

Torrey 2021 Walking with Jesus Session 2

By John Hutchinson

Speaker 1:

With John today and continue to speak through him, God, may we have open minds and open hearts to what you're going to say? God, I thank you for Torrey Bible conference and how it how awesome it's been so far. And God, I pray you continue to teach us new things and continue to change this from the inside out, continue to show us things about our lives that we need to change. We need to renew. And God, I pray today that we would be focused on you and this time would be just great fellowship and worship of who you are in your word.

And God, I just thank you so much for John. I pray you to speak through him today. God, we love you and we praise you in Jesus name. Amen. And welcome. John, can you hear me?

John Hutchinson:

All right, let me tell you the story of Doug. The story of Doug is a very personal one because he is my brother in law, my wife of 30 years and lives here with me today. And I'm not going to ever stand up because I don't want to say a little bit about my family. And the trade off with her was, if I do that, I'm not going to make her stand up today. So you can say hi to her if you want up here.

Leah is here with me today, and her oldest brother, Doug, has a very interesting story about his life. He's a natural businessman. When he was a teenager, it was amazing. He had already started a couple of businesses as a as a boy delivering papers. He discovered something that, you know, if you recruit a few of the neighbor boys who might also want to deliver papers and don't tell the paper company about that, you can take a commission off of their delivery of papers.

And that's kind of the way Doug started out in business until the until the newspaper company discovered him and busted him on that one. But he was a natural businessman. He had he had a knack for understanding how to make money and how to do well in life. A little bit later, during a process called silk screening. Silk screening is the way they used to make t shirts before they had the more modern processes. Maybe some of them are even made that way now.

But Doug had had the first silk screening business in San Diego, which is my wife's hometown, and where they're where their family lived. And it actually has become, even today, a very, very

successful business. Well, they went on there from that to become a car salesman with the company at that time called Dotson. And most of you are too young to even know that word. But Dotson became Nissan and the Nissan company spotted Doug very early.

He was actually in his early twenties and they realized that this guy is an amazing salesman. In fact, he was Salesman of the Year for Nissan for for several years. And then finally in his early twenties, they offered him his own dealership and that was unheard of. He was the youngest dealer in the United States for four decades since, well, as you might imagine, is his car dealership thrived over a period of years. And by about his mid 20s to late twenties, Doug made his first million on his way to making and many, many million, he began to diversify a little bit.

He bought several other companies and ultimately his whole life was just driving, became successful and powerful and certainly very wealthy. And in fact, it was about that time that I came into the family and married into the family. And I hardly knew. Doug, in fact, is his family hardly ever saw him because he was off traveling to Africa or Europe or other places and really was a high roller, moved in the fast lane in every way and life about that time.

And we're not sure exactly what led to this. But Doug's businesses, one by one, began to fail. They began to go through some reversals of various things. And to make a long story short, he was in in hard times because of that. Probably he got very depressed and he went through an extended time of depression. So much so that he had to check into a couple of different hospitals and to go through depression treatment. And one of those hospitals was actually in Dallas, Texas, which is where Lee and I and our daughters were living at the time.

Doug came to live with us for a little while, but he was also in and out of the hospital there. And I still remember one evening I can remember it as if it were today. He was sitting on the couch in our living room. It was one of those nights that he was the most coherent because he wasn't coherent every night. And he shared with me, he said, you know something? As I look at my life, my life is a lot like King Solomon.

I've made it big financially. And once you make enough money and never forget what he said, once you make enough. Money, money doesn't mean anything anymore. What becomes important to you then is power, and he said, I've also become a very powerful person. But I've

straight away from the Lord, because all of these years had been a Christian, but far away from the Lord, straight away from the Lord, and now I feel like my life is really falling apart.

He told me, I know you're going to be a teacher someday or a pastor or something like that. I want you to tell my story to people. I want you to tell the story of what happens when you begin to trust too much in money or power in your life. Well, it was less than a year later, Doug had moved back to the San Diego area. He was in a kind of a maximum security care area. And on Thanksgiving Day nineteen eighty three, we received a phone call right in the middle of our Thanksgiving dinner.

Usually those kinds of calls are not good news, but when we receive the call, what we find out is that Doug had come home with the family, but the first chance he got, he had stolen their car and he was off somewhere and they didn't know where he was at. This put an immediate fear into us as a family because Doug had been suicidal before. And we really didn't know what was going to happen, and so we waited and we waited and the dinner was obviously changed and everything was changed that day.

And then came the second phone call. Doug has committed suicide. For our family, many, many Thanksgivings were never the same. And as we look back over the sequence of events, I can I can clearly think of things that we would have tried to do differently. But in the final analysis, I don't know that there is anything we could have done differently, because where Doug ended up was the result of a series of choices that he had made.

And he was very open to admit those choices. Extreme example. Yes, you could say that, but yet God is going to use many of you in roles of leadership that will involve power and money and fame. And success. Your roles of leadership are going to be many and varied. In fact, I want you to know something today because I'm going to talk a lot about some of the difficulties of being a leader and some of the difficulties of power.

But I want you to be a leader. I believe Biola students, Biola graduates ought to be out there in the world being leaders after all. What do we come here for? Not just to grow in our own lives, but to have a salt and light influence in the world around us. I want you to be a leader, I want you to have authority. And yet today, as we look into several stories in the New Testament, especially, one of the things we realize is that success becomes one of those turning points in our lives, as I've referred to it yesterday.

It is a time when we make decisions that are either going to take us one way or another. Some of you will go on to be powerful over large groups of people. Some of you will have more of an influence over a small group. Some of you will find your authority and your power in a position. You'll become a boss or a supervisor or maybe a pastor or a Christian worker who has others under your authority. Others of you will exert your influence through your words.

I happen to have a job like that. I have very little authority around here and I don't mind that at all except the authority to talk and to say things. And when I do, I become ever aware as I interact with students. How the littlest things that I say can be taken with them without me even realizing it, to change them something about their life. Many of you have had teachers, favorite teachers in your life that change something about you that has made you into a different person, and some of you will have that opportunity to have the influence of a words.

And those words are going to be words that are going to affect the lives of people. My daughter, Kristen, is a kindergarten teacher by undergraduate. The reason we're really excited is she's actually making a living now and paying her own way in life. There is life after biology. But what's really neat about her situation in Wilmington, she teaches kindergarten and Lee and I have gone every year to go visit her in her and her kindergarten class. It is amazing if you've ever been around first grade kindergarten age, they just love to jump on top of you and crawl all over you.

And we've gone in there and sat in and and these students in her kindergarten class are generally from low to middle income families. It's not unusual for one of them to share a story. I was watching one girl one day who happened to be sitting kind of by herself and sad. And the story she shared is that her dad is in jail and her mom and family don't know when he's going to get out of jail. And he's also been with some who have shared stories.

They don't know where their mom goes at night. Obviously, she has a job that's probably not that desirable to talk about. Others have shared stories of my brother just got shot in a gang shooting. And, you know, I think about those little kindergartners and I think of my daughter, Kristen. You know, at kindergarten, you don't share a lot of words, but you share a lot of love. And the impact that one year, one school year with those kids can make in their lives, somebody who cares in their life.

That's the kind of influence some of you will have. It may not be a high powered position over many employees under you, but it may be that you're going to have a circle of influence because of your words and the style of your life. All of us are going to have opportunities like that to impact others around us. What are we going to do with them? What are some of the dangers? I want to take you to several possibilities here, and I'm hoping you brought your Bible along.

I didn't give you the luxury today of some PowerPoint on the screen. And so we're going to be opening our Bibles to several different passages, which you'll find marked there on the the yellow hand out sheet. First one is in Mark, Chapter 10, verse 30 to mark ten thirty two. This is a story of James and John. Referred to a little earlier in the Book of Mark as Sons of Thunder, so it gives you a little insight into their personality.

The two Sons of Thunder, we get an idea here that these guys were pretty outgoing. And I'm going to begin actually a little bit before the main part of the passage in verse verse thirty two, because what happens just before their conversation is important here, it says the disciples, they were on their way up to Jerusalem with Jesus leading the way. And the disciples were astonished while those who were following were afraid. And again, he took the 12 aside and he told them what was going to happen to them.

We're going up to Jerusalem, he said. And the son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and we'll hand him over to the gentiles who will mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him. Three days later, he will rise. Now, my impression is they didn't hear that last sentence by what goes on later. But in that setting, it says is thirty five, then James and John, the sons of Zebedee came to him, rabbi, teacher, they said we want you to do for us whatever we ask.

What do you want me to do for you here? They replied, Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory. Now, here we have an example of a question that's being asked at an unbelievable time, Jesus has just told them that they're on the road to Jerusalem and he is going to face beatings, a trial and his own death. And what are James and John thinking about? Lord, we know that you've talked about a kingdom.

That's coming, and we wanted to get a side here from the 10 others and we wanted to talk about the positions that we might have in that kingdom. Would you put one of us on your right hand and the other one on your left hand? Now, a little bit later in the passage, the other disciples learn

about this and they're really ticked off at James and John, probably partly because of the setting here that Jesus has been talking about.

This is very, very heavy situation that he is going and facing death. And what are they concerned about? They're concerned about getting a position of authority in the kingdom of the Messiah. Now, we could ask the question, how could these guys be so audacious? How could they be so presumptuous? To ask a question like this, I think we have a few clues. First of all, if we go back a little bit and it's not in Mark's gospel, but in Matthew's gospel, in a period just before this story, Jesus has talked about his future kingdom and he has told them that one day the disciples are going to rule on 12 thrones around him.

And so probably what James and John are doing it, they're remembering, well, if they're going to be 12 Throne's Lord, can we have the one in your right and on your left? The highest power, the highest ruling authorities, perhaps James and John were thinking when they asked this question of of their their inner circle of leadership in the disciples. And I think many of you are aware of this, that Peter, James and John seem to be pulled out of the 12.

As the inner circle of leaders, we find them in several different situations, for example, when they went up on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus chose to take Peter, James and John with him a little later on when Jesus goes into Gethsemani deeper into the garden and he's going to pray intensely, it's Peter, James and John who are there with him. There are a couple of miracles, important miracles that only Peter, James and John are the ones who are allowed to witness that.

Perhaps that's what they're thinking about Jesus. You gave us you've given us some positions of authority so far. We like to hear about the kingdom coming up as one. One other interesting theory here, and that is in Matthew's gospel, the parallel story to this, we believe it's the same event talks about their mother approaching Jesus. Can my sons have positions of authority in the kingdom? And, you know, I can remember one day in one of my Talbot classes, as we were we were going through this event in the Gospels.

We were talking about how those two gospels fit together. One of them says that James and John asked Jesus, and the other one says that their mother asked Jesus. And I'll never forget one of my students. The isn't sitting in the front row who comes from a Jewish background. He was laughing and shaking his head and he said, you only have to have a Jewish mother to understand this. And his point was well taken. Probably their mother put them up to it.

Their mother was very ambitious. James and John seemingly are ambitious, too. We do know this as we look at other passages, that they were a wealthy family and they were a family who was socially connected within the society of Jerusalem. All of those reasons together could lead us to the reason why James and John were so bold to ask Jesus about this. But look, what Jesus says as he answers was thirty eight. You don't know what you're asking.

Jesus said, can you drink the cup that I drink to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? We're thirty nine. We can, they answered. And Jesus said to them, you will drink the cup that I drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. Now, what is he talking about here? He's talking about a price. That has to be paid if you want to be a leader. A price that has to be paid if you want to be in a position of authority, there's a price to everything, there's a cost.

In this case, the cost is going to be their lives. I don't think they fully understood that. But what Jesus was talking about is in reality, that they, as an apostle would face the same and that he did. We know, according to Chapter 12, that this same James was executed by King Herod, one of the first martyrs in the Christian church. We know a little bit later, of course, this, John, is the one who writes the Book of Revelation, and he is exiled by an emperor named Mission to the Isle of Patmos.

Now, we don't know for sure what happened to John there. We know that in those later years of his life, he clearly has been banished from living within society. But a very strong tradition says that even after he was banished, he was executed by donation for his faith. So Jesus is asking the question here. Do you know what it costs? Do you realize that along with power and fame and influence, come comes a cost? Do you know what it costs and I don't mean just serving the Lord, we're all serving the Lord, you're training in so many different fields here.

That's what's thrilling to me, to be at Biola, to have so many different opportunities of areas in the world, so many fields of study to go out into and make an impact for the kingdom. You know what it costs to want to be a leader? The energy, the time. The commitment. The criticism. The difficulties. James and John, we're going to give their lives for the sake of the gospel and Jesus asked him that question, do you know what it costs?

He also says in the next verse. Verse 40. But to sit at my right hand or my left is not for me to grant these places belong to those for whom they have been prepared. What would Jesus seem to be saying here is whenever anyone is put in a position of authority, it's God, the father who puts in their. There's a there's a divine work here and behind the scenes, almost like Alistair was talking about this morning in the Book of Ruth, behind the scenes for those who pursue leadership.

And I'm speaking especially as a Christian here, for those who pursue leadership. There is a God at work that is going to place you where he wants you. Now, for some of us, that that hasn't always been where we thought we should be. Have you ever really wanted to be placed into a job or a certain situation of leadership and everything fell apart? I've been there. I've been there several times in my life. I can remember when I was finishing my studies in Dallas, Texas, which was my doctoral program, and I had gone to Dallas with this purpose in mind.

I knew the exact school that I wanted to go to and to teach. I actually had a position all picked out because I knew a certain older professor was going to be retiring. By the way, it wasn't Biola because I didn't know Biola at the time. I mean, I knew of Biola. This was a school and other part of the West Coast in Portland, Oregon. And I knew I wanted to go there. And and I had reason to believe by some of the letters that I'd received that there was a good chance that this was going to happen.

I'll never forget the night. I can still remember it. We were Lee and I were with another couple on New Year's Eve. First, bad news I found out is I wasn't going to get the job. Second, bad news is. One of my friends, the people who are over with us that night, he was going to get the job. What a letdown. I can still remember the disappointment. There have been other times. When I've sought to be placed in a certain position and it just didn't happen, you know something?

Looking back over that, I really believe that if you're a child of God and God has in store for you to be in some kind of a leadership position, he's going to put you there. He's going to put you there. That's not to say that you shouldn't do things, you know, you need off on a resume and you need to work to finish a degree. And those kinds of things are all a part of what we do. But it's Jesus is saying here, it's God who places us in leadership position.

And that's a really freeing kind of thought to know that the pressure is not on me and if God hasn't placed me somewhere, this is where I had to come down. If God hasn't placed me

somewhere, then I must not be there. And I probably ought not to be there because I'd probably get myself into trouble. In some way, so Jesus says, you know, this kind of leadership positions are not for me to give, but then he gets to the heart of his advice in verse 41.

When the town heard about this, they became indignant with James and John and Jesus called them together and said, you know, that those who are regarded as rulers of the gentiles lorded over them and their high officials exercised authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. And whoever wants to be first must be a slave of all. For even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

You want to walk as Jesus walked? As a leader. Jesus became a servant, and that's the antidote to this problem of aspiring to power or to the delusions that wealth and influence and fame can bring to me, the antidote to all that is to see who I really am in the kingdom. And that's a servant I'm a servant of Jesus Christ, have written down another passage there, I think on the nose out of First Corinthians will not turn there.

Paul says the same thing in First Corinthians. Remember, the Corinthians had a problem. They were putting some of their leaders up on pedestals and that actually caused divisions within the church.

Splits within the church and Paul writes to them and he said, don't don't you know that that Apollos is just a servant? Don't you know that Peter's just a servant? Don't you know that I'm just a servant? And Paul says the same thing as Jesus, that if we really lead. The way we lead is by being a servant. What does it mean to be trained to be a servant? I want to suggest to you that God has some curriculum going on in your life, probably right now that is outside of your classes, that is outside of your experiences that you would normally think of as formal preparation for a job that is maybe more important than the degree you'll get here from Bill.

And that is his training you through different experiences to be a servant. When I finish that degree in Dallas, I did have to write my dissertation. And yet, you know, nothing was happening, I mean, the job in Portland fell through. I really didn't have any other opportunities. And we ran out of money. You ever have that happen to you? Yes, some of you probably right now you face tuition bill. We ran out of money, had a daughter, two years old, a daughter, three years old, a wife to take care of.

So what do you do? You go to work? Well, you know, a great job opportunity came up as a janitor. It was perfect because I could work for about 12 hours on a Saturday. And I actually set up my own janitorial business work about 12 hours on a Saturday and during the week put in a lot of time writing on this dissertation. But every week, as I went to work as a janitor, the same kinds of experiences over and over.

I had the dust to dust, the floors to mop. I had the windows to clean. And every week, every week, thirty four toilets. To kneel down and clean, you know, I can remember sometimes kneeling down in front of one of those toilets sounds weird, doesn't it? And praying this prayer, Lord, I have nothing against janitors, but is this why I got my Ph.D.? It didn't make sense. We went on a little bit longer, I was still working as a janitor, still didn't have enough money to kind of keep us afloat.

So I went to work as a courier driver. That was kind of fun, buzzing around in a little Honda Accord around Dallas, Texas, delivering actually delivering letters to law offices and places, but a number of times stuck in traffic in the middle of rush hour traffic. I offered this prayer to the Lord Lord. I have nothing against career drivers. But is this why I got my Ph.D.? It did make sense. And it wasn't until years later that I began to piece it all together because I had no idea what my road would be from that experience, and ultimately for about 16 years, I became a pastor the last years in nineteen eighty five to nineteen ninety over a community Baptist in Manhattan Beach.

And then I began to teach here full time beginning in the late 80s here at Biola and at Talbot. And you know, something that finally came together. What do a janitor and a courier driver? And a pastor and a teacher have in common. The good ones are serving. The good ones are servants'. Isn't that what it's all about? Isn't that what this position of authority is all about, and I really believe no matter what your vocation, you're an ambassador of Jesus Christ, heading there to be a servant of Christ.

And many of you will be in positions of power. You're going to be a different kind of boss. If you have this mindset, I'm going to serve my employees. You're going to be a different kind of supervisor. You're going to be a different kind of teacher. If you have that attitude, I'm going to serve my employees. I'm going to serve my students, I'm going to make a difference in their lives, not to lorded over them, you see one of the pitfalls of authority and fame and even money is that it begins.

It causes us to believe things that aren't really true. We get inflated ideas of our own importance. And we begin to think of ourselves as greater want to real quickly here, in case you're wondering who you're evaluating here now, I notice he's gone through one point and I see three more. Well, just like Alistair said the other morning, I intend to deal with these others more briefly. But I do want to deal with at least two others.

And if we're out of time, we're out of time as we finish very closely connected to the problem of power is the problem of materialism. Some of you will become powerful people. And a few of you will become very, very famous and very, very rich. Now, right now, I know for many Americans, I can see smiles on your face. This is so far from reality that you cannot even imagine when you're trying to pay tuition and struggling with the things that go on during college.

As I said, I've got two daughters out there now who are supporting themselves. It happens. It happens. But God is going to provide for you some measure of financial worth. And he's going to give things to you along the way, opportunities, but also financial opportunities. Let's go real quickly to Matthew 19, verse 16. This is a this is a powerful story about another man of authority in Matthew's gospel. We don't have the words ruler.

It just says a man. But over in Luke, it refers to him as the rich young ruler, probably, by the way, a ruler in the local synagogue. So he had a position of authority in his local community and in his synagogue. We're 16 of of Matthew, 19 now, a man came up to Jesus and asked, teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life? Why do you ask me about what is good?

Jesus replied. There is only one who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments. Well, which one's? The man inquired, and Jesus replied. Do not murder, did not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not give false testimony. Honor your father and mother and love your neighbor as yourself. All these I have kept, the young man said, what do I still like? There's twenty one, Jesus answered, if you want to be perfect or complete is the idea, if you want to be perfect.

Complete, go sell your possessions and give to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven if you do that and then come and follow me. When the young man heard this, he went away sad because he had great well. This is one of many stories that Jesus tells about finances and money,

in fact, along with the subjects of heaven and hell, Jesus says more about money than any other subject. You get the idea in his teaching that he knows something about its effect on people and.

In his teaching, he often refers to money with a term in Aramaic called Mammon. And he refers to the idea that you cannot serve God and Mammon. At the same time, actually, what it seems to be doing is he is making money into a person, an idol. And when he says you can't serve God and money at the same time, he's talking about a choice that we make. A choice of what idol we're going to bow at and how it's going to influence this one to take you to one other passage written by Paul, if you'll turn it over to first Timothy, Chapter six, we get very much the same idea here in Paul's writings.

First, Timothy, six six. But godliness with contentment is great gain. Before we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it, but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into a temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people eager for money have wandered from the faith and have pierced themselves with many griefs, I picture Paul as he says that last verse, perhaps even with tears in his eyes as he thinks of some of the people that he's known.

Who have been torn away from their relationship with God. Because they couldn't get away from the idol of money. What's the antidote here, what's the way that we avoid this pitfall? It's right there in the first verse for six, first Timothy six. Contentment. Contentment. God will bring into your lives opportunities to make money, and some of the jobs that he will provide you with will provide for you a lot of money. Some of the choices that you've already faced perhaps have then these kinds of value judgments.

What are you going to do? How much does it influence you? If you believe the Lord's leading you a certain way. But the salary is lower. How does that affect your decision? You know, I really believe that even though some of these things seem off in the future for many of you. That the foundation of this is being laid right now, it's being laid right now and a lot of your lives granted school is expensive, school is a good investment.

But for some of you, credit card buying has become an obsession. And the credit card buying isn't to pay for school, but is to pay for a style of life, for a level of life that is keeping you where you think you should be. Sometimes we consider a job or you consider a job, and the biggest

issue that is considered is how much money am I going to make? I can honestly share with you, and I'm not I'm not sharing this in any way to to say that that this hasn't been a struggle for me through the years.

But there have been two times in my life where I've had to make this decision and it was a significant one. And if I had not made a decision in both of those times the way that I did, I wouldn't be standing here before you today. The first one was when I was finishing college. I went all the way through Washington State University with an electrical engineering degree. And when I was finishing college, this is going to date me now, but way back in 1970.

It was the hot area for engineering, the aerospace industry had just boomed, the electronics industry was coming on and I went at the end of my senior year, even though I was pretty sure I was heading another direction, interviewed for some jobs, I immediately had three job offers laying there on the table before me. Now, they were entrance level jobs. They weren't huge paying jobs. Nevertheless, there was opportunity for an advancement. And yet during that last year of my college years, God had brought me into a group of people just like you.

I went through a very different experience than many of you in that I went all the way through secular high school and a secular college. And it really wasn't until my last year and a half of college that I began to get around Christians who were living the Christian life. And when that happened, God got a hold of me in a way that I can't explain. And began to change my priorities. Do I believe you can serve God the rest of your life as an engineer and be a part of the kingdom?

Absolutely. And some of you will do that. Do I believe that I was supposed to do that? No. But at the time I was making that decision, it was a tough one, it was really tough for my dad. My dad remembers of that generation who came out of the Great Depression. Just having a job was important to my dad, and now I was within a few months of getting that degree. I had three job offers on the table.

So I said to Dad one night, Dad, you know something? I don't know how to describe this, but I really feel God calling me into some kind of Christian ministry and I'm going to go back to school and start over again. You think that went over very well. Now, what's been neat to see is my dad has, through the years, been so excited to watch the ministries that we've been involved in and to see what God is doing.

But I'll tell you, that night that shook his world. And yet I knew I knew that that's what God wanted me to do. There was no financial security there. There was no guaranteed salary. In fact, if anything, I was going to have to go start paying for school all over again to go on to seminary. Graduate school. I made another decision, though, that very closely relates to Biola, and that is after I was several years in pastoral ministry, the church I was serving in in Manhattan Beach was a fairly large congregation, a fairly large church.

And as a senior pastor of that church, I was well paid. Wasn't getting rich, but I mean, aren't we all rich in America compared to the rest of the world? Everything's relative, isn't it? But I came and talked to the dean of Talbot at that time who has been Hunter and had no idea the salary levels. And we talked I got really excited about the possibilities here, and then he told me the salary. It was about half of what I was making.

Now, I'm not telling you that I was trying to get rich, I was just trying to survive in Southern California and you know how expensive it is and that that cutting in half of my salary was a significant decision. You know, there's really no question there was no question that God was calling me to come here to Biola and to tell that and to be a part of what is going on here. I have never regretted that decision. I'm having more fun than I ever have in my life.

I love this school and I love what it stands for. And I know that by making that decision, I was in the will of God, didn't matter what the salary was. So what if it's happened? Just a piece of the story. You know something? God has provided all of our needs. God has met those financial needs along the way, and he's even provided extra, and that's what he does. But as the rich young ruler.

If you've made certain commitments to the God of Mammon, then you're going to bow down to that idol. Then you're not going to be free to let God guide your life. I'm not saying this in relation to only Christian ministry. I'm saying in any decision that you're making, are you going to choose a job just because of the benefits and the finances? That are coming through that job. I don't think most of you are. I talked to by all this to say I think you're going to choose a job because you believe that God has trained you and is directing you to do this.

This is a pitfall. It's a subtlety. It's like power or fame. It can trip us up. Third, and I'll finish with this one. We look now at another character named Timothy in First Timothy four, would you turn there with me? What are some of the pitfalls that come to us when we're in a role of

leadership where there's power? Possibly finances. Well, you might be surprised at this third one and the reason I've chosen it over others.

As I have observed, it can be really a stumbling block. A real frustration before I go into it, let me mention one that I've left out, that you might be surprised that I've left town in the history of Christian leadership, especially. There's one that appears quite often, and that is moral failure. Sexual sin. You know, the reason I've left it out, not because it's not important, it certainly is a possible area of downfall for anyone.

I've left it out because I've come to this conclusion after watching a number of different people go through this, a couple of whom I knew firsthand that when there's moral failure of someone who is powerful in ministry and they make a decision to commit adultery, sexual sin of some kind, I don't think it's about sex at all. Oh, sure. That's that's the tip of the iceberg. That's what. The controversy in the scandal. But one moral failure happens, I'm really convinced is something else.

It's an ego issue is someone who is not accountable to anyone. And often those who are caught in moral failure. If you really understand the road that led to this, you see someone who has become powerful, whose ego has gotten out of control. Who is unwilling to be accountable to anyone around him? And I say him because his most often happens with men. And who ultimately carries out the exercise of his power in one more way, and that is to show his power over women?

Now, I consider sexual immorality a serious sin, but folks, what I observe in relation to positions of power, it often is just the tip of the iceberg. And the real issues are character issues that happened long before. Of someone who isn't able to handle the power and his own ego gets in the way and then he begins as he begins to misuse that power, he begins to misuse it in the wrong way with the opposite sex. Well, Timothy has another problem that was an aside there.

Timothy has another problem. Look at Chapter four and verse. Well, let me read to Lebanon 12. Paul says the Timilty command and teach these things, Timothy, don't let anyone look down on you because you are a young. And we need to go into a little background here, because, first of all, as we look at the pastoral pistils first and second, Timothy, it's pretty easy to conclude that Timothy had a fairly mild mannered personality.

He was not the sons of Thunder like James and John by any means. Timothy, in fact, is but was probably extremely shy and timid. And because of his godliness, he had now been placed into this leadership position as pastor of the church of Ephesus. And Ephesus was the most important church in Asia, minor of that time. In a sense, you could say, Timothy, from a human point of view, was in water over his head.

And now in this in this powerful church situation and emphasis, Timothy is getting criticism from people. And the criticism seems to be about his age and maybe connected with his age, what people perceive to be his lack of maturity. Now, many of you can relate to Timothy here, even though he was probably older than you are, I'm guessing putting together the chronology that Timothy is about thirty five years of age at this time. Now, that seems really old to you, but thirty five years of age in this day was very young for a pastoral kind of authority.

In fact, if we use the Jewish measurement of an elder cannot be an elder until he's 50 years of age, Timothy was truly a young man. And that's probably why he's getting some criticism here. He's younger than anyone and should be in this position. And as he began to get the flak from people, his personality backed off because he just wasn't going to argue he's not a son of thunder here. He's not willing to fight back. And Paul needs to write to him.

Timothy, don't let people look down on you because you are a. Here we have an example of something that you can't change about yourself. Well, time will do that. But, you know, sometimes if you're put in a leadership position. Those who are under your authority, who are under your influence are going to criticize you, sometimes they'll criticize you for things that are valid, but often they will be criticizing you for things that you can't change.

They'll be criticizing you for who you are. And that's a tough position to be in. I've been in that position. Where you know that you're doing your very best, that you're using the gifts that God has given to you, that you believe that God has placed you into this position and now the sheep don't want to be led by a shepherd. There's not a responsiveness there. What do you do? Well, you know, we live in days where there's an easy formula to this, and I'm not being critical here of the political establishment, but it's probably one of the best examples of what has been characteristic of politics, of American politics for many years.

How do you lead? You take a poll. And you find out what the people want, right, and whatever the majority of people want, that's what you give to them. When we were in that ugly period of

time, that was very frustrating for all of us where the election in Florida was to be determined and Bush and Gore were were running, even Stephen, there in that election. What was really sad to me is behind the scenes, the pollsters were going crazy.

What do people want to hear? What kind of image do we need to see on this candidate or on that candidate and have to honestly say, I think it was going on on both sides, Republican and Democrat, the image, the right image. And how do you figure out that image or you figure it out by doing a poll, by finding out, well, what are people wanting now? And once you figure out what they're wanting, that's what you give to them.

Leadership by poll.

Folks, that is not leadership. What is leadership, leadership is leading. Leadership is knowing where God wants you to take a group of people, and it's not to say that you can't have feedback from them, but leadership is the courage to stand out in front and to know where you're going to go. And that's what Paul is telling Timothy here. Timothy, you're being criticized for something that is not your fault. You can't change it. Now, here's what you need to do.

1Timothy 4. Don't let anyone look down on you because you're young, but set an example for the believers in speech in life, in love and faith. Purity until I come devote yourselves to the public reading of scripture to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Timothy, verse 15, be diligent in these matters, give yourself wholly to them so that everyone may see your progress.

I love that passage because it reminds us that Timothy, though Paul says you're supposed to lead, Timothy is growing and it's OK for people to see that you're growing. It's OK to be vulnerable before the people you're leading to be transparent, to be honest, to be able to laugh about your own weaknesses at times. Paul says to Timothy. Let everyone see your progress, watch your life and your doctrine closely persevering them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearer's.

What is the antidote to this pitfall of leadership? It's hold strong to your conviction. Lead with your character, you know, that's what this is all about in verse 12. Set an example, it's a very interesting expression, it's the word to pus in Greek, which is a word that means make an

impression. In that day, as many of you know, letters were sent as scrolls and there would be a glob of wax that was put on the letter.

And someone who is wealthy or influential would often have a signet ring and he would take and make his impression into the wax on the letter. And you know who the letter was from. That impression in the works was called the two parts, Paul says to Timothy Timothy. Making it make an impression, set an example on those around you and how do you do that? Well, the issues that he says are important here are character issues. He names five of them altogether, probably the first to speech and life is a general summary of all that you do, the things that you say and the life that you live.

But then he goes on to mention three specifically. Set an example and loving people. In your faithfulness is probably the intent here, your faithfulness to your work and finally in the area of sexual purity and specifically that Timothy, let your life leave. Let your character lead. That's the way you stick by your guns don't lead by polls. Know your people well enough to know what their needs are, but then have the courage to lead. Now, my desire.

For you are Biola in the years to come is that you're going to be the leaders out there. And I really believe you will be leaders in Christian ministry leaders and every other vocation where Christians can infiltrate and be the salt and the light that we're supposed to be in our work world. But you know something, as we've looked at just three examples today, there are some areas where we can easily be tripped up. And those those areas become the defining moments of our lives for those of you who are with with me yesterday in the session over in Calvary Chapel.

We talked about going through trials as some of the defining moments, I really think the other end of the spectrum is true to. The tough times in life, the trials are certainly defining moments, but how about when you're on the top of life and you're in that position of authority and power and you're faced with one of these issues? What are you going to do with it? Those are defining moments. Those are moments when your role in the kingdom of God is going to be determined.

And the stakes are high and God gives us his Holy Spirit to enable us to make those kinds of decisions. I'm excited to see the influence of violent university around the world and, you know, we have a track record already of graduates who have gone out into many. Many locations, many areas of the world, and made a difference, I didn't even mention the home, but I think it's one of the most important battlefields today that many of you.

All of you, I hope. Will be the leaders who will make strong Christian homes, how desperately, how desperately our society needs that. And I don't need to tell you that because you look around and you say there is something that we don't see very often. May God grant to all of us. The steadfastness and the commitment. To be men and women who lead with character, who stick with convictions. Who don't back down because we're criticized or because somebody doesn't like something about it.

May we be men and women who know the pitfalls of power and fame? And money and how those kinds of things can send us in an entirely different direction that God wants us to go. Would you close with me in front? Father, thank you for your word, thank you not only for the doctrinal statements there, but for the characters who are there, the lives. And Lord, this morning, as we've looked at Ruth and Boaz, and then this afternoon as we've been able to see some of Jesus disciples.

Paul and Timothy. How grateful we are that you've taught us these important ideas. In the fabric of human life, and you've shown us illustrations. Lord, as we go forth and live out our lives, may we be living illustrations of those who lead with conviction, those who handle success well? We want to thank you that this isn't all done in our power, but the Holy Spirit. Empowers us to live in this way. I pray for my brothers and sisters here.

I know the years ahead are going to involve some important decisions, not only career decisions, but decisions within their homes and within their careers. To choose the mate that you have for each one. To choose the mission. And what that will mean, Lord, these are exciting. Decisions and times, but we know that we need your wisdom to do that, and I pray that that might be provided through the power of your Holy Spirit. We commit ourselves to you today.

In Jesus name, we pray.