

How Do We Know We Are His?

By Billy Ingram

Worship leader:

All right, how many you guys love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength to sing a new song to the Lord right now!

[Musical Introduction]

Announcer:

I'm going to have Donald Gordon come and lead us in prayer. We have been led to the throne already. Let's just look to the Lord now, shall we?

Gordon:

Lord God, I thank you that you are nothing. Lord, I thank you that you are someone that we can depend on, Father that You independent father, that we are dependent Lord, that you know, every hair Lord is upon our head. Father, I thank you that you are not distant Lord, but you are aware of our present circumstances, father and Lord, we act Holy Spirit that you be be with us during this conference. Father, did you speak to the speaker, Father, that you would use music Father. That you would use even InterAction's Lord among the fellow students Father to grow us, Lord to mature his father to teach us what it means to be like your son. So I thank you, Lord,

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that you've been more than enough for me, Father. And I pray that that reality would just sink in for those who know you, Lord, and we pray this all in your son's name. Amen.

Announcer:

Let's thank the worship team together, shall we? That was wonderful. Thank you.

[Applause]

The program talks about the fireside chat tomorrow and the time it does not list our guest, we want to make sure that you know that Billy Ingram will be our fireside chat guest tomorrow from three about three thirty to five. It was in the original programs that I think the speakers knew, but the students did not. I was thanking the Lord today for many reasons for what he's done in Torrey already, if there will be a place on campus.

First of all, if there's a screw up, I usually hear about that. But if there's a place on campus where the spirit of God is stirring or people have questions or comments, I usually get that because it's kind of it kind of comes with the territory. And the spirit of God is without a doubt doing some very special things on our campus. Most of the emails and the calls have had to do with pray that and then fill in the rest.

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Most of you know that there's a 24 hour prayer watch that's going all the way through Tory conference, reminding me that when all when all else fails, we should pray. I really think God is doing his work and he's just beginning in this three day conference. Amen. Praise God for what he's doing now. Wouldn't it be exciting if two six Torrey and the seventy first year was the year that some of the most significant things happened in our lives and in our hearts and on our campus so that the world was never the same?

That can happen. It's it's entirely possible. And I believe the flames have been lit and are starting to move around in hearts and lives. Incidentally, Billy Ingram is here tonight to the flame. Billy Graham played ball here for those that didn't attend a Torrey earlier or what year? Monday. He dignified himself as an all-American, helped our team immensely during that time as a student, he preached, I don't remember a student that preached as often as Billy did.

I was chaplain. I didn't preach as often as Billy did. And as I said earlier in the week, he did it without notes many people would think is unprepared. He was prepared. He's memorized thousands of verses from the scripture. But that's all right. A lot of people memorize text, but it's got to go from your head to your heart. And it did that with this brother a long time ago. Founded in pastors Maranatha Community Church. His resumé goes on and on. I won't. But I want you to know that he has been an ambassador in Korea. He's represented the United States and our city in a number of places. But what he is best known for is his love for God and his love to preach the word of God. So let's bring in and let him do that this evening. This is Billy Ingram.

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Ingram:

Good evening. Good evening, how's everyone tonight? It's a pleasure to be back, and I want to say in all of the years that I have been associated with Biola, Chaplain Ron Hafer has been consistent coordinating speakers and scheduling and making sure that people are on time and all of that is not an easy job, and I think that he should be commended for the excellent work he does here at Biola University.

There you go around here for for president. I think I mentioned Monday that I wrote a book called In Times Like These, it is a 40 day daily prayer book. And there are two companion CDs in which I narrate and actually pray the prayers with original music. And I got a couple I just like to give away.

All right. Here's Miss Enthusiasm. Come on right here, Miss Enthusiasm. You're welcome. And what is your name...Vanessa. It's a nice name [cheering]. Well, we got one more, who should I give it to? What's the name? All right, Donald was pointing out someone. Alright take it to her, is that your girlfriend? I see. Just a good friend. By the way. Andrew, you have got that praise team rocking the.

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We got out the car way down the way in the parking lot. We heard you guys. I'm like, yeah, and I'd like to just extend an open invitation whenever you guys can schedule it to come to my church. Yeah, in fact, where is Judith? She had another engagement. I just turned fifty for this past July 19th, and Judith came and blessed me and she ministered at our church and what a gifted, talented human being, lovely, warm servant spirit.

So the invitation is open. Let's pray together. Our God and our heavenly father, we thank you for the opportunity. To rally together around your word. We are thankful, indeed, Lord, for the joy that is ours in knowing Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and as it has been mentioned, Lord. The flames that you have ignited. The lives that you have already touched. May it continue by the power of your Holy Spirit, and I thank you, Lord, that your word would not go forth or returned to your boy, but will accomplish that which is pleasing to you and your word will prosper and benefit the hearers and the listeners and the doers of your word. So we celebrate that and we thank you for it. In Jesus name. Amen.

I was in Atlanta. Maybe a month and a half ago. Waiting on my airplane, and I always like the people watch, I think it's very interesting watching the dynamics of people, how they walk communications. And there were two kids there, probably 10 and 11 years old. They were waiting for their flight as well, and I overheard a profound theological debate, one of the youngsters was white and the other one was black.

They were debating what color God was. And I said, let me listen in and see. And. I didn't get to my punch line yet. And so as they debated back and forth, the white kid gave all the reasons why he felt that God was white and the black kid came back with reasons why he felt that God was black. And the black cat left, he was disturbed and he went to the restroom, came back. And he said, yeah, you're right, God is white, and the white kid was kind of surprised and said, well, how do you know?

He said, I went to the restroom and I asked God what color he was. We said, what did he say? He said, God said, I am, that I am. He said, well, why does that make God why, he said, because if God was black, he would have said, Well Subi is that I? You know, I love jokes, and every Sunday before my message, I love telling jokes, I think that humor is actually a gift from God.

And in fact, you know, what would you wouldn't you agree that we should legalize happiness in the church? Sometimes we're so stuffy and stiff and like we've been baptized pickle juice. God has blessed us with that ability to be able to be open to his spirit on all levels. If you were with us Monday here or in Sutherland Hall, you may recall that my message titled is entitled How We Know He We Are His.

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And I like to read and reflect again from the Book of Romans, Chapter eight. And verse 14. I read beginning at verse number 14. All right, are we there? Thank you for that, Eamon, appreciate that you've got a dollar coming. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

I mentioned on Monday that the Book of Romans is probably one of Paul's most important books between Galatians. Enrollment's. For the simple fact that, for example, in Chapter seven, his whole discussion centers around the fact that the law can't do anything to save us, it can't empower us. It can't bring sanctification, it can't bring salvation. It can't even bring peace of mind. What it does is that it holds up God's standard and then condemns us when we break it because we don't have the capacity to keep the law.

Paul described in Chapter seven his own difficulties with sin, his own struggles with the flesh. But what's interesting is that when he comes to Chapter eight. We learn of the spirit of God's power. All through the eighth chapter of Romans, The Spirit of God permeates verse one, there is therefore now no condemnation to them, which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit of the law, the spirit of life in Christ.

Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death for what the law could not do, and that it was weak through the flesh. God, sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemn sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. So here in Chapter eight, the apostle Paul is very animated about the life in Christ, a life which is empowered by the Holy Spirit, a life connected to Christ that can never be separated from him.

I recall as a student here at Biola. I struggled a lot. I struggle with where I was with God. To be honest. Can I be honest, I struggled with coming to chapel. Even though Iran was doing a great job, I discovered I was struggling with a lot of things, I had a lot going on in my life. My father had just passed. I was the oldest. There was a lot of pressure on me to make good to do something with my life, and I just couldn't make heads or tails.

Some days I felt good and because I felt good, I felt close to God. In the days, I didn't feel good, I didn't feel close to God, and therefore I just concluded maybe I'm not even saved. Back and forth for a long time, I went around and around on this merry go round and roller coaster. Am I safe? Am I not safe? Am I in Christ? Am I not? And then I discovered. That the power of God's word can solidify our faith.

It is capable of sustaining us even in the midst of our doubts. For example, the conclusion of this book, of this chapter, Paul writes, What you're separate is from the love of Christ, your tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, perilous sword. As it is written for thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep for the slaughter, nay and all these things. We are more than conquerors to him that loved us.

Then Paul triumphantly writes for I am persuaded. I'm convinced I'm confident that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present, nor things to come nor heighth or any other created being. She'll be able to separate us. From the love of God, which is in Christ, Jesus, our Lord. Well, that was a good man, I like that. What that did for me was to help me to understand that in Christ I am his.

And I am therefore secure in him. There's nothing that can separate me from him nor his love. And by the way. Can I ask you a personal question? It's possible that some of your students might be married any anyone, Mary? Obviously, I know you are on a good thing. Proud of you. Keep it up. Anyone else? Your student and your marriage. All right, student and you're married. What year are you? Transferred and you were a junior.

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As a junior, so that makes you can I ask, how were your twenty two and you married? And how long have you been married? Three months. Power to the people. Someone win the back, yes. You've been married twenty two years. What will she say next month? Twenty two years and you are a student. I wasn't saying that I'm admiring you, that's wonderful. Now, my point in the illustration is this. When we talk about a marriage or a relationship, typically we're talking about a four letter word.

Can I say it? Can I say it? Hello, I'm not stupid. What I find fascinating, and I read a lot, I pay attention to the world. How is it that most every song writer? Has written about love. With poets who've written about love and philosophers who philosophize about love and our churches, we hear messages about love. And then. Love sometimes falls apart. What happened? Sometimes we love. If you love me back. Been in a relationship like that. That's strings attached. Or I love you because you were a star athlete. You're on the soccer team, you're all right. You're on the volleyball team, you're on the swimming team. OK? But let me leave that one alone. But typically, as human beings, we love because, we love if, we we don't fully fathom how to love like God until God imparts his spirit and his love within us.

You know how God loves God loves with an unconditional love. Unconditional. He loves with an eternal love, so when Paul said, I'm persuaded that nothing can separate me from his love. He's he's speaking of the security of his relationship with Christ. He knows. Who owns him? He knows who he belongs to. That's what registered in my heart as a student, as I was, I was having

a hard time, I was struggling, I was wrestling with a lot of things internally. One of them was depression. Somehow it began to click and make sense, so what Paul is describing here is a believer whose mind has become the mind of Christ and whose desires have merged with the will of God.

He is one who is spirit filled, Christ control and God focused, where you at with God? Hello. Where are you with God? Focused. You know, a very. Important thing as a student at Biola. Which is an excellent, excellent school. But what you have to be careful of as a student, many of you have come from Christian homes, some of you are piqué kids, some of you are missionary kids. What you have to be careful of is being in a Christian environment, coming from a Christian environment, you can kind of just ho hum Crucell.

I know that. I've heard that my dad's a preacher. And you can not take it serious, listen, you can't afford to be casual and nonchalant with God, he deserves our best. He deserves our best, our very best. We sing a song sometimes in our church, I'm yours, Lord, everything I've got, everything I am, everything I'm not. I'm yours, Lord, try me now and see if I can be completely yours.

See, the refreshing key idea of Romans Chapter eight is the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in and his influence on the life of the believer. By the way, Paul's assertion is that every

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true believer is in full possession of God, the Holy Spirit. A man, Biola. Paul asserts that every true believer is in full possession of God, the Holy Spirit, and in fact, he writes, But you're not in the flesh, but in the spirit.

If so, be that the spirit of God dwelt in you. Now, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. In fact, the Holy Spirit, as I said before, is all over the place, you take, for example, verse twenty six. He is likewise also the spirit help with our infirmities, but we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit himself make it intercession for us with gremlins which cannot be answered. He who searches the heart? No, with what is the mind of the spirit? Because he maketh intercession for the Saints according to the will of God.

Now, is there anyone who has come tonight who's prepared to be honest, I like to ask questions. Anyone come prepared to be honest. All right. Anyone ever been praying? And while praying you have fallen asleep. OK, I'm not alone. I used to be so devastated and so guilty, gosh, I fell asleep on guard. You know what the disciples did to. And they did at a very crucial point when Christ really needed them to stand with him in his final hour and they blew it.

You ever felt like. Man, I've got a circumstance, I've got a situation in my life, I don't have a clue as to where to start, what to say or how to pray about anyone. I have some good news for you.

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You are not alone, and the beautiful thing listen, about the Ministry of the Holy Spirit is that he assists us in our prayer life. He aids us. He makes intercession on our behalf.

Now, just remember that God, the Holy Spirit, has got your back. He's praying for you 24 seven. Now, that is something to get excited about. Well. You see, what's disturbing to me is this raging debate regarding the Holy Spirit in some groups thinking that they are part of some spiritual elite because of their experience. Listen, there is no such thing as a spiritual elite group, they don't exist. There's no one person, group, organization or denomination that has more of or another group that has less of the Holy Spirit than anyone else.

First Corinthians 12 13 says by one spirit, are we all baptized into one body and we all have been made to drink into one spirit. Paul just said, true believers have the Holy Spirit. Listen, you don't need another experience. Colossians 10 says you're complete in him. You're already complete. What needs to happen? Lean forward, I need to tell you a secret, don't tell me about I told you this. What needs to happen? You need to grow up. We should be in a perpetual growth mode.

See, I I have a hard time with people suggesting to me that I need another experience, I need to do this, I need you to that you don't need more of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit needs more of you. The challenge we all face as believers is how are we going to live? How are we going to

live is an indication of who we are. What does it mean, verse 14, where he says. As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God, what does it mean to be led by the spirit? The notion of being led by the spirit of God presupposes or assumes that we have wanted a relationship with God. Two, and we have a willingness to follow God through acts of obedience.

Paul, writing to the Philippians Church, wrote in Philippians two 13 four, It is God which work it in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Young man came to me after the service. About three months ago and after I preach on Sunday morning, I just opened the floor for questions. And this guy, he just went on and on and on and on with a certain question, and it was obvious that he was struggling with a certain thing.

So he came to me in private and he said, I'm just I'm just having a hard time with sex. You know, it's just. A struggle, he said. And I just can't stop I can't shake it. And I know that what I'm saying is totally irrelevant here, but just bear with me as I make my illustration, all right? So I said to him, I said, you know the problem. With you and sex. Is your mind? And his eyes got big. So what do you mean I set your mind? You have not submitted your mind and your heart to Christ, you've not decided that you're going to say yes to God every time. So each time you are bombarded with temptation it's too late to pray. By the time temptation comes your way, you're down for the count. By the way, someone as well said when running from temptation, don't leave a forwarding address.

You see, a very powerful writer once wrote, I will seek the will of the spirit of God through and in connection with the word of God, the spirit and the word must be combined. If I look to the spirit alone without the word, I lay myself open to great delusions. Also, if the Holy Spirit guides us at all this, listen, he will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

There is a. Men from Puerto Rico in South Florida right now. He has 300 centers around the world. He has a huge, huge following and he claims to be. Jesus Christ in the flesh. And you think, well. First of all. We already know Jesus is a Puerto Rican, and it's no no dig at a Puerto Rican, God loves everybody, but we know he's not Puerto Rican. We already know that. So why would anyone follow someone who is a Puerto Rican claiming to be Jesus? Secondly, Jesus is not an ex-con or an ex heroin addict, and Jesus wouldn't be on his second marriage. And what's worse is this message, his message is you have the right by me, I authorize you to indulge in whatever you want there. There's no such thing as sin. There's no consequence for anything that you do. And he has thousands of people following him.

Why? Because there's no responsibility and there's no consequence and there's no accountability. If he God is saying, go forward, do your thing. Why wouldn't you buy into that? And according to the scripture, God will not say one thing that's written and then have someone come along

who claims to be a spokesman who contradicts that and be speaking on behalf of God. It just doesn't work that way. In fact, listen to this, Thomas Kemper's wrote.

Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is. Delayed obedience is disobedience, whoever strives to withdraw from obedience withdraws from grace. I love the words of Oswald Chambers, who penned these provocative words, One step forward in obedience is worth years of study about it. See, the bottom line is, it's a great deal easier to do what God gives us to do, no matter how challenging or demanding it is than to face the consequences of not doing it.

This is what Paul hammered out to the church, this, I say, than Galatians five 16 walk in the spirit. And ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would, even if you sincerely want to please God, you cannot please God without the aid and the help and the power of the Holy Spirit.

So could I put it to you this way, Biola, if you're struggling with sin. At some point or another during this conference, you need to settle the score with God. Lord, you are right, your way is best. And I can send. I consent, I acquiesce, I yield right away, I give up, I give over, I surrender. I'm willing to obey. Without that. To be honest with you. Without obedience in your life, you're

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wasting your time becoming a Bible scholar. Scholar of what? Who are you going to teach that will have power and that will resonate and that will impact lives if your life is not benefiting from the message you're preaching to others.

Paul talked about being a castaway. I think I was going to share with you the miracle when I came to Biola and my time ran out. Was that about where I stopped? I was a student at the University of Oregon. You're from Oregon? Well, part. Portland, I lived in Eugene for three years. Hated it. Coming from L.A., there's nothing to do, nowhere to go. Rains every day, one day, honestly, the sun was clear, the sky was clear, sun was bright and beaming.

Five minutes later, start snowing. Like, you know what? This is not working for me. But while I was a student there, I got exposed to a lot of things. And I wasn't raised in a Christian home, but I was raised in a religious home. No one ever talked to me about knowing crisis, my lord and savior. No one ever talked to me about my commitment to God. It was just you got to go to church.

You got to go to church. And. I don't know if any of you have ever been exposed to a traditional black Baptist church and if you ever been to a traditional the church I grew up in. Treadstone Baptist Church is still there. I take my kids by. That's that's the church I used to go to and then it

looks so big. That's a little shotgun church just. But that big, big is this pulpit. Just straight back, little tiny squawk box. But when I was a child was just huge.

Anyway, when I was coming up, I used to sit in church. The minister would read a text from the Bible and then closes Bible. And never talk about the Bible. I'm trying to process, OK, now, how am I going to learn about God if he's never going to talk about God from the Bible? He read a text, I guess, to justify the religious experience, and then he would go into. A song and dance.

He would say something and he had a group of deacons who were supportive. Come on. That's right, preacher and he get going and they come on and he get going. And finally he got into a singsong type of tone. And it was a lady after he got wound up, she said on the front row every every Sunday. And as a kindergartener in elementary school, I saw this lady die every Sunday.

I couldn't process it. She would get happy. She'd jump and shout and scream and then pass out and they carry her out on a stretcher every Sunday. And as a child, unconfused. How can this lady die and come back every week, and why did she die when the preacher's preaching?

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So in a lot of ways, I really missed out on meeting God because I was open, I was hungry for God, but there was no word coming from the pulpit to me. So when I got old enough, I rebelled against God. I think I was about your age when 18, 19. Twenty two. When I went away to the University of Oregon, I decided that nobody will ever make me go to church again. I'm just not feeling it.

I do what I want to do. It's my prerogative. I can do what I want to do. And I did. And man, did I get in big trouble. I mean, big, big trouble. I was at Oregon on a basketball scholarship, and I don't say this to boast. I humbly submit this to you. That I was considered one of the best basketball players in the state of California. Here it is, I can write my own future, write my own ticket.

But I got mixed up with the wrong crowd. Because I wanted to prove that I wasn't a prima donna, I wouldn't do this, do that, everything's paid for. I can hang. I can I can kick it, throw it out there. I'm with it. So this guy knocked on my door one night with a long trench coat and I'll never forget it with a hat. He walked into the room and he opened his jacket and he just had all this stuff, I never seen it before, just just all this stuff.

And he took out something quite that was rolled in paper. I don't know what it was. He lit the end of it. It didn't look like a cigarette. I knew what a cigarette looked like, didn't look like that. He lit the end of it anyway. Either man, you need to drive some of these. Man, it's gonna make you feel so good. And he's holding his breath talking like this, like what's wrong with him?

So like an idiot, I tried it. You have me. I laughed so hard I could not stop laughing. I don't even know what I was laughing about, I was crying, I was laughing so hard, it was the most wonderful experience I've ever had. My side was clapping. I just couldn't stop laughing. Next day, the guy came by, had some more stuff. I didn't have. I'm like. OK. And the next day and the next day, then they had something else and then something else.

And then cocaine and. What what I saw happening to me was that I was going deeper and deeper into the devil's web and I didn't even know it. What I was trying to do was to recapture that first, most outstanding, exhilarating experience, unbelievable once in a lifetime experience, and it never happened again in two years. And each time I'm thinking I'll recapture this time, so I'll try Hasheesh, I'll try cocaine, and I saw the beginning of the end when I was at a party.

And they were doing heroin. So they took me to this back room. I knew what happened to people on heroin, and I'm like, you're an idiot, but I couldn't act like a wimp. I could just leave. So I

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stood in this circle and they were passing this tray around, my heart was racing, I felt like I don't care what they think, I need to get out of here or it's over for me. And I remember running back to my dorm, not having an answer as to how to get out, but knowing that I'm dying, I'm in trouble.

And the irony. Is then as an athlete, I was doing exceptionally well. In the spring of 72. We beat UCLA, I scored twenty two points. After the game, a former agent who handled Jabbar and sipping Wickson along with the UCLA players, Sam Gilbert, he came to me, said, you're a rare talent. He said, if you will just stay at the University of Oregon and graduate, I will guarantee I can get to a million dollar contract.

After the season was over, I got saved in May. And for some reason, I just knew. That I was supposed to be in ministry. And not basketball. But I thought, well, if I'm wealthy and famous, God could use me more effectively. That was my philosophy, that was my way of looking at how God was going to use me on my terms, I need to have some money, I need to have some notoriety, and then I'm ready to go forth and be used to God. So I struggled, I looked at a lot of friends who were athletes who had played in the NBA. They were injured, they were caught, they didn't make it.

And I thought, gosh, I don't know anything else. If I don't make it, what am I going to do? And to make matters worse, people were asking me to speak in their churches. I didn't know the difference between songs and poems and job and job. They're calling on me to speak in their churches and at their banquets and the assemblies. And I got afraid because I thought, gosh, somebody is going to listen to me and they're going to believe what I'm saying, and I don't know if I really know for sure what I'm talking about.

And. In 1974, I was with a basketball team, we were touring Africa. And I was just really struggling with this idea, do I go back to Oregon or should I just start studying the Bible now? At that time I didn't know about biology program. And it just so happens that I had sprained my ankle. We were in Zimbabwe. And. The head coach now, Dave Holmquist, was the coal head coach then in 74. I said, you know what?

I want to study the Bible. I feel God is calling me into the ministry and I'm prepared to leave Oregon right now. I said that I was soaking my foot in a bathtub in Zimbabwe. And I come to the conclusion, this is God's will for my life. So he said, well, I'll call the US and see what we can do. Coach Lyons, the late Coach Lyons was the coach head coach at that time. He was he was elated to get a player of my caliber, but there were no scholarships left.

They had exhausted all of the resources. The next day, he calls back and he says to me, I've got good news for you, there's a private donor that's going to put up scholarship money for you. And you just have no idea how elated I was to come to Biola, to study the Bible, to study Greek. That's better than getting high. So I get to Biola and I never meet the family that put up my scholarship money for two years, never met him.

And I wanted to know who. Were these people and once a month, they'd send me a check anonymously for one hundred bucks, man, a college poor college student getting a hundred bucks a month. Watch out. They make a long story short. I have become not only good friends with that family. Gordon and Lonnie Scott, who invested in my life and in my ministry. But they are the godparents of my twin sons. And I asked them not long ago when I ordered them at my church because I told my church they are responsible for where I am today, because if it were not for then I wouldn't have had a chance to go to Biola and I wouldn't have this ministry to offer to you, Maranatha, that I do, if it were not for them.

So I asked him, I said, why me? Why would you invest all of that money in someone you'd never met, did not know, didn't know anything about? Why would you take a risk? You know, they said to me, they said sometimes in the providence of God, he lead you to do something. Now, if I had made the decision. To obey God. God wouldn't have had anything for them to obey in supporting my vision, in my dream.

That's why obedience is so essential, that's why it's so important. So my first class was with the late Dr. Curtis Mitchell took it in Sutherland Hall. Old Testament survey. I thought the man was out of his mind, he act like that. I only had his class. All of this reading, all of this collateral reading, all of these reports, all of this information, so but of course, I'm I'm going to be an evangelist. God is going to use me to change the world.

I'm going to be a scholar. First tests. I just knew I aced it. I flunked it. And how could God work such a miracle in my life? How could he do all of these important providential things? And then I feel my first Bible test. I thought, this can't be. I got confused, I thought I was all over the world. God, I thought, wow, what what's God trying to say to me? And then I buckled down and I studied harder and I'd go to the library and study.

Two hours extra every day. And that was just on Greek. And it didn't make sense. Took me six months, six months. To figure out what they were talking about when they talked about a prepositional phrase or a noun or verb or an adjective, I don't even know that in English.

But after six months, it all just clicked. And it made sense. And I'm saying that to say to you, my friends, you had such a beautiful place in life, you're at a crossroads. God wants to do something

special with you, with each of you. But it's not going to happen if you say no. It's just not going to happen. And in fact, what I discovered is that God blesses us. When we obey him.

Of course, there are some blessings that just come because God is cool like that. It causes the rain to fall upon the evil and the good, the sun shines on the just and on the unjust. But when we disobey him, when we refuse to walk in the spirit and allow his spirit to impact and empower us, listen, we rob ourselves of his blessing. So Paul said, walk in the spirit. That is moment by moment, decide that you're going to do what God says to do.

Is it easy? Absolutely not. I'll give you an example, and I don't mind sharing of of my life because I think it might help. In nineteen eighty six, after I had been six years in the pasture that Maranatha. We went through a church split. I didn't know anything about church splits, I didn't know that people in the church got angry at people in the church. It's all new to me. I thought we get along. I thought we loved each other.

I thought we obeyed the Bible. I thought we prayed for real. And what a rude awakening there were people planning strategically throughout the church and they tried to take over the service and I'm standing there watching this, listening to this in just absolute shock. I just can't believe what I'm seeing. And what's worse is when I met with them afterwards, what do you want? You

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know better than this. God is not the author of confusion. And he said, well, we don't know, you don't know, and you've just scattered the flock, doing something that has no purpose and no go, you don't know.

And for one year, they threatened my life. Without identifying what the problem is or why, and I'm telling you, they hurt me so deeply, I've never been hurt so bad in all my life, they called my office and harassed the office and they said, yeah, that building Ingram we're going to come to the service and at point blank range, we're going to cut him down. Christians. So for a whole year, I wore a bulletproof vest.

Oh, yea. Man, that thing is heavy. A whole year. And. By the grace of God and thankfully, I never had to use it. But a friend of mine. Loaned me. And Uzi. I never touched it, it wasn't a case, yeah, it was like crazy. It sat in the corner of my office. I know it's the whole thing about guns and all this very controversial, but, you know, my life is on the line at this point. And so I did what was necessary to protect myself with a bulletproof vest, and there's nothing worse than not knowing who your enemy is and you're always having to look over your back.

Always for a whole year. Every time I got out of the car. Morning, noon and night, I just never knew if and when they were going to attack. And thankfully, they never did and it died out. But

here's the part that was a struggle for me. Now I'm a wounded general. These were my. Battle against God. Spirit filled life, the Christ centered life, the God focused life. Is a life of steady growth and progress.

Are you growing? Are you growing? Spending time dealing and got word. So that's that's what you have to be careful of, you can't make the assumption that. Doing Bible reading assignments is equivalent to connecting with God in the word. Some said and some one nineteen ninety seven oh, how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day.

That word is a lamp to my feet, it's a light to my path. Story is told of Albert Einstein. He was on a train and everyone in his car recognized him and knew who he was prior to the train leaving the station. The conductor made his routine inspection to ensure that each passenger had their tickets. The conductor noticed Einstein fumbling through his things, his pockets, his papers, and the conductor reached him. Einstein admitted that he couldn't remember where his ticket was.

And he stopped that's no problem, is trying to stop, the conductor replied, We know who you are. Einstein responded. I know who I am too, but I have no idea where I'm going without this ticket. You have no idea where you're going without the Holy Spirit. As many as our land, they know

where they're going. Even when you don't know where you're going, I used to sit in these chapels and wonder, what can I learn all this stuff, what is God going to do with my life?

Where am I going? And you know how God. Get you there. I'm sorry, you know, I've got to get you there. All of my messages are like linked sausages. You can just cut them off anywhere. I'll tell you tomorrow night. Shall we pray? Could we possibly stand and join hands? I'm going to suggest you do something that we do in our church from time to time. I'm going to suggest, as we pray, that you pray for the individuals whose hands you are holding, that you pray a prayer for them.

That would be everything you'd want from God, from God for yourself. Pray for the person whose hand you're holding, everything for them that you would actually want God to do for you. That's bound, let's pray you pray that prayer for those people near you. Now, Lord. We pray for each one who's. Join hand-in-hand. How amazing you are, because everything we're praying for others, someone's praying that for us, it always comes back full circle.

I pray your bless your best for these students, your best in every way.

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That they would give you your best in everything they do, that you would honor that Lord and that you would most especially honor their commitment and honor those who have answered the call of God to serve you all their lives.

For at the end of the day, it is only what we have done for Christ that will last an hour, labor and him is not in vain. So I'm praying, Father, that what you are stirring here at Biola. You would just breathe into the flames by your Holy Spirit.

That we would connect with him, knowing for sure that we're his we belong to you, and may we be willing to follow that leadership, Lord, even through dangers, toils and snares, even through the valley of the shadow of death, may we know by the roar of your word and your staff that you're there and that you always comfort us and you restore our soul and you protect us from our enemies, preparing a banqueting table even in their presence.

I thank you, Lord, for the special special place that Biola has in my heart, Lord, and now all of these 35 years of ministry, Lord, the foundation was laid right here on this campus. Because of Lonnie and Gordon Scott. Whom you lend to support me while I was led to come to this school in Africa.

And God, we know that you always leave your people. So we prayed that we would be willing and obedient to do what you lay before us by faith. I pray that you would bless your people and keep them be gracious to them, cause your face to shine upon them, lift up your countenance to them.

I pray for each student, faculty and every person under the sound of my voice that each day they would know your power and your presence and your provisions and the fulfillment of your promises to them and your protection. And may they have the ever abiding and abundant peace that passes all understanding and made the best days of their past be the worst days of their future. In Jesus name.

[End of Recording].