's what they did to your leader, and you want to be well liked, you want to be the cool Christian that everybody likes? What are you thinking? Here's what Jesus said about it in John 15; do you think a servant is above his master? Here's how he put it, and I know this is jarring for a Sunday morning in Orange County with a nice sun shiny day outside, but here it comes, ready? If they hated Him, right? They're going to hate you too. Jesus put it in the first-person, if they hated me, they're going to hate you. It's just the way it is. And here's how he put it in John 15; if you are of the world, the world will love you. But you're not. I chose you out of the world, and because I chose you out of the world, get ready for it. As a matter of fact, as Matthew 5:11 says; get ready to gladly embrace it. Mistreatment and disgrace, I summarized it in one word, ridicule, Number 2 on your outline. You and I just need to do the right thing, and then gladly, ready? Here it comes, gladly accept the ridicule. Don't fight back, just say okay, whatever, call me a nut, call me a zealot, call me a Jesus freak, whatever, hey that's nice, but, you know, hey, that just comes with the territory. Bottom line is, you stand in good company, that's what Jesus said. Because you know what? They did that to Jesus, they did that to the prophets, they did that to a guy we preached on a couple of weeks ago, his name was Noah. How was Noah getting along with that big barge in the backyard? Everybody thought he was really cool, huh? Is that what they thought? What did they think of Noah? Whoo-hooo. I mean... crazy. Now you can imagine Noah doing some negotiation with God on this one. Hey God, I know you want a boat, but the size that you gave me is really going to call attention to this in my backyard. Can we build a smaller one? I could build it in the barn maybe, where no one can see it, okay? Now you laugh at that, but isn't that exactly the challenge we face right now? I mean God is telling you in 2 Corinthians 5 to be an ambassador, speak up, to plead with people as though Christ were making his appeal through you, be reconciled to God. And you're going, well, that's a little overboard, can't we just build a little small Christian testimony? Won't that be okay? And what does God say? Oh boy, compromise, right? If the specifications for your Christian life are to stand up for God, do the right thing, be his representative in the world, then here's the deal...don't make deals with God, that's called hypocrisy. That's called compromise. Let's just stand up to it and know that they're going to do this when we walk out of the lunch room. Oh well. Is this a license to be a kook, right? Is that what I'm saying? Just be as kooky as you can, right? Make sure everybody thinks you're a nut. No, I'm not saying that. Now let's be respectful and kind. But let's

just recognize that if we stand for truth, they're going to say... kook, oddball, zealot, Jesus freak. So, what do we do? Let's just remember that we're in good company. And don't, by the way say, well, I'll stand up for Christ, but I'm going to try to do it in a way that makes sure that everybody still thinks I'm kind of groovy, you know? Don't. I'm not trying to say to do it in a brash way, but it's like Noah saying, well, I'll build your big boat, but can I paint it really cool? You know? So everybody thinks it's really nifty, you know? No. I mean just build the stinking ark and tell people to get on it. And they're not going to like the message, so just do it. And same for you. You and I need to recognize that God calls us to do things that we give into not doing because of the pressure and we need to recognize that we do it because we idolize the acceptance of the people around us. That's the bottom line. Lets invert this, let me ask you a question. Are you ready to give up the idolatry of being accepted by all those people Monday through Friday? Are you ready for that? Again, people sometimes take this and run the other direction. I just want to be a kooky, nutty person. Not asking you to be that. I'm just saying give up on the hope that you will be well liked by everyone. Because Jesus said this, whoa to you when all men speak well of you, right? If you're the employee of the year for the fifth year in a row, and everybody is toasting you at the Christmas party, then there's a problem, man. Because unless they're all angels, you're probably not living for Christ the way you're supposed to. Because the Bible says, when you stand up and do the right thing, you're probably going to have what Moses had, mistreatment and disgrace. Ridicule is another name for it. I'll gladly accept the ridicule. Its going to happen, and you just need to get ready for it. Speaking of getting ready, one passage on this before we go. There's no service after this so we've got all day, right? 1 Peter chapter 4. This is so specific, so we've got to deal with it, so here it is. Here is what the Bible is asking us to do. 1 Peter chapter 4 verse number 1. Three choices. I can stand up and do the right thing, I can say I'm not going to do the right thing, or I can find some kind of middle hypocritical land of compromise. Man, lets just choose A. Stand up and do the right thing. But they won't like us. Well, that's all right, that's okay. I'm still going to be nice, I'm still going to be gracious, but not everybody is going to think well of us, that's all right. Does that mean I'm going to have to suffer a little bit? Yeah. 1 Peter 4:1; therefore, since Christ suffered in his body... why did he suffer? Because he did the will of God. Because he was in a world that didn't do the will of God. Because he was at peace with God and the world wasn't, therefore they were war-ing against him. Well, since he suffered in the body, here it is, one word which translates to two English words, arm yourself. That's the only time its used in the scripture. And this word, it translates, arm yourself, it really brings us to the picture of Ephesians chapter 6, because it was the word used in classical Greek to put on your armor. To put your pads on and your helmet on before the game, to gear up, that's what it is. You've got to get ready. Where? I've got to put on some special shin pads? No, no, with an attitude. Arm yourself also with the same attitude, and that means that I know that I'm going to get thumped, I'm going to put on my helmet, I'm going to put on the right attitude because I know that He who has suffered in His body is done with sin. Now careful with that phrase, because some people have used that as ascetics in church history, slapped themselves, whipped themselves, and now they wont sin anymore. Funny thing is, it doesn't work. That's why there's not monasteries on every corner. It doesn't work. We're not talking about that. What we're talking about, catch this carefully, if I've suffered in the body, if I'm standing with Christ and doing his will, then it's the mental attitude that I'm done with sin. It doesn't mean I've stopped sinning, but in my mind, I'm done with sin. There are periodic failures, we all sin. 1 John chapter 1, if you say you're without sin, you're a liar; the truth is not in you. But,

in my mind, what's your resolve? I'm not going to sin. I hope when you leave today, you say, you should say it everyday, God, I'm done with sin. As Paul said, I'm dead to the world, its dead to me. I'm not interested in sinning. Now, will we by 3 o'clock have to confess something? Probably, but I'm committed to saying I'm done with sin. As a matter of fact, here's what I'm committed to, as a result, I don't live, verse 2, the rest of my life for evil human desires, I'm not just out to do whatever I want to do, but rather, my resolve is to do the will of God. I live for the will of God. I want to do what God says. And then he says, you've spent enough time in the past, and this guy's had some sordid testimonies apparently, doing what the pagans choose to do. I mean we can get up, share, open the microphone, you've been debauched and you're full of lust and drunkenness and orgies, carousing in the test of idolatries, you've done all that. And they, current tense, think it's strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation. Why don't they go to the same movies we go to? Why don't they party with us? Why don't they do the things that we do? I don't understand. And when they don't understand, what do they do? Next phrase, they do what to you? They heap abuse on you. They may not do that to your face, but they do it behind your back. I just witnessed that, we got into some new circles of friends and moving up here and just the whole, before they even learned I was the Jesus freak pastor of a bible church, even before that, which always pushes them over the edge. But, before they knew that, they were doing this behind my wife's back and mine. Whoo-hoo. Why? Because we had one group, with our kids, whatever, I won't get started, this is on the radio, I understand. Wow, I can't say much about it. Uh, let's just say this, man; these guys were into the world, right? And we came on, and we didn't have signs up going, you pagans, you're going to hell, but you know, we were like, we don't do that, or we don't go there, or you know. And they were like, whoa... and within like two weeks, they were like, yup, here come the holy Joe's, you know? And that was before they even knew we were Christians, before they even knew we were the psycho pastor people. And I'm thinking to myself, you know what? It happens to all of us, doesn't it? If you don't run into the same flood of dissipation that they do, they go... ohhhh, okay. Because it's a rebuke to their life, and they don't like it. And they heap abuse on you. But, here's the vindication, they will, verse 5, give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living, that means us, and the dead, those that aren't saved. And he will judge them both. And that's the vindication ultimately, isn't it? I mean what was the vindication for Noah the nut, building the barge in the backyard? What was the vindication for that? F-L-O-O-D, right? That kind of solved the whole question on whether he was crazy, right? That was the vindication. And what's the vindication for us, the little goody-two-shoes who cant do what we do and is it going to offend you, the people that say that about us, what's the vindication for that? Philippians says, one day their nose will be down on the ground before the throne of Jesus Christ. The Bible says every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And that's what we get nailed for, right? Oh is he your boss, the little invisible God you follow? Ohhh...how cute. You know that's fine, abuse me if you want. One day, your nose will be pressed to the ground saying oh, Jesus is Lord, just before you go to the great white throne judgment, and you have your retribution. And the vindication is coming. Every person that speaks badly about us behind our back because we follow Christ or try to obey him, just remember one day they are going to go, wow, I wished I were more like that person. I wished I had of woken up to this thing. It will be too late for them at that point, but you do recognize there is a day of vindication coming for everyone who chooses to stand with the people of God. Heap abuse on us, ridicule us, mistreat us, disgrace us, whatever, I don't like it, I don't care for it, I wished you

wouldn't, but I'm going to gladly accept it. Because I stand in good company, and one day it will all be vindicated. Two phrases in the bottom of verse 25 and 26 of Hebrews 11, if you'd go back there real quick, that I think helps us see the choice. You want to put the choice down, okay, I'm all ready to not fear the consequences, fine, I'll make that resolve and I'll accept the ridicule, and that's kind of a problem, but I'll do it. Here's the real choice, the choice is the one spelled out for us. The juxtaposition of these last two phrases are great and so helpful. First it says, he chose to be mistreated, Moses did, along with the people of God, rather than to (now these are pretty positive words here), enjoy the pleasures (that sounds good, I'd like to do that) of sin. He regarded disgrace, verse 26, for the sake of Christ as greater value than all the treasures of Egypt, which would help fuel those pleasures because he was looking ahead to his reward. Now there's two positives laid out here for us. One is to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Okay that's bad, but enjoy the pleasures sounds good. And the other good thing that's pitted against it in verse 26 is reward. So we've got two pleasurable things put before us, A and B. The first one is, you can enjoy the pleasures of sin. Oh, it doesn't please God, its called sin, and it's only for a short time. Or you can look ahead to your reward, which the Bible says is eternal. And rust cant destroy it, and moths cant eat it up, and thieves cant break in and steal it, and you will enjoy it forever, it will be better than you can ever imagine, but that's option B. So you can have fun now, and enjoy the pleasures of sin, which isn't pleasing to God, and only lasts for a while... Or you can deny yourself that, you can live with the depravation of saying, well I'd like to do that, and that looks like fun, and it does appeal to my flesh, but I'm going to say no to that because I want to have this thing called reward. But to manage the depravation, I've got to be looking focused on the eternal reward. So the choice is A, B. Fun now, short lived or eternal reward, which I don't even fully understand, but apparently its good, and it lasts forever, and its called treasure. Right? So it's a good thing. So I can have pleasure now, short time, and the consequences that go with sin and disobedience, we looked at those at the introduction of the message, or I can hold out for reward. That's the choice that I have. And if you choose to say no to sin, you're going to have to get use to, Number 3 on your outline: delayed gratification. That's what you've got to get used to. Because what you're saying is, I'll pass on the pleasure now, to have the pleasure later. I'll pass on the fun now, to hold out for the reward that comes with obedience. And the reward that comes with obedience ultimately comes, as A.W. Tozer so rightly says, really we need to hold out the real hope of fun and enjoyment to the next life, which is much more suited for it than this one. So I know ultimately, my heart is deciding, am I going to have the bumps of joy now through life because I'm doing whatever I want? Or am I going to hold out for the joys of something better that's going to last for eternity? Delayed gratification. We're not real good at that are we? Did you come out really good at delayed gratification? How about your kids, are they good at that? Are they good at that? No, they're always trying to turn the whole equation around, are they not? I mean our kids sit there at dinner, and they know that there is ice cream that we just bought at Costco, and its in the freezer, and there it is and unfortunately, they're facing the plate of green beans, carrots and peas, right? And they try to make this deal, they've given up on it now, but they used to, can I have my ice cream first? Right? And we say this. What do we say? Of course sweetie, we love you, we wouldn't want you to wait for the pleasure of ice cream, we want you to have whatever you want when you want it. That's what we say, right? No. Eat your peas kid, we'll get to the ice cream later. Is that what your parents told you to do? I hope that's what your parents told you to do. I hope that's what your telling your kids to do. Right? Or they come home from school, please can

we go out and play, we want to go out and play. Right? Well, do you have any homework? Well, yeah. Well do your homework first, right? Is that what we say, or do we say, do whatever you want, because if you want to play now, okay. No, get your homework done. Its work before pleasure, that's how it works, right? In the scripture, it may not be as crass as that, but we call it the cross before the crown. Before you get to the payoff of God's blessing, you've got to go through the depravation of saying no to sin. That's the cross. And isn't that the call of Jesus anyway, in the scripture? What did Luke 14 say? He said this, if anyone is going to come after me, take up his cross and follow me. You know that? If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. Deny himself. Is that easy to do? No, its hard. What does that mean? I get used to a life of depravation, its delayed gratification. It's a life that says, I'm going to handle that, I'm going to be okay with that. See? And that's hard for us, even as parents, trying to make our kids eat their peas before the ice cream. You know why that's hard? Because you and I like to buy it now and pay later. Isn't that how we live today? We like to live that way, and it takes a lot of discipline to say, no, I'm not into the whole you know, same as cash, 12 months no payments. That's stupid. I saw that at Lowes recently, I realize that's out there. Pay for it first, go through the pain of paying for it, and then we can enjoy it. That's the economy of God. And this is not a message on money management or credit or any of that, that's a different sermon, we can preach that. But the point is this, when it comes to sin, just tell yourself this, I'd better get used to delayed gratification. I ought to know you pay before you get the benefit. I ought to know that you get deprived before you get the payoff. I ought to know that there's a cross before the crown. I know that you do homework before you play. I understand that there is work before pleasure. And when it comes to the Christian life, just get used to that, because that is how it works, get used to delayed gratification. Now, I know how my kids deal with it when I tell them no, you can't have ice cream eat your peas. They turn instantly into this face goes first, and then they eat with this rebellion. That's not really what I was looking for, right? I'm looking for something different than that. I want the kid to recognize we eat the peas, get the nutrition, and then we'll get the sugar, but lets get the nutrients first, okay. And can you do it, here's what I really want as a parent, I know dreamland, but I'd like them to do it with a good attitude. That would be good. In the scripture, here it is, patience is a virtue. But it's only a virtue when you're doing it with a good attitude, see? Because you could blow this whole deal by saying, fine then, I will say no to sin but, grrrr, I'll wait for the Kingdom, fine, okay. If you've got that attitude, then God is rolling his eyes at you. Just like when I want to take my kids face and fix it for them, right? What are you doing? Stop with the faces. And God is looking at us going, you're not patient, if you're not doing it with a good attitude. That's what patience is. You think God's trying to work patience in your life? Yeah. Fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience. What about love? 1 Corinthians 13, what's the first thing on the list? Love is patient. I love God, I want to be patient for the reward. When it comes to the payoff, I want to be patient, I know the Spirit is trying to make me a patient person, which means we do it with a good attitude. We recognize, you know what, I'm going to say no to sin, I'm going to say no to all the stuff the world is throwing at us that I know is not right, I'm not going to give into the pressure because I know in the end, God's going to pay me back. How do you feel when your kids do the right thing that's hard and they delay gratification, how proud of them are you? How about teenagers with raging hormones who can't wait to be intimate with their girlfriend. What about when they say no to those impulses and they say, I'm going to wait for the appropriate time with God's sanction and God's blessing. How proud are you of your kids when they do that? You want

to bless them? Does that change the way you shop for a wedding gift? I mean think about it, its like you cant wait to lavish on them, you prayed, you waited, you did the right thing, you said no to your impulses to wait. And how is God going to respond to us? Do you think God is going to reward us richly? Look at Hebrews chapter 10, verse 35, I love the way it ended here. So do not throw away your confidence, it will be richly rewarded. Translation, don't compromise. You need to persevere, verse 36 of Hebrews 10, so that when you've done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. Its coming, God is going to pay you back. And I know you're going to have to say no to some parties, you're going to have to say no to some impulses, and I know you're going to have to say no to some fast tracks up the ladder to get the big house or the big... But you know what? Its okay. I will deprive myself now of what I want, the pleasures of sin, because I know its only going to last for a while, to hold out and look ahead to the reward that's coming. I feared putting this message together, I wasn't afraid, but I was frustrated at putting it together. Because this is all great stuff but, if we don't have the awareness of sin, it's filed. Great sermon pastor, see you next week. It's done, its finished. You have to feel it, there's got to be a sense of awareness in your life, that this is needed for you. I had to go through this to make sure God, this is needed for me. This is a typical sermon that people love with the L shaped amen. You know how that works? Preach it, pastor Mike, because he needs it, right? That's it. Amen. Amen. Amen, preach it yeah, this pagan over here needs it. Oh I'm going to get a couple of CD's on this one, right? My prayer repeatedly putting this sermon together this week is that you and I would never, just not even be tempted, just don't even think about other people for a whole week, okay? I just want you to think, what is God dealing with you on? Okay? Because I don't think there are any sinless people here, are there? The only people who don't recognize their sin are dead people. You know what I'm saying? If you are not a Christian, I get it. Or if you don't hold up the mirror of God's Word ever, or you sleep during sermons, I get it, you don't see it. But living people are the people that care, who look in the mirror and they say, wow, there's some work to be done, I've got to fix a few things, there has to be some adjustments in my life. And it starts with this prayer from Psalm 139; search me oh God, try me, see if there be any wicked way in me. Now I'm praying I've got half of you already because you've already been thinking about the temptations that you're falling to. Great, this sermon, apply it. Bolster that. But the other half are going, I don't know, I haven't really thought about anything in my life. Now is the time to go, okay, let's give God the open door. Not that he needs it, he can kick doors down. But it's a whole lot better when we cooperate, just open up your heart to him and say Psalm 139; God, search me, try me, I'm open right now to knowing if there's something I've got to fix here. You tell God that, God will tell you, hey, you know what? He'll point it out, because you're not perfect, and he's going to say, I'd really love for you to work on this. Because you fall to temptation here and you don't even see it. And I know sometimes we're looking for the obvious... well no ones playing the music and having me bow down to golden statues. You know what? The temptations are much more subtle in your life, I recognize that. But you and I have got to look before God and say, God, search me, try me, what is it, where do I need to work on this? You tell God that and then put these things to work and say, I'm not going to fear the consequences, I accept the ridicule, if they want to make fun of me fine. And I'm willing to say to my impulses, I can wait for gratification, see? Then you'll start to see the path of sanctification improve. You'll see yourself saying, you know what? I am more like Christ this year than I was last year, and there's nothing more important in God's plan for your life right



now than that, that you walk in step with his Spirit. Let's cooperate with God's Spirit right now and ask him what do I need to work on? What is the compromise in my life?