Door of Opportunities, Many Adversaries
By Robert Vernon

Announcer:

Some of you may not know him I believe. Most of you do. Bob Vernon served as the Los Angeles Police Department as assistant chief of police. Prior to his recent retirement in that capacity he supervised all departmental police operations for Los Angeles's 18 police stations. This included the overseeing of 7800 officers and 3000 civilian workers. In 1978 he was one of three candidates for the position of Chief of Police Chief Vernon is an author speaker and consultant. His latest book entitled L.A. Justice touches on the Rodney King incident, the Los Angeles riots and his suggestions as to how to deal with crime in the United States. Chief Vernon presently travels across the United States speaking on the need for change in the moral fabric of our nation. His insights into leadership based on the Christian ethic are well-received by both secular and religious groups. Recently chief Vernon has been asked by four foreign governments to speak to their military and police leaders. He has had the opportunity to instruct key leadership in dealing with pressure and change and examine the Christian philosophy as it relates to government.

Chief Vernon is one of your fellow alumni. He did his undergraduate work at Biola University. He has a master's in Business Administration from Pepperdine University and he is in the process of finishing work towards his PhD in Government. I think Chief Vernon's integrity and concern and compassion are reflected in the organizations in which he holds membership. Just a few are the advisory board of the Salvation Army in Los Angeles, the Economic Roundtable of
Los Angeles. The board of directors of the Fellowship of Christian police officers and the board of directors of Hume Lake Christian camps. He is also a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Executive Institute of the FBI and the board of directors of Masters College.

Chief Vernon We are very proud to have you this morning speak to us about integrity in leadership and your passion for that and we'll look forward to having you come in just a few minutes. At this time would you take your hymnal.

Vernon:
Morning ladies and gentlemen. My pleasure to be with you. Yesterday morning I spoke in the gym and today here in the Calvary Chapel tonight I'm speaking somewhere I think it's Sutherland Hall. And the topic yesterday was God's direction in your life. This morning we're going to be talking about that difficult battle that we're all in and what the Bible has to say about some principles that are very appropriate to that battle that we're in. Tonight we'll be speaking on the topic - When things don't turn out the way you have them planned, When tragedy - from your perspective - comes into your life, when your dream is died. When a reputation has been destroyed. And you wonder is God on the throne. I just give a little preview. Yes he is. He's not only there he doesn't make mistakes. And I have some glorious news to tell you tonight. Things that came out of great sorrow. Things that came out of great disappointment but incredible opportunities. It's really hard to believe if I'd planned it myself it wouldn't have been anywhere near like this and my plans were laid one way God's were another. Of course God was right.
Would you join me in prayer before we open God's book. Father we thank you for this time together and as we open your book I pause to admit before my colleagues here that if anything spiritual is to happen in our lives this morning it must be through your Holy Spirit your words your truth. Lord speak to us speak to me encourage us fill us with the fervor of representing you while we're here in Jesus name amen.

Would you turn your Bibles to Ephesians 6 chapter will get right into it. Just let me give you some preface sorry comments is as you turn there. We're really in a battle and as you take a look at cities like Los Angeles I think you get a preview of what the rest of the United States is going to be like in a few years unless we do something about the road that we're on. It's not the right road. Los Angeles is just a little further down the road than the rest of the country perhaps along with New York and some of the other major cities. But in Los Angeles we are literally approaching social meltdown.

Why do you say that - you're asking. Well this guy let me give you just a few indicators. We built a county jail a little over 12 years ago that was engineered to hold 10000 daily inmates. Today there are 21000. This jail was supposed to last until the middle of the next century to about 2050. And it's already twice as full as it should be in the only reason there isn't anymore more inmates in there as a federal judge has put a cap and said I won't let you put over 21000 -
it's unsafe it's unhealthy you can't do it. And so what's happening is as someone goes in the front
door someone has to be pushed out the back door which means no one does their full time. If you
get sent in 60 days you're probably going to do somewhere between 12 and 15. It depends on just
how crowded they are.

Of course the bad guys know this and behave accordingly. There is now a section of the penal
code that is being used 18 before where felons who are convicted are sentenced to the county
jail. Because our prisons are all so full. And so although county jails were meant to house
misdemeanor prisoners misdemeanors I mean by that drunkenness, drunk driving, theft petty
crimes misdemeanor type of offenses. Now we have hardened felons doing their time in L.A.
County jail and it's overcrowded. Less than 10 percent of felony cases actually go to trial. 90
percent are in some way compromised or plea bargain as they call it. People ask me Do you like
plea bargaining. Of course not. It's a compromise. But you know what, the system wouldn't work
without it.

If even half of the people who were charged with a felony demanded the trial that they are
guaranteed by law within 30 days a swift and speedy trial the whole system would collapse
completely and everyone knows that and that's why there's so much plea bargaining that's why
you hear about that our system is in meltdown many years ago in the 60s when I worked at the
Southwest precinct which is the precinct located on Martin Luther King Boulevard in South
Central Los Angeles now and then some detectives would come from either Wilshire or
sometimes 77 precinct or sometime Newton and they would say we have a series of crimes occurring some of them have happened in your precinct some are happening in ours. This is the M.O.. You have some idea who it might be. And myself and my three or four colleagues who worked juvenile enforcement in that precinct were looked around at one another we say that sounds like the so-and-so family. And sure enough when we would take the photos out to the victims that was the son's whole family you know what we knew the dysfunctional families because there were only 20 or 30 I mean in the whole precinct. Now if that same thing happened they wouldn't know where to begin because nearly half of the families are dysfunctional. We are approaching social meltdown.

At two o'clock one morning in the kitchen of Stanislav Novotny the president of all the police in the Czech Republic which is one of the countries that I'm bringing the gospel to under the auspices of the government isn't that interesting. Previous communist country and they want to know what the Christian ethic philosophy is all about. He developed a mile with me as he was trying to explain what happened in his country. He said you know since the Velvet Revolution we've experienced during that first year after it in 1990 the first year after that the 89 Velvet Revolution we had a 300 percent increase in violent crime.

He said we figured out what's going on. He said the reason I want to share this with you he says it impacts you and what you're doing in your country said You see we've come to realize there's a balance and it's like this fulcrum of social order has a plank on it. And on one side is moral
consensus on the other side is government control. We had government control way up here it was complete so it wasn't necessary to have a moral consensus. But now that we have lowered our government control without increasing our moral consensus the social order the fulcrum has been broken and we are out of control.

He said My question to you is during the last decade or so your moral consensus has been allowed to go down. Don't you realize when that happens in order to maintain social order you're going to have to increase government control. I said Mr. Stanislavsky that's exactly what we're doing. We just passed a multibillion dollar crime bill. We want to hire 100,000 more cops we're going to take away everyone's guns we want to have more rights for wiretapping on the part of the police. He said You're going in the direction we came from. Don't you know that didn't work. It's not good. And of course he's right. Well all of this is kind of introductory to you when you are fighting the battle are under great danger.

The Apostle Paul when writing back about his ministry said to his colleagues he says a great door of opportunity has been open to us but there are many adversaries. And it seems like that principle always holds true when there's a great door of opportunity, there's always many adversaries. And the concept that I call the machine gun nest principle comes into play. You see my father was a machine gunner during World War One in World War One there weren't too many machine guns. It was a big deal. They only had a few every every 500 yards or so along the trench lines.
And he came from a battalion called Company C of the 11th machine gun battalion. They were all machine gunners and and they they put them strategically along the trenches and he said you know it's kind of a no win situation he said the Germans and like us of course we would kill them and they'd get about of their trenches and and come running toward us we'd mow'em down. But he said our own men don't like to see us come. Because when we came in they knew we would draw artillery fire because as soon as the Germans found out where machinegun nest was they poured everything they could at it because they knew that was the only way to save their troops as they were advancing the average life of machine gun war where one was six point three minutes, six point three minutes. Once a battle started and it took about him that long to focus in on you.

My father was hit - his emplacement was hit by a direct hit. There were 12 of them in there. All but two were killed. He was severely injured and died younger than he should have because of the shrapnel that he carried all his life and his body and the mustard gas that had ruined his lungs. The machine gun nest principle if you're effective the enemy's going after you. and I just want to tell you if you're effective for the cause of Christ as indeed you want to be or you won't be here you're going to take some flak you're going to take some incoming they call it. Now how do we fight this battle?
Ephesians the sixth chapter the tenth verse. A familiar passage to many of you I'm going to try to give you a military tacticians point of view. A man who has been in the profession of arms all his life. "Finally be strong in the Lord in the strength of his mind. Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against rulers against powers against world forces of this darkness against the spiritual forces of wickedness and the heavenly places" I'd like to kinda open that verse for you but we don't have time. That's not redundant. It's talking about different levels of evil authority. You probably know that. And in verse 13 he says "therefore take up the full armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything to stand firm".

Now before I begin to give you my insight on this verse I have to admit something to you I'm not a theologian. I have not been to seminary. I wish I had. But maybe I will someday. I'm still going to school. But I give you this as a lay person as a as a man underarms who understands a little bit about that but is not a theologian as far as the Bible so please excuse me if if I come to a point you say he doesn't know what that Greek word means shame on him. I'll admit to you right now I don't know Greek at all. It's all Greek to me. No pun intended.

He says therefore take up the full armor of God that you may believe resisting the evil day and having then everything to stand firm stand firm. Therefore in other words here's how you do it, "having girded your loins with truth". Of course that concept of girding your loins with truth became very important to me to understand what it meant. And of course I found out that that
whole idea of girding had to do with one of the pieces the armor of the girdle that they wore around their middle it was either made out of metal some time specially treated leather but it was that big belt that somewhat protected the in the laws of parts of your of your stomach of the breastplate was above that of course for the chest and the upper portion of your stomach. But this was not only protect things but the hanger pieces of equipment your battle axe your sword your dagger whatever and that whole idea of girding up I'm told in fact I learned this here when I was under Jay Vernon McGee for two years. He was my bible survey teacher. What a great Bible survey teacher. He's still teaching Bible survey has been dead for ten years but he's still teaching it - isn't that great. That's a real testimony. If people still want to listen to after you're gone you know. Well he was my bible survey teacher and he he taught us about this concept of girding up.

He explained it very simply that you know the long flowing robes that when you get into ballet you don't want them hampering your feet. And so yet you kind of pick them up and tuck them into your girdle and and as as often happens in a language the whole idea changed from not just applying to military men tucking in their robes but it meant to get ready to gird up to prepare yourself. In this case to prepare for battle. In other words there's a military principle here that you make preparation before you get in a battle and here it says that that can be tied in with truth. I interpret that to mean and it helps me to look at it this way that you can prepare for a life of integrity.
I learned this through an experience that I had on the police department not long after the onion field incident took place. It was just a few weeks we had been talked to by our lieutenant at roll call. Some of you know the Onion story where two officers LAPD officers were kidnapped taken over into an onion field in the Bakersfield area. One was murdered the other miraculously got away. But anyhow they that that whole thing happened because they gave up their guns once they were confronted. And so the lieutenant went to call and he said you know I'm not going to order you to ever do this because it's your life and you'll have to make the judgment but you may want to talk over with your partner what you're going to do if someone ever gets a drop on you with a gun and you don't have your gun in your hand What are you gonna do? Are you going to give up your gun like they want you to do. Are you going to go for your gun right there. He said I'm not going to order you to do either but talk it over at least. I want you to think this through and take some acts of preparation before and when it happens. It doesn't take you by surprise. Be prepared. He didn't use the phrase but I was thinking in my mind "gird up!".

And so here we were as we left the station I worked with a guy named Fernando Jayna here - a Mexican officer who is the best cop I ever worked with. He's still my friend. I still go over and have dinner at his house he comes over to mine. He's retired now he's 70 years old he's still arresting people it's incredible but [audience laughter] But he's a committed man. He was in one hundred first airborne and receives a Silver Star. Best song if you know anything about World War 2. Just being at best knowing everybody should have got a Silver Star there. But Nick knocked out three tanks with a bazooka. In so doing that shot through the chest nearly died. At any rate Fernando Jane O'Hara my partner as we left the station that night I kind of knew what he
would say and I said Nick what are we going to do if someone gets a drop on us and he said we're not giving up our guns we're going for it.

I kind of thought he would say that [audience laughter].

I said wait a minute let me ask you a question if they've got a gun at your head. And they asked me to give up my gun what do you want me to do. He said Go for your gun because I'm going for mine.

I said Really. He said Yeah. And I said wait a minute, what are they got a gun to MY head? [audience laughter] He said we're going for our guns. I said I said to myself I thought that's what he'd say. You know I kind of didn't want to hear that. I said Well okay. And we had a kind of a practice that we would pull off in those days. I remember pulling the car over and I can't remember who was driving it's been too long ago. But we reached across and I can still get the vision of of reaching across that front seat of that police car and grasping right hands and look at one another in the eye. We would pull this off if we made a serious decision about some kind of conduct something that might affect our lives and we looked at one another and one of us would say a pact and the other one would say pact and we would grasp hands on it and get eye contact and it was an agreement and we did that that night.
A few weeks went by. We were in a cheap hotel. We just arrested a [inaudible word] - a narcotic user. He told us what room you just bought us stuff from so we went and was a small time dealer a street mule. You know we just knocked on the door. We didn't see him in our guns in our hands. They were under our coats. We had sport coats on it was summer slacks and of course even having coats and ties on a in a cheap hotel like that everybody knew who you were you know. And as we knocked on the door we heard the bed springs squeak and a guy get up and he came to the door and he opened it up and when he opened a door in his left hand he had a large balloon full of heroin in this and he had a 32 automatic and he said "cops, huh" and the way he said it we kind of figured out the kind of plans he had for us.

And I remembered our pact and without even thinking I went for my gun. I remember I had a brown and white checked sport coat - a hounds tooth I think they call it. And I tried to get the button open as my hand was going It's funny how things do slow down when you think you're going to die. And I remember I [audience laughter] I. I didn't want to look at the gun I was afraid to see it go off and so I was cowering with my head down and I was going for my gun which was in a cross drawer holster that I wore at that time over here. I had a little two inch detect especially as I was and I was jerking it out of the the holster.

I could still see the button that it broke loose from my from my coat - I did it in such haste - going through the air a real slow [audience laughter]. The gun was coming out of the holster in
his I as I was going through this process a very cowardly thought that later I became very ashamed of came to my mind. I later confessed it to Nick. I said Do you remember when we were going for our guns in the hall. He said Yeah. How can I forget it. I said I gotta get something off my chest Nick. I was hoping he'd shoot you first. And he looked at me he grinned and he said Guess what? [audience laughter]. We were both thinking that I guess survival is number one.

As I got the gun out of the holster and I was kind of surprised the gun still hadn't gone off and I knew I wasn't that fast of a draw. You know I was I was coming across and crouching down and beginning to focus in on the target and the pressure is already being pulled on the trigger and the hammer was starting to come back and my gun. And the picture I saw was something like this. The guy was still standing there with his left hand outstretched with the balloon full of heroin but this hand was empty where the gun had been.

His mouth was kind of open in shock. And the gun was right here in the air over a shoulder going back and I withheld my fire.

And I quickly put the gun down and released the hammer carefully as I pushed him over against the wall and Nick jumped in with both hands and was patting him down for further weapons and I was getting my gun back in the holster and as I did that I kicked the gun that he had thrown
back into the room and it skidded under the bed. We stepped into the room and shut the door and
after we came down from our adrenaline high which took several minutes. Finally one of us
asked him why didn't you shoot. And his answer was this: "If one of you had gone for his gun -
yeah I know this is gonna make you mad about I probably would have shot but when both of you
went for your guns I figured one of these fools going to kill me".

I learned a principle there. The time to decide am I going to drop my gun or not is not when
someone is standing there with a gun pointed at you. It's important to make that decision before
the battle. Bible says gird up. Gird up your loins for truth. If you want to live a life with integrity
prepare for it. You say well how can you do that. What's the application. Well let me just give
you a practical application I used to use in my office.

I decided you know what I don't want everyone to commit adultery and yet I know I'm a man.
It's, uh, every man I think is a potential adulterer and if we don't think that way men we become
easy victims. And so I decided you know I'm not going to go to first base and I came up in my
mind where I always like the title principles was something I came up with what I call the first
base principle.
You know if you're playing baseball you can't go to second base unless your first base first. You got to tag there then you go to second base. If you take first base and if you take second place anything advanced to third base and then if you do that you can go to the home plate.

I kind of think in those terms when I think of committing adultery because I think most of us Christian men aren't going to say I think I'm going to commit adultery but we do make compromises and go to first base. You say what's first base. Well maybe it's having coffee along with some woman that's not your wife. You say well nothing's wrong with that. Yeah you're probably right. But it's going to first base and you know what. You'll never get to second base if you don't go to first base. You got it? And so I told my staff I said you know when someone calls up a female judge and wants to talk over a murder case or maybe a female prosecutor or someone I never want to be alone with another woman.

Just tell him I'll bring my staff with me. Every now and then they get a little friend and say well I want to talk privately with the chief and they and they would say he has a policy. He always has a member of his staff with him a trusted member. And that's just the way it's going to be. And you know what that helped me. I'll tell you it it helped me two ways. There were times when I would kind of forget or or maybe subliminally kind of want to be alone there you know. And I would be on the phone talking with some woman a judge or something and I'd say yeah okay well yeah okay well we'll have lunch and talk about that one. And my secretary come in and say
Chief. Remember your first base principle. Give me the phone and I'll make arrangements for it. [audience laughter] And she go back energy pick up the phone.

Now you know why we did that is because I made a commitment I made a commitment to my staff and I made it public. I said I never want to commit adultery and so I need some help from you on this. And here's what I want you to do. Now you are going to be pastors need to make those kind of commitments to your staff because sometimes you'll need to have them keep you honest and my staff helped keep me honest. They made me keep my commitments whether I wanted to or not because they were public commitments. Frankly I think that's what it means when it says gird up! Don't wait to get in the heat of the battle. Make some commitments before you get into battle. Get ready for a life of integrity. Then he says and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. What does that mean.

Well you know this is very near and dear to me because we furnish every one of our officers with what we call body armor. It's made out of Kevlar. It's not metal. It's a flexible vest but it protects all the way up to at least the one that was issued to me all the way up the 44 Magnum. You can select what vest you want you get different levels of protection depending on how much weight you want to carry around. The one I wore weighed a little over three pounds I figured that was a small price to pay to keep out the bullets so that's when I wore. Though the vest protects the heart and the aorta artery that comes out in the lungs and these intestines the liver and these important inside organs if they're punctured can cause death. And he says then put on this
breastplate of righteousness I looked up that word righteousness and vines dictionary of New Testament Greek words and it came from probably most of you got into this right "wiseeness" and it really refers to actions the right kind of actions - telling the truth, keeping your word. These kinds of things.

What will what does that have to do with a breastplate. Well I began to think in terms of those first century Christians and that Mideastern world and they had some thoughts about that as you look in the Bible. When it talks about the heart it talks about where we think. And as it talks about the intestines it talks about our emotional center. In fact today to this very day we do that we say I love you with all my heart. Now we know the heart's a pump. It's kind of funny I love you with all my pump.

You know I mean but what we say that. And you know the first century Christians they knew the heart wasn't the brain. They knew that at that point there's a lot of documentation it will back me up on this. So it wasn't the way they were stupid that they thought they had thinking in the heart. But but that's just the way that they referred to this. And Paul I remember I was a little kid and we taught from the King James Bible in our church and our pastor would say about the apostle Paul in my bowels this and my bowels and I used to get embarrassed every time I heard a word because my mom used that term and only in one way and around the house [audience laughter].
And yet I learned as I grew up that the Apostle Paul was talking about a deep sense of emotional feeling. What is this talking about. This is saying protecting yourself as far as what you think about what you emote about. Just to kind of back this up to scripture is a best commentary on scripture Proverbs 23 7 says is a man think if in his heart social he be. Matthew 15:18 and 19 the words of Jesus those things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart. Murders adultery fornication theft. Proverbs 4:23 a remarkable verse. Watch over your heart with all diligence for out of it are the very issues of life. What's the saying practically.

Well from my military tacticians point of view I think he's saying Don't you dare expose yourself to the kind of thinking patterns and the kind of visual things that will cause you to sin. Don't you dare get into pornography. Be careful about your watch what you watch on TV. You have to be really careful today be careful about what you read now primetime TV. Full frontal nudity. Bible says put on the breastplate. Protect your thinking your emoting.

It starts there and every one of these great ministers of God that you've heard during the last five years have gone down in flames. Guess what you won't you talk to them. It started with thinking, with emoting you protect yourself there. Don't even go to first base. Don't even think. Put down that book. Turn off the TV. You get enough in your brain through no choice of your own at least what you have choice over ask God to give you the strength to turn it off. Don't let it come into there.
Then he says having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace isn't an interesting how often in the Bible when it talks about the Gospel it talks about feet. I think there's a message here for us. I don't think we should invite people to come and hear the gospel. I think we are to take it to them. The church is primarily a place of edifying God's believers teaching them the truth and then they're to go out and take the Gospel where people are at their work at their play wherever they are. Feet. Go! Would you come to my church and hear my pastor. Now I'm not putting down the fact that many people are saved in church and that's wonderful but the way I read scripture God's plan is for the church to be a gathering of the believers to be strengthened and edified and encouraged and fired up and go out into the world go ye doesn't say call ye. It says Go ye. You take it to your work you take it where you are you take it to your neighborhood.

Now he's talking about going and yet we're talking about defense here. Remember we're talking about armor. How does going out with the gospel become a defense I was working a plain clothes car what we call a felony car those days with neck again and there was an armed robbery took place in Highland Park and the DMV and the car that was seen leaving the place after some shots were fired. Everything was registered in Lincoln Heights. There are three main arteries at that time that were used to go from Highland Park proper to Lincoln Heights. One was Figaro street. One was the Pasedena freeway and the other one was Marmion way.
We heard a traffic car go code one hundred at Avenue 52 and a passenger freeway. So we knew that artery was covered so Nick said let's cover Figuro Street and we'll get Marmion way as well. We'll go to Avenue 39 where ma'am way joins Figaro street. I said sounds like a plan. So we headed that way. As we actually approach the intersection. Here comes the car down Marmion way. We pulled in behind the car. Pulled him over got out of the car. I approached the car on the driver's side. We had our guns out because there'd been shots fired. We had them with their hands on the front of their on the dashboard and the two guys in the backseat had hands on the back of the front seat. And I went to the driver and I I opened the door and I said "Out!". And he turned to me and he said "$%*& you!" and I grabbed him by the clothes in his chest - Forgot kind of what cause he had frankly. But this was before seatbelts were around. You know I just grabbed him and started to pull him out of the car had my gun in this hand as I did that he I saw his right hand going down between his legs and I saw the barrel of a gun and I yelled to Nick "Gun!" and Nick I could hear him barking orders.

"Get your hands back up there or you're a dead man!".

And as this guy was reaching I did the only thing that seemed reasonable at the time they told us don't use your gun as a club or anything. But right then it's all ahead and bam I hit him alongside the head as he started down. I kicked him to kick him out of the way and away from that car and
that gun and in my peripheral vision saw some other movement and I whipped around to cover
the other guys with the gun.

I was teaching a junior high social class at the time and modesty to park union church right in
that same area and one of the boys that was in my class was absent for three weeks and we had a
policy if you're absent for three weeks you go call him. So I did. His mother came to the door
and I asked her if he was there and she said yes I'll get him. He came to the door and I said
"Eddie I haven't seen you for three weeks. You all right? What's going on? He said "I'm not
going your Sunday school class anymore!" I said oh why. He said you fight dirty. I said I fight
dirty what when you talking about. He said I was there I saw it! I fold my papers at Avenue 39 &
Marmion Wayne Fig" he points there says "I saw you. You kicked the man you're not supposed
to kick when you fight!" [audience laughter] And he was burned up. Little guy. He looked up at
me. I'm a big guy.

I said let me tell you why I did that. And I went through the story as I told you and he said
"Robbery! Gun? I thought it was a traffic stop!" [audience laughter]. [mimicking tone] May I see
your driver's license sir. Bam [audience laughter]. Once I told him what happened. He kind of
understood and he said "okay. That's a little different. They're trying to kill you. You kind of do
whatever you have to do. I'll see you Sunday". [audience laughter] He's a tough little bird.
But you know what even though I was able to explain Eddie that time why took that extreme action it taught me something. I was a sunday school teacher. You know when you stand for God you're under a microscope. And that should be a defense against the wiles of the devil and let me tell you why it is with me. When I'm tempted to do something just a little compromise. [inaudible word] one of those warblers where Christians aren't sure whether it's it's against or you know taught against or not in the Bible it's one of those could be maybe not - a lot of Christians say uh that's okay - Other Christians, ehh, maybe not. Well you know even in those areas when I get to that point you know it comes to mind? Vernon you've got a ministry. There are a lot of people watching you even when you don't know it.

I don't know. Eddie was watching me that day you've got to behave as though you're always under the microscope. When you take out the Gospel. You see taking out the gospel should become a means of defense. It should make you think there's nothing worth giving up the privilege of taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to my fellow human beings. Nothing! There is no pleasure there's nothing that's worth compromising that being disqualified. Nothing! we're running out of time and so we'll just hit one more here and then we're through.

And in addition to all taking up the shield of faith with which we'll be able to extinguish the flaming missiles of the evil one and also taking the helm to salvation. First of all if you're going to win the battle make sure that you're really a believer. But getting back to that concept of faith I tried to find something profound about that and actually I couldn't. I just found out that you
know when you're tempted to sin there's only one basic question you have to ask yourself - who do I trust? God or the evil one on this.

Do I trust the one who became a man and went to the cross and died for me. Or do I trust the father of lies. Let me give you some examples what I mean. God says raising children is more important than career and accumulating material things. Satan says get things and position and status. My question to you is who do you believe God or the liar. That's what taken up the shield faith means. God says you achieve happiness in relationships by submitting to one another. Satan says demand your rights!. The big question is pretty believe the one who loved you enough to die for you or the father of lies.

God says save your body for your marriage partner. Satan says don't wait. You'll miss out on a goody! Question is who do you believe? God or the liar? You're in a battle. Stakes are high. Many have been disqualified. Make a commitment to someone you know today. Prepare for a life of truth. Put on that breastplate protect yourself from what you think and emote about. Get involved in a ministry not just at school. Get involved in a ministry of taking out the gospel. When you're identified as representing God you will be under a microscope by the world. Take up that shield of faith and the best way I know how to tell you to do that is just ask yourself that question that I posed. Who do I believe on this God or Satan and above all of course. Make sure you got the helmet salvation. Make sure that you're in his family. Just coming here doesn't make you a Christian you know. It's a personal relationship with him. If you're not sure about that you
better make sure of to see it tonight. God be with you. Shall we pray Father in Jesus name. Thank you. Amen.