

Pursuing Impact

By Rick and Theresa Dunn

Announcer:

We are just about ready to get started. This should be a lot more comfortable venue for us to be listening to the Dan this afternoon than yesterday Sutherland. I'm going to go ahead and get this time started with the word of prayer, if you please. Quiet your hearts. And pray with me. Dear Lord Jesus, we just come to you in the middle of the day, what a joy it is to start our day listening and worshiping you and end our day listening and worshiping you and to have you in the middle of our day. I thank you, God, that your continued available for us and continually calling out our name and so desiring to be in a closer relationship. Father, I ask that you just bless this time encourage our hearts with the convicting words from Rick and Teresa. And your precious holy name, Amen. All right, let's give a warm welcome to Rick and Teresa.

Rick:

Are you good? All right, I'm all right, still adjusting a little bit to Pacific Time, but I'm doing well, little cockups. OK, let's talk about the same part of our workshop. Most of you were probably here yesterday or a number of you were told that taking the red pill and that's beginning to see relationships in ourselves, in relationships is they really are not as we wish they were not as much as they might look like if we're trying to do the Kumbaya and make it all perfect thing. But as they really are and today we're going to talk about taking the red pill, and that is to look at

the impact of who we are and how do we understand who God made us to be and the impact he wants us to have in the world.

How do we keep from living out someone else's life for us? How do we find our own voice to speak into the world? The words that God wants us to speak out of our lives. And I start this with and I usually do this use family illustrations because that's the thing closest to my home. And my heart is a picture we have on our refrigerator of my son Zachary. I have really bad allergies and Tennessee is one of the two worst allergy states in the country. And so when I mowed many times I use a filter, little white mask. Looks like I'm performing surgery on my yard with a lawnmower and I will use those and go around and mow my little push mower.

When Zachary was about two and a half years old, he got a little push mower, a little plastic when it was a bubble mower. He pushes it around, the little bubbles come out. You know this deal. Well, you have to also understand that Zachary, when he was little, he had little white hair that sticks straight up OK. And so like for Halloween, I suggested we put a green turtleneck and take him as a dandelion. So that's kind of how I look. So here's this little kid with the hair sticking straight up with his little bubble mower and he puts a mask on to walk around and he's walking around mowing the sidewalk. All right. With all the bubbles coming out.

And I keep that picture on my refrigerator to remind me of two things. One. I am constantly shaping these individuals I call my children and they are desiring to look like me, to act like me, they are becoming very much like the person I am. And that's really a fun thing when I see Zachery out there mowing the sidewalk. What was not fun was when I got mad one day when my daughter was about two years old and I went over and I just kicked a door and just out of disgust. And my little two year old daughter went over ran over to the door and went like, Daddy, like Daddy.

That all of a sudden reminds me that they want to be like me and I should be careful with the person that I am, but it also reminds me of another truth. The reason they try to be like me is because we were made to be like God. We were wired to derive our understanding of who we are, of what life is about by looking at the one from whom we got our identity. And part of our journey and your journey and becoming an adult is starting to look at and say, what does it look like for you to look like God?

What is God like for you, because God created you to be in a relationship with him in such a way that he can look at you and say, that's what I would be like. That's the way I would do it. That's the way I would choose if I were Rick or if I were Teresa or if I were Jenny or if I was God, whoever I might be, God gets glory from seeing us be like him. That's why he made us in his image. The challenge is. Sometimes it's very hard to understand what it means for us as our own individual to be like him, not the person next to us, not our parents, not the people in our dorm,

not our roommate, not our boyfriend girlfriend. Who are we in this world and what does it look like for us to bring glory to God? So let's consider that just for a moment and consider the whole idea of God and the name that he gives to us.

What's in a name? Adam was created and named by God. God said, your name is Adam. I have made you. But what did he say to Adam about the garden and the animals? Those are yours to name. I'm giving you charge over the animals you give to them the identity. In other words, Adam, you be like me, I've created you, and now I've created this for you to take care of, and God and Adam were to be in a partnership in the garden.

God said, this is your garden to take care of. I've made it for you. And I want to sit back and I want all the heavenly and all the angels and every creative being to look at what it looks like when some being created in my image takes care of things. And that's the way God is this morning when Alistair was talking about that verse, Philippians two, 12 and 13, remember that work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work but the willing to work for his good purpose.

That verse says that our spiritual growth is a partnership between us and God. God does his part and we do our part. That's because we were made to be beings who work with God on our

spiritual growth, with me as a parent, you as a student, you in the way that you make a difference in the world. God has given you your own name. Now, in our culture, we don't take the time to name people with particularly meaningful names trying to give them a blessing.

But if you look back in the Hebrew culture, the name meant the giving of identity. And God has given to you a certain identity. And part of the journey of how you walk out your impact in life is to understand what that name is that he's given to you. I also want us to consider, as we look at what's in a name, that our souls are what Dallas Willard has called plastic. There's a plasticity to our souls, and that is that they're very moldable. That as you grow up, there are different types of impressions being made on the shape of who you are.

Let me give you a for instance, of a negative form of that. I had a student when I was teaching at a college who came to me and said, I'm getting married in three months and I'm afraid to get married because of the wedding night. And I said, what about the wedding night really frightens you or makes you afraid or makes you nervous? And it probably took him 15 or 20 minutes, it kind of went around talking about this. Finally, he came out and told The Real Story when he was in seventh grade. He was in a shower at a camp. And the boys in the shower who were older made fun of the size of his penis, and from that point forward he felt bad about himself sexually, that he was inadequate and incompetent. Off of one little comment from some guys who were just being rude guys, it can.

And that started to take the shape and make a shape on how he saw himself at the same time. I bet you can point to teachers, coaches, youth, pastors, people who along the way in your life said things about you that said you are so good at working with people. You have such a gift for caring about people who who no one else cares about. You have a gift for music. Someone gave you names, they shaped your soul. They gave you a sense of passion and they gave all of us are. Made and shaped internally by all those different things that have happened.

Some of you had parents who really encouraged you and who helped you just become more than you ever would have been. And some of you had parents who never spoke affirmation. One psychologist tells the story of seeing these two ladies at the same time in his counseling practice. One lady came in and she was a vibrant, active woman who was making a huge impact on the world around her. Maybe not something you would see, but other people were seeing it. And she shared the story of how her dad used to call her Angel Darling and even made up a song with the words Angel Darling. The last thing he did before he died was sing that song to her and she would talk about how that had made her feel, had shaped her soul into someone who believed she had something to offer. She was valuable and cared about.

At the same time, in his practice, he was seeing this one girl who he described as she was absolutely drop dead gorgeous physically, the kind of person who'd walk in the room and

immediately every head would turn to notice, except for the fact that she was so dressed in such a way to not draw any attention. Not attractive at all. In fact, always dressed in total black, total darkness, always keeping her head down. Because her father's nickname for her was Demon Daughter. You see those things come in and they shape ourselves and everybody in the room today has some things that have been shaped in positive ways and things that have been shaped in some negative ways.

And so sometimes it's really hard because of the plasticity of our souls to hear God call our true name who he's called us to be, who he's named us to be because of what's happened in our past. So we have true names and we have false names that we get. And we also have misshapen souls and a misshapen world. And as a result, we wind up with we could hit those points, we wind up with distorted selves, that one distorted selves.

You go back one more, thank you. There you go. Great, thanks. Distorted selves that created a distorted impact we can't quite understand. And many of you have taught to me just since we've been here in two days, I'm trying to figure out God's will for my life. Should I be doing this? Should I be doing that? Should it be going into this kind of ministry? Should be going into this kind of vocation? Should it be taken a year? What should I do with my life? And it becomes confusing because we have our own issues of who are we? And then as we look out in our world, sometimes our world gives us negative feedback. That's not fair about who we are. So how do you start to understand the name by which God is calling you so that you can make the impact

he's called you to make? Because when you're making when you're trying to make an impact, that's not you.

It's exhausting. By illustration, if you're a sports fan like I am, you will recall what happened when Michael Jordan switched from basketball to baseball. When he was playing basketball, you felt like you were watching Michelangelo paint the Sistine Chapel, the artistry, the natural just it was breathtaking physical and mental ability. When you watched him swing at a curve ball and double a Birmingham bear in baseball, it was anxious and agonizing. You just wish he could get over it. Because he was trying to do not what he really was, and I'm not surprised that he's unretired again because he's so quiet and passionate about basketball, that's a metaphor for us.

How do we find out what our passion and impact is? How do we go about our name? How do we avoid just going into this role or this place or doing this thing? Because our parents expect us to our friends expect us to, or we have some kind of pressure because of our misshapen soul to try to prove to people that we're something that, in fact, we don't really have to do. Now Theresa is going to walk us through for a little while thinking about how it is that you find your unique name and your impact. And after she's done that, I'm going to come back and talk a little bit about some of the obstacles that we face in that, and then we can give you a chance, like we did yesterday, for some question and answers. So if you have questions that are coming up as you go through this, write them down or keep them in your head and we'll come back to those.

Theresa:

One of the things that we've been talking about both yesterday and again today is just that whole idea of identifying our needs and. And the places in ourselves that were broken because the reality is, until we know that we don't really understand our need for God, but one of the things that I see often that happens in us is that we come to grips with our need and our brokenness and we get stuck there.

We get stuck in a place of brokenness. And we we focus on our inadequacy are the places in ourselves that are not whole when in reality, God calls us to a place of brokenness so that we learn dependance on him. And if we're not moving to a place of dependance, then we're really getting stuck in a place and giving the enemy a stronghold in our lives because otherwise we just end up in a vicious cycle of self defeat. The reality is, is that we are always going to have longings. We are always going to be imperfect people on this side of of glory because the fall of neednt, this isn't our home. This isn't the place we're made for, we're sojourners here, longing for another country, and it's real important to hold on to that because otherwise, if we're just looking for this to be home, then we really ought to be working harder to find a place to settle in here. And I think we often do that. I really get caught up in that sometimes.

And, you know, the whole, you know, give a good career, get the bigger house. Uh. You know, the success of our world, which are the lives that are out there, that something out there is going

to bring fulfillment or hope or completeness to us when the truth is our only completeness is in him. So our dependance, our brokenness and need have to move us to a place of dependance on him. Otherwise we become defeated and paralyzed.

Brett Curtis talks about this and Sacred Romance when he says Satan's tactic in separating us from our heart is to sneak in as the storyteller through our fears and wounds that we have received from life's eras. He weaves a story that becomes our particular message of the era's counting on our vanity and blindness. He seduces us to try to control life by living in the smaller stories that we all construct to one degree or another. He accuses God to us and us to God.

If we listen to the accusations. Then our lives. Stay, we don't walk, walk our lives that as mature children of God, of King, one of our problems when we talk about our name is that we don't understand. We really are children of a living God. And if we ever really got a hold of that, if we ever really understood that, and I know that's a journey, but if we ever really got a hold of that, it would change how we live life and what we do.

We would begin to understand that we are in a battle. A battle for the lives of other children. We don't yet know that they have a king, and if they are sons and daughters of him after September the 11th, I think the battle that we are in right now is greater than ever before. I don't know if you

all have seen the movie A Knight's Tale. It may be right, it are you may not can watch that movie, but in that movie, A Knight's Tale, the key character, there is an.

A pauper, and it's it's set up in the medieval times in which only the nobility were allowed to fight and to win a great favor. And there was also monetary accolades that were given if you won the jousting contest, those kinds of things. So this guy is a popper, and his night that he serves gets killed in one of the jousting contest. And the unfortunate part of that is, is that the knight who won would give a small portion of his winnings to the poppers that had helped him along the way.

And these guys were all hungry and really couldn't afford for this guy to die on them. So one of the poppers says, hey, I'll put on his gear. I'm about his size. I bet I can pull this off and we'll get our money and go home. So he does get on the horse and he manages to survive the battle and they get through it. And so what starts out for him as a quest for survival, a quest for money, um, turns into something more.

He finds, you know, I'm pretty good at this. And he likes the thrill of the crowd. He loves the adventure of fighting. And somewhere along the way in the journey. He becomes he starts to begin to realize already ammonite. But in that culture, the only way you could be a knight was if

you were from some sort of noble bloodline so he can some papers and some other things and pull it off and he becomes actually one of the best warriors in the land.

There's this one, you know, always in movies, there's a good guy and a bad guy, the bad guy figures out that he becomes very suspicious of this man and begins to do some research hasn't followed and comes to find out his true identity. He's really a pauper. They are back in England, the man's home country, and it's the big final battle. And here this truth comes out, well, here comes this guys, the good guys, buddies, all come running back to him and say, look, they found you out.

The Royal Guards are coming to arrest you. Run, run, get out of here. They'll put you in the stocks. You'll be flogged within an inch of your life. If they come and get, you've got to run. And he's won a girl somewhere along the way and she's begging him, please run. And he turns and says to them, he starts to get on his horse and go and he turns around and he says, No, I'm a knight.

So sure enough, they come and they get him, they put him in the stocks, it's the day of the battle. And people are the peasants, the other peasants have now turned on him and they begin to throw, uh, food and things like that at him and they're making fun and jeering. And somewhere along

the way, he's run into the king of England. And out of the crowd steps the king. And he says. We've discovered that in the ancient history of this man, he escaped from great nobility.

Release him, for he is a warrior and warriors need to fight. One of the things that we often do is we listen to the people around us, the areas of our lives that tell us we're not children of a king. We aren't the sons and daughters. We aren't people meant for great battles, we're really paupers. We're really people who just need to learn how to get by, who need to learn how to survive. But if we'll listen to the voice of the king. And listen to our own voice somewhere in a is the image of God that echoes to us that we are something more and that we are created for that. The reason I want to talk to you about that is because if you don't get that piece. The steps that I'm about to give you that talk about how do you begin to make an impact in your life, just become another list of do's and don'ts. They just become another list for you to try to muster up the strength and the energy and the resources to do.

And that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about, you know, in your name. And as you know who that is and who you are, you begin to make these kinds of choices that move you deeper into relationship with him and ultimately move out into your world, not because you don't aren't afraid, not because it's not hard, not because you aren't defeated sometimes, but because ultimately, you know that the battle is in his hands.

So let's talk real specifically. How do you begin to find insight into your place of impact? The first step is to pursue God's known will in your life. Those are the real clear, obvious things. Um. For example, your character, you don't have to wonder or guess whether or not you need to be a person of character, you know, for example, in school, when you've got your profs give open book test or take home tests, take home exam, things like that.

Um, you wish, you know, those honor kinds of things that you put yourself into where you know what no one's going to know. Whether you're going to do the right thing or not, that's where your character really comes into question. That's, you know, how do you deal with your dating relationships and, you know, Christian campuses? One of my favorite things that happens in dating relationships is that and we don't deal with one another with integrity when we're ready to break up. God told us to do it. We don't we don't say, you know what, this isn't working for me or I'm not comfortable with our relationship and it may be a part of God's work in your life, but you know what you need to own your decisions too. That's a part of character. Standing up and saying, yeah, I did that, owning it and being willing to deal with the consequences of that positive or negative.

The other thing is intimacy. We talked a lot about that yesterday, just moving into relationships in very real and intimate ways, not hiding, not protecting, not doing the fig leaf thing we talked

about yesterday. Either medicating or performing, but beginning to move into relationships based on who you are. You know, God's called you to that because that is how we grow and change.

And then acts of service, you know, that God's called us to love that you don't have to wonder, do I need to do I need to love other people? Do I need to care for the poor or do I need to care for the widows? Do I need to care for orphans? Do I need to care for my roommate? Yeah, you do, obviously, you have limitations within what you can do that, but you are called to do that, so begin walking in what you know. There might be a lot of things you don't know, but if you're faithful, it's kind of like Alister talked this morning with Ruth. Ruth didn't sit and wonder, you know, do I need to pray about this? She knew she needed to eat, they knew they needed food. So she got up and went somewhere and started doing something and God met her along the way.

The next thing is solitude, listening, prayer. I cannot encourage you enough to build this into your life. Now, this is something that didn't come into my life and I don't think I learned a whole lot about until I was about 30 years old. Our culture does not teach us solitude, quiet reflection, you know, our idea of a quiet time is ten minutes on the fly right before we head to class. Maybe if we're lucky, we get that in or ten minutes at night right before we head off to bed. And I know that you may not can do that on a daily basis, but there needs to be rhythm in your life of quiet, of solitude.

When I talk about listening prayer. I mean a time of quieting yourself enough that you've gotten past your own voice and past the voice of busyness to really beginning to hear the voice of God. First time I ever did this, I was on an R.A. retreat with some students and we had a new dean in who decided we were going to spend the first day of our R.A. retreat in a day of silence. And I thought, oh, that'll be cool. Well, the first hour, two hours, probably, my brain just ran with all the things I'd try to read my Bible and that one working, you know, I was getting distracted. We were outside. And. But I let my mind just run with all the things that it ran with, tried to read a little bit, read a little bit, got past that, sang a little bit, fell asleep finally. Um. And eventually, after four hours. I'd run out of franticness. And could finally be still long enough to begin to hear my own voice, to get in touch with some things that were going on inside of me and to begin to really sit before the Lord in a quiet kind of way.

Now, we don't all have four hours on a regular basis to quieten ourselves with. First of all, if you do it on a more regular basis, it doesn't take four hours to get quiet, but if you had ever done that before. The first time it may take you that long, but you do need to build in regular times for that regular rhythm of it, I'd say three or four or five times a year at least, that you're taking concentrated amounts of time to quiet. Take inventory and listen. Because, again, you can't get where you're going if you don't know where you are.

Parker Palmer has said that the soul is like a wild animal. You know, if you try to catch a wild animal, it's going to run away from you. If you want to observe a wild animal or you want to get close to a wild animal, the best thing you can do is to sit quietly. And obscurely and wait for it to come to you and our souls are very much like that, so you've got to adopt that value if you're ever going to move into this place of impact.

The next thing is effective mirrors. Mentors, friends, people who are going to speak truth in your life, positive and negative, to say the hard things, you cannot know yourself in isolation. You cannot know yourself in isolation, it's an impossible thing. But you need to be careful about whose voices you're listening to, observe their life, they need to earn the right to speak into your life. There are the occasional people and. Rick has a little bit of our infertility story with you guys here, and we encountered a man along the way and our infertility process who is a great prayer warrior. We went to meet with him. He was probably 75, 80 years old at the time. And he said some hard things to me - and I'd never met that man - that God used to really work powerfully in my life. But I think that's the exception and not the rule.

Most people who speak hard things in my life and who've changed my life have been people who've walked the journey of life out with me and earned the right to say it. And I have a handful of those people, probably besides, Rick, three other people in my life who do that. Um, but I need to get with those people on a regular basis for good time and good feedback and quality.

The next thing is passion. What are you drawn to? You know, this, again, goes back to a little bit of what Alastair was talking about this morning, common sense. Part of how you begin to understand how God wants you to impact the world is what are you drawn to? If you're by nature an artist. God's probably not going to call you to be a technician. If you're a technician, he's probably not calling you to be an artist. So what brings life to you, what brings energy to you, what what energizes you? We all have things and you're in college right now, so you have lots of things that take energy from you, classes that you have to take, because that's what the curriculum says you have to take. But listen to those. What classes energize you and you come out jazzed because of the kinds of things you've dialoged and talked about. And what things do you think if I can just get through this?

You know, those are huge windows into your soul and into your gifting and what you're about. Listen to this. Let me say one more thing about that, one of the things that I think oftentimes we sell ourselves short on is, again, when we haven't listened well to our name, we tend to value some things that we see as being more important than others, because our culture cheers some gifting, some more than others. Rick and I have talked about that a lot. He and I both have very public kinds of giftings. You get a lot of strokes for that.

But the reality is, is that, you know, Jenny, right now, who's running the, uh, PowerPoint and who's done for us this week, a very service behind the scenes kind of thing has been huge gifting in this conference and has enabled a lot of what's gone on here. Um, and so you begin but we tend to go, well, if I can't do that, that's not as important. And so we tend to discount our passions because they don't sell as well.

So let me really encourage you that God has called us as a body. And one thing, it's not greater than another in that. The next thing is to be willing to risk and to fail. One thing I already know about you because you are in higher education is that you don't like to fail. Your performers are you wouldn't be in college. So already, that is. Something you're in an uphill battle for, but the truth is, is if we aren't willing to risk, we're never going to learn what we're good at because in some sometimes in our failing. That begins to help define us.

When I am - I'm a pretty strong leader. Um, by definition, and particularly as a woman, uh, at least that's the feedback I get a lot. And so it seemed a very natural thing. I've been working in a counseling center at a university, I'd been the number two person there. And when the director for the center left to go to another position, they offered that position to me. And I seemed like the logical person for that. And I took it on. One of the things that happened in that is that I found myself miserable. It was much more administrative. The buck stopped with me. I found that people interacted with me differently because of being the boss. And I found I didn't like that. Now, prior to being in that position, had you told me that was true, I would have said no

way, I'm a great number one person. The reality is I wasn't and I hated it, but I'd have never known that if I hadn't taken the role. Pulled it off, but found out that isn't who I am or how I'm wired. Don't ever want to do that again. I don't regret the experience because it taught me something about who I am. So be willing to take the risks. Part of how you find out who you are is to find out what you're not.

And then finally, follow the trail of God's work in your life. You know, are you from a specific cultural background? Did you grow up in a culture? Do you have an ethnicity? God works in that in some real powerful ways. We have a gal right now in our church who actually is from L.A., she's Hispanic, and one thing that you'll find about Knoxville, Tennessee, if you ever come to Knoxville, Tennessee, is that it is by and large a very anglo European culture, and that means it's very white. And so one of the things that that's been one of the real difficulties for me, moving from Chicago to Knoxville, but she's very Hispanic and one of the things that's happened is that God has used that ethnicity in her to open. She is a oh, my gosh, vibrant, outspoken believer. I mean, she would meet a stranger on the street and tell them about Jesus. That's who she is. She bubbles over with effervescence in that.

And one of the things that's happened is Knoxville's trying to introduce into the school system foreign languages. And so Spanish being one of them. They've asked her if she'd be willing to do that. And she said, well, I'm a Christian, really. Anything I talk about, it's going to involve the Lord. So if that's not going to be OK, I really can't do that. And they said, oh, we don't care. Why

don't you just come on in and do that? Well, now this woman is having this tremendous ministry. Really related out of the fact that of our heritage and there's a long story of testimony with that of how God has brought something that for her growing up was a difficult thing because she had migrant parents and that was really shameful for her. And what now God is using for the kingdom in mighty and powerful ways, and it's become a real source of joy in her life.

But look at that, your family background. What about your family experiences, positive and negative, you know, will God use in your ministry and my family in early childhood? Um, I was sexually abused. Gosh, I have said that in front of a crowd like this 20 years ago would have been well, I wouldn't have done it. Um, but, you know, God used that in my life in a way that allows me to have compassion for people in ways that I know I would never have. Would I have signed up for that to happen. No! That was a horrific thing in my life. But God uses that and has used it in the kind of work I do to cause me to be a more compassionate, connectable person. And so I see good that God brought from evil in that.

And then positive experiences. Obviously, you have cross-cultural experiences. And if you have, um. You know, huge ministries with children, you find yourself really drawn to little kids, you know, brain, that would probably mean, you know, if you're from a large family. Um, you know, those kinds of things God uses to help you begin to see areas of impact that you may have, um in your life. Rick is going to come and talk about obstacles that we may have that relate to that as

well as we walk this impact. But again, let me say, understand that this list is only a list if you haven't yet discovered your name.

Rick:

Let me just share with you for a few moments, I want to give time for questions. And some of the things that can hinder the very process we're talking about. And the first one is going to be failing to value our own journey, and I'm going to give you three examples of what I'm talking about in there, all three very different examples. But if you have your Bible, the first one comes from Zechariah, chapter three. So turn there, if you will. We're going to talk a little bit more about this tomorrow when I speak, but we'll hit on it just briefly today. Zechariah three is somewhere in the Old Testament. I have no idea how to get there, but somewhere in the mind of I can never remember the modern prophets order, but it's in the back there.

All right, Zechariah, chapter three. And we're going to look at. Verse one, chapter three, to look at an obstacle, being able valuing our own journey. Verse one, then he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan, standing at his right side to accuse him. And the Lord said to say, the Lord rebuke you, Satan, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you? Is not this a man, this man, a burning stick snatched from the fire?

One of the difficulties you're going to have is the enemy, Satan, the evil one, the demonic. However you want to understand our spiritual warfare, it is clear that he is a liar and an accuser and he wants to take the wounds and the hard places and the arrows, the abuse experiences, the negative things on your SO and he wants to accuse you with them. He wants to say, yeah, I told you, you can't do it. You can't make a difference. I know what your past is like. I know what you've done. I know what's been said to you. You are a loser. There is something wrong with your sexuality. You will fail. He wants to use those things to accuse you, and it's good to see what God says the same. That's a Satan. I rebuke you. Is not this the person I snatch from the fire? Saying You will not take my glory from me because it's about me and what I'm doing in their life and I have called in for my name.

Look at verse three now, Joshua is dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel and the angel said to those who were standing before him, take off those filthy clothes. Then he said to Joshua, See, I have taken away your sin and I will put rich garments on you, then I read, put a clean turban on its head, so they put a clean turban on his head and clothing while the angel of the Lord stood by. God is going to be your guardian, if you will call on him and say, God guard me against the enemy's condemnation and his lies, and he's telling me that I'm not OK, there's something wrong with me. And then everybody else can make a difference in the world. But I'm going to ultimately fail or what I'm doing doesn't matter. Guard against that with the strength of God.

Second example of how we can fail to value our own journey. I'll call my friend Robert. Robert's one of the people in the last 20 years I've known who was probably one of the most broadly nationally known and impacting youth leaders that I've run across. I've probably known a half a dozen men and women whose whose real ability to impact student ministries is national and even international. Robert was one was one of them, and I ran into Robert at a conference and I said, you look tired, it's well I'm doing, OK. It's been a rough week. He said our college ministry had been changed. He was in a large church about church of five thousand. He was working in college ministry. You still overseeing the high school ministry. He was working with some things in the junior high ministry, and he gave down his list and his list was unbelievably long.

And I thought, no wonder this guy's worn out. Look at all the things he's doing in ministry. But within a month, I heard that Robert had run away. Left his wife, left his children because of an affair with a woman who was in the church and they had gone to Arizona to start a life together. Robert loved the Lord, he loved students, but you know what, he got addicted to ministry to medicate himself and he didn't deal with what was really going on and he didn't take the time for solitude and to hear God call his name. He didn't take the time to put people into his life. He didn't take the time to really work through his past. And what God was doing, he just kept doing and doing and doing it one day out of his tremendous need that we talked about yesterday to belong. He destroys his marriage, hurts his children, and devastates his ministry. All because he didn't value the process we're talking about today.

And let me give you a third example to that, I've run across from time to time where you find people working really hard to be Michael Jordan playing baseball, because for some reason they feel like it's more important to do this than this. I was so appreciative this morning and I think the girl's name was Kerry in the backseat where she talked about how she had dreamed about she was going to be a traveler. Remember that story? She's going to make a difference. She's going to be basically she was saying I wanted to be a star. I thought I had the talent for it. I wanted to do that. I want to make an impact for God with that. And God said, that's not what I have for you.

And as Teresa said, our culture wants to name us with the heroes are the people that we see on TV. The heroes are the album cover people. The heroes are the people who stand up in front. The heroes are the people that we write stories about that in God's economy and in God's will. Your journey is just as much of an impact and a hero and a glory to him, because remember what brings him glory is not big things and big success. What brings Him glory is when he can stand to the angels and say, you see that? You see what Rick's doing. That's because of me He's doing that. That's exactly how I would do it. That's exactly the way I would be a husband in that situation. That's exactly the way I'd be a father there. That's exactly the way I'd walk out life with a pastoral staff. That's what brings God true glory. And that's how we impact our world one life at a time. And so you must we must I must value our own journey and see ourselves as God's made us embrace that and accept that and not think that's lesser or insignificant in any way.

The second thing that we do that can keep us from living is who we are, is when we assign too much power to other people. We define ourselves based on how attractive we are to the opposite sex. We define ourselves over how many people give us the strokes for the things that we do. And let me tell you, I struggle with this because I'm a performer and a perfectionist. And when things go the way I want them to do, I feel good about myself and when things don't go the way I want them to do, I beat myself up internally and I've had to learn and grow that I cannot judge who I am based on whether or not people like what I'm doing. And that, for me, has been a very hard road.

But when you give the wrong people the wrong power, when you let the crowd decide who's real and what's real in your life by their applause. And get you to stop being you in, the applause goes away when you do that, you were enslaved to the God of other people's impressions. And it's exhausting, and so you need those few people in your life, those affected mirrors, who help you get over and get past and get out from under the power of that applause. Because it will jerk you around and it will keep you from the impact God has in store for you and your life.

Thirdly, when we become stuck in the pain of the process, you remember what happened to the children of Israel on the way to the Promised Land. They got tired of it. We're tired of all this manna. We're tired of this desert. Just send us back to Egypt. We'll take slavery with some cucumbers and watermelon over being free with manna. And what had happened was they look at their circumstances and they couldn't see what God was doing in their life. They couldn't see

the promised land ahead. They just wanted temporary relief and they'd rather be enslaved. And that's what happens to us when we go back to living by other people's impressions or when we get into the performance or the addictions or all the things the minister, any of the things we're blaming ourselves or shaming ourselves or listening to Satan, those are things we go back to because they're comfortable and we know those instead of pressing through the hard desert on the way to the promised land.

And we're going to need each other to do that. Which comes to my final point on this, and that is one of the major obstacles to living is who you are, is when you try to go solo. Recall our story this morning, it took four guys to carry the guy on the mat up into the roof and in the presence of Jesus. It takes three or four people in your life to get you to fully become the person that God made you to be, and you're going to need to grab a hold of another person's corner of their mat and help carry them to you were not made to self define yourself.

You were made to define yourself from your creator and relationship with other people. And we've got to hear from him, but we've got to hear from them, too, and I have people in my life. My wife is one of them, other friends or one of them. And I have like two or three friends that I can say really hard things to. They can say hard things back to me, cultivate that, because in those places, those are the places where I get unstuck.

Those are the places that get courage to move on. And those are the places where people say, Rick, that's not really who you are. A couple of years ago, our church went through a real difficult time and they asked me to be the interim executive pastor. Now, I was willing to do that because someone needed to do it, but I'm the most administratively challenged person you will ever meet. I can't do administration for nine months. I did that.

And everybody to this day would tell you we love Rick. He's a nice guy, but I would never want him to be my executive pastor. And that's OK, because I wasn't made to do that. Was it wired to do that? There's a reason why I'm not singing this week. I'm not speaking on suffering, so I won't do any solos. Right. I don't sing. Well, it's not a pleasant experience. That's OK. I need to be who I am, and that's what we all need to do, and we learn that in community.

Now, we just have a few moments before we wrap up with our final thought here. Let's see if there's any questions that you have. Teresa has the microphone and there you go. What kind of do the little Oprah know? Jerry Springer, maybe a little Oprah kind of thing. You're all right. And we're going to take about ten minutes. So hang with us on that as we finish up. Anybody have a question that you would like to ask that we can discuss about knowing our name and God's unique will in our lives? It took about one or two brave souls yesterday to get us started.

So if you think you might have a question, jump in there. There's one right back there. Let's give this man a hand for getting it started. All right. There you go. That's what we needed.

Speaker 4:

Yeah, I was kind of wondering, like when you left for God's will and stuff, and sometimes you look and there's like different options you can go like, but you don't see God keeping you away from either one's. Like you have a couple out there and you don't know which way to go. What do you do? All your best preference or?

Rick:

That's a great question, I think, but I bet there's seventy five percent of this room would've wanted to ask that question. Thank you. Yeah. All right. I'll answer and then Theresa May want to [inaudible] theology, and this is just the Rick Dunn way of thinking about this. God, if we're walking with a heart to hear him, if we're willing to serve him with the very best, we're listening for the truth. And we come to the place where we see that there's consistency in our character that Teresa talked about in our serving, in our loving. There's consistency can be lived out in one of two or three different ways. And he's not moving us with guardrails towards one way or the other. Then I think he finds great pleasure in saying, Rick, this one's on you. Make the decision the way I would make the decision, think about what's important, think about what's valuable and then step out. And you know what, son? If you step out and later find out, that probably wasn't the best decision. I'm not going to squash you. I'm not going to say, you idiot, what are you doing that for? I'm going to say I understand that. Let them show you something else, because sometimes I would say this most of the time in my life. God's path from point A to point C is not

straight through B, it's usually A1, A2, B2 to B, it's kind of like this because God is more interested in who I become and what I do.

And I am more when I have students come to me and say I don't know what my major should be, I don't know where I should go to college, it's like God's not speaking to me here. I say this to them, it is more important how you make the decision than the decision that you make, because who you are will go everywhere with you. So learn to listen, learn to take responsibility for your decision. And don't be don't be afraid to find out that wasn't the best decision later, because God's not going to punish you with that. He may teach you something with that. So my answer is, I think you got a lot of freedom in that if you really played it out in those kinds of ways. And it may be that. Let me just give you one more point on this. And I won't belabor it. Give you one more important point. When you try something and it doesn't work out, do not assume that that could not have been God's will. Sometimes God takes you to places that don't work out because that's the best way he can teach you where he wants you to go. So that's the way I process through it, and I feel a lot of freedom to walk with him and move where he wants me to go, and I figure he's a big enough God if he needs to speak something else, he'll say it.

Theresa:

I don't have a whole lot to add to that other than I think theologically we get God's will as if there is it is a thing and we've got to find it. And if we don't find it, then we're missing out on the real thing. And I think God's will is about relationship with him. And as long as we're walking in authentic relationship with him. I think there are specific times we talked about that a little bit

this morning when God used our circumstances in Illinois to bring us to a situation, Knoxville, Tennessee, that wouldn't have been on our radar screen and we probably in our own humanity wouldn't have thought of and God used some some directing, but we had no idea. And one of the things we were sharing with the leadership class today was that, you know, we just got a sense that God was moving. And so we said, OK, Lord will move. And that. And I think that had we chosen any number of things along the way, that God would have accomplished his purposes in that. But as we walked out just a step at a time, you know, he directed.

Rick:

Great question. Another question? That back there doesn't look like I'm going to send back. The questions are in the back.

Speaker 5:

My question for you is, what if they don't have those two decisions? I have a friend that is extremely she's one of the most Christ-centered people I know, and she has been desperately asking God to show her what to do with her life or to show her some direction. And she just doesn't feel like God's talking to her at all. And I've been trying to encourage her, but she just seems to be extremely depressed. What would you say to someone that doesn't seem to have decisions?

Rick:

Yeah, I really and that's such an important and relational question that I want to be careful that I don't sound like a cliché on this one. So I'm going to say I'm going to walk away from this and think, gosh, I didn't say nothing to racial profiling. Some color. Here's my thought on that. Is when we find ourselves getting depressed. And struggling in that way, it's usually because something's blocking our goal and in that situation, what it feels like is I'm willing to do God's will, I'm going to get where he wants me to go, and he's standing in the way. And why isn't he speaking to me? And in that situation, I would say you change your goal and your goal changes from trying to figure out what he wants you to do to just being in relationship with him and enjoying that and doing what you know to be as well. And if he's silent on something, then maybe what he's trying to teach you to do is to how to make decisions on your own and find blessing and safety and comfort in him so that your anxiety level doesn't get so strong about decisions that I really believe sometimes God is silent of leading us because he wants us to take steps on our own that are necessary for our growth.

And I'll just tell you, I'm just honest with you. When I accepted the job and understand, I'm very happy where I am and God's used that I don't think I have time to talk about, but that God is really used it. But I did not. I told the church. I told them why they should not hire me. I do not want this job. I'm only coming because I think it's God's will. And they said, well, we'll find you something else along the way. That's how bizarre this thing was. Right when I got on the phone and said, I will accept that job, I almost threw up because I thought that I was supposed to be a seminary professor and I had done everything to do that. And I couldn't believe what God was doing. But God used that because he wanted to teach me something about what life really means.

And it's not Rick Dunn's successful career. It's Rick Dunn being the son of God, the father. That's what it took for him to teach me how to do that. So that's been my experience with that.

Theresa:

The only thing I'd add to that is I don't think God got most often speaks when we move. And so you say that God, most God most often speaks to us as we move. I think that it is a dangerous thing to only pray for God and I don't know the situation of the person you're talking about, but but if we are just praying, God, show us your will. Show us what you want us to do and then we sit. It's very seldom that God audibly speaks or writes on the wall, God most typically speaks to us and reveals his will as we step, as we move along the way, either through our circumstances, through other people that we encounter. And so, again, kind of going back to that list that I talked through today, you know, where are your passions? God often will direct his will through those.

What are your circumstances right now if you've got right in front of you something you don't have to wonder whether what should I serve? Should I love well, should I? You know, those are real obvious things. Walk in what you know, asking and seeking, praying. But but be walking. Don't sit passively. That's a huge piece. And it's bad theology to just think that we're going to just sit and wait. And because God doesn't usually speak that way.

Rick:

Then got another question, so. One more. Yes, right up here. Can you just do this one more and then we'll close out for today because it's close to three. Right here, could you raise your hand?

Speaker 6:

With failing to value your own journey, um, I know I've come through times, I've taken the, um, the nontraditional route when it comes to college and different things like that. And, um, there's different times where I can see the lessons and what God taught me. But it's a constant fight of dealing with other people's reactions. And how do you get past that and really value the journey? I'm sorry, without getting caught up in other people's reactions to where you are, the failures or the ways you went about it?

Theresa:

None of us are islands unto ourselves, and so it is impossible not to be affected if people around you are giving you negative feedback about what your journey's looked like. In other words, you shouldn't have done it this way if you had done it different. You know, it's hard not to take that in. And that's a reality. We're human. We can't get away from being affected by the applause or lack thereof of people in our lives that that's not a realistic thing. But are we controlled by it becomes the real issue. And we do have to have if you don't have anybody in your life who's supporting and validating and encouraging you, that's a long, hard road and we really have to seek that out. That's where I think counseling becomes if you really have a complete lack in your life and some of us do, we don't have anybody check it. If you come from families where they're completely non supportive, maybe abusive families or where you grew up, we're being supportive wasn't a part of the family system. Sometimes you have to go to a counseling. Um,

setting, and you've got that right here available on your campus to begin to hear those kinds of words and how to build them in your life because you don't have the skills to know how to build that because it was never modeled for you. And it's something that we do learn.

But if you have those people that you that those, um, three or four people in your life who have walked like that with you, believe in you, care about you, let those two be the stronger voices. It's not that you won't wrestle with the negative feedback. That's impossible. But, um, it's which ones do out of control you and to determine you that become the real issue.

Rick:

That's great. And I think that the lesson that we can take from this is that you all have a tremendous. Partnership with God in helping one another hear his name for you. In other words, as a community of Biola, in your classrooms, your dorms or apartments, wherever you may live, you actually have the privilege. And I would tell you the responsibility to speak truth to each other in a way that helps one another. Hear God's name for you. So when you tear down, when you help the enemy accuse. When you make fun of and ridicule. It's powerful, it's arrows to the heart, and when you speak words of encouragement or in your close relationships, you speak hard words of conflict and confrontation. But they're really loving. They're not about slamming and blaming because you're concerned and care about the person. It's powerful.

It's also powerful when as a community, you respect God's process in each other's life. And I want to go back to what you just said. You know, sometimes - we were talking about this at lunch lunchtime. Sometimes on this campus, it's hard to get alone and by yourself. And that's OK to get alone and by yourself, it's OK to have the solitude, encourage one another in that solitude, if you see somebody getting too busy and too crazy, say, hey, I'm concerned about you. Are you getting any time by yourself with God or you getting face time with God? Saying those things can make a huge difference and encouraging that and respecting that. And ultimately, it's going to come back to and I know I don't we don't mean to sound like a broken record, but it's just the universe God's created ultimately is going to come back to you having a few people around you who are able to see you for who you are and speak that into your life and then for you to be able to speak that back into their lives, that's really going to help you find your name.

But the world that you live in, our culture, will tell us that it's all about success and beauty and performance and making it and all those things. And what we've been trying to say about the red pill the last two days, it's it's all about knowing who he is, knowing him, knowing you and sharing that relationship with others. That is the only thing that brings depth and meaning and value to life. Why do people love to win sports championships? Because the feeling of the team doing it together. Why do people love to be in bands and choirs together? Because the experience of doing it together and doing something meaningful. Why do people love mission trips more than going to classes? Because on a mission trip or stretching and learning and growing together. And why is it that when you watch a funny movie or someone speaks and they say a joke, that you look at the other person next to you to laugh? Because you were made to

share the most fun and the most difficult things of life with other people and with God, and that's how we make our impact on the world. And you've got a whole campus of people that you can do it with. I think that the only thing that I'd want to leave you with is. I don't want you to stay self focused. Hear the calling on your life, if you're the one gift of the whole September the 11th thing, was that we realized that we're in a battle.

And, um. I think the gift to us as believers is not to become a lot. The challenge is to not become lulled into complacency and peace time, but to realize that you're in a battle, a very real battle, and that you are called to be a warrior in that if you really get a hold of that, one of the most amazing dynamics that I watch happen in our country, I'm sure you did, too, was all the nonessentials that went by the wayside.

You had Democrats and Republicans standing together. How many in your lifetime have you seen that? Know, I certainly have not people of faith in our city, people of every faith coming together. The differences didn't matter anymore because we needed a God and and we knew the same God in that matter and we needed to love one another. Well, in the midst of that, a lot of the nonessentials fade away when we really understand who we are and what we're called to.

And the danger is when we lose sight of that, because then we forget who we are. We forget what we're here for. And who has called us? It closes in. Lord it out in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ the savior. We thank you that we have the true God and father that we worship and love. You're so thankful that we belong to you and sons and daughters and we don't want to live and stepchildren. Of a distant parent.

We've been adopted, we've been owned, we've been embraced, we've been empowered, we've been named. By the Lord and king of the universe and nobility runs through our spiritual blood. So, Lord, help us make the impact that we're called to make and to settle for nothing else, nothing less and nothing more than the will of God in our lives, and then help us to have the freedom and the rest in you to make choices within that will that you give to us.

And Lord, I would pray for Violet's campus that it would be a place that as this community is built, it moves out into the world with passionate humility to change the world, father, and to confront the needs that are out there. And Lord, help us not be so self focused that we shrink back into trying to take care of ourselves when we're meant to be taken care of in you and community so that we can go out and give.

Dunn: Pursuing Impact

That hearing that needs to take place in the world, it does not know you, Lord, call us out for a vision of the battle that's in front of us and make us mighty warriors and humble servants in the name of Jesus, Amy. Thank you all. Have a great afternoon.