

Growing in Christ

By Alistair Begg

Announcer:

If you can all take your seats and quiet down, we'll go ahead and get this session started. Let's start real quick with a little prayer, father, we thank you just for this this session, a chance to come together with our brothers and sisters and to learn about you and focus on you, Lord, and a chance to take a break from the normal school and academics and just rest and who you are. Father, we thank you for pastor begging for bringing him here. Pray that you would just speak through him as he opens your word and teaches us today in your name. We are pretty packed out. So if you're sitting on the floor, if you can make sure that you leave aisles open for people to walk and we'll be good. As far as that goes, I have the privilege of introducing to you our speaker day who really doesn't need very much of an introduction, as both Ron and Dr. Gaines have butchered him pretty severely.

He is from Cleveland. He is a head pastor, senior pastor there in Ohio. He has a radio show program called Truth for Life on Keila. And it's at about eight 00, five and ninety nine point five on the radio, about 5:00 in the morning. You can listen to him on the weekdays and that's about it. So I'm going to introduce you now. Pastor Alistair Begg, if you would, give him a warm welcome.

Begg:

This is an intelligence test, um, that I'm just failing, um, because the things set up, it set up the wrong way around from the way my shirt opens, this is set up for a lady. OK, so far, so good, I would be really encouraged by this crowd if I hadn't seen on the thing that you have to attend eight out of 10. So any immediate feelings of instantaneous gratification that I had have been immediately eroded by looking on the air and realizing that you had to clock in. But at least I suppose I should be encouraged that you clocked in here as opposed to clocking in somewhere else. I can't tell you how much I regard it as a privilege to come and be given the opportunity to speak in these particular sessions.

The longer I go in life and the more invitations that I receive, I'm trying to learn to be as selective as I can. And there's two things that I've determined that I will say yes to, and that is to have the opportunity to speak to students and to have the opportunity to speak to pastors. Not that the others are beyond my interest or concern because they're not. But if I'm establishing priorities, I regard these as a priority. And as long as I have the privilege of a listening group of students, I regarded as of high significance because the multiplicative impact of your lives in the coming years is quite staggering, far more so than many of you would even understand or even be prepared to accept.

So in moving around the campus, I'd be glad to talk with any of you who want to talk and please don't walk past me. I mean, you don't have to all flock around me, but I mean, you can walk past me if you want, but don't be definite about approaching me because I'll be glad to hear about you. And that's that's the reason that I'm here now in the program, it says that I'm going to expound the 15th chapter of John beginning now and finishing tomorrow afternoon that I said I would do because whenever it was months ago, they wanted titles.

And so in order to get everybody off my back, I gave them those three titles. I didn't then know anything about John 15. And as of right now, as of right now, I don't have much of a clue about it any more than I had then. So I but they got their titles and they wrote them in. So they were happy. And I told my secretary, just give them anything at all and get them off the phone and we'll go wherever we want.

So I'd like to invite you to turn to the Book of James in Chapter one. You understand I'm being a little facetious in what I said. James, chapter one and verse twenty to. Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves, do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror. And after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like, but the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does.

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God, our father accepts is pure and faultless. Is this to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world? Now, we're at this particular portion of scripture here this afternoon because going deeper into Jesus Love, which is the theme under which these meetings have been convened, is directly related to our willingness to allow the word of God to dwell in us.

Richling that there is a direct correlation between the hearing and the obeying and the applying of the word of God and a genuine, deepening, growing experience of the love of Christ. Indeed, so much so that no one can claim realistically to be growing in a love for Christ without simultaneously deepening in a love for and in a submission to the Word of God. It very possible for us to conceive of the love of the Lord Jesus in a way that is so sort of existential or is so immediate in terms of how we feel that we may be tempted to believe that we can experience it, as it were, in a corner in isolation from the instruction of the word of God.

And so since that is the case, I want to begin here just now and then follow up, not in James, but follow up later on this evening when I have the privilege again and then tomorrow. Now, let me begin by posing a question for you rhetorically. Do you think that it is possible to become sermonized sermon proof? Do you think it is possible to reach the stage in your life where no

matter who comes to speak, no matter what they say, no matter what portion of scripture they may turn to, when you sit out and listen to it, it's like water off a duck's back.

It is like rain falling on tile that is completely impervious to it and taking on no water at all. The obvious answer to that question is yes, and indeed there is nowhere where it is easier to become more surman proof than in being. Introduced to successions of sermon's. And that is the very issue that James is addressing here when he acknowledges the condition that I'm describing as not simply being a possibility, but being an actuality. The kind of individuals who have put themselves in a position where they are self deceived, the way in which you and I listen to the word of God is vitally important.

Now, I see that as someone who has to speak the word of God and also listen to it at the same time. You understand that I listen to the word as well as speak the word because the word is spoken to us all. Both the speaker and the here, because it is God who chooses to speak through his word to each of our hearts. And that's why it is also possible for those who become teachers of the word to become impervious to the very things that they teach to, to imagine a standard far higher than what they're living to, and then to convey this imagined standard to their listeners, thereby discouraging their listeners who can't aspire to this high standard and make an ally out of themselves.

In the speaking of it, because they know and God knows that what they're actually calling people to is something that they themselves do not experience. They are urging people to a dimension of spiritual geography that they themselves do not know. So at the very essence of it, we address this issue of our listening to the word, when Solomon encourages his son in relationship to the gaining of wisdom, he gives to him principles that are apropos when we think about the way in which we listen to the Bible being taught.

And in Proverbs two, he says, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding and if you look for it as for silver and search for it, as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. In other words, if you are prepared to be diligent in your search. If, however, you are not, if you are superficial in your interest, if you are casual, if you are indifferent, then it will be your experience progressively that the word of God is increasingly irrelevant to you.

And so James is in introducing us immediately to this most devastating danger, the danger of self-deception. Look at verse 22. Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. The idea that because I was present, because I got it stamped or whatever you do in here, because I attended, I listen to the word and there is benefit in listening to the word. And I was there and I heard something and therefore all as well. No, because the subtle area to which he calls our

attention is the error of becoming hearer's, only becoming, if you like, Sturman Taster's, spiritual fast food connoisseurs, gourmet specialists, those who are able to say, oh, I heard that before.

I heard him before. I heard him on the radio and I got that tape. Yes, I know that. And we're like these kind of people who are always poking around with their food, but they never, ever eat any of it. You go to the restaurant with them and they're always nibbling on other people's plates. But when it's all over, they give the whole blooming thing back. They haven't had a square meal themselves, but they've got comments on it all. That's very good for you. Yes, I. I heard I read about that in the eating well magazine and so on, but they themselves and never seem to eat the stuff at all. They just talk about it. And there is no nutritional value to the meals that are set before them. These are the kind of individuals who often become swollen with knowledge, they look like tadpoles, they have huge, big heads and tiny little bodies, and they go around and if you squeeze their head, it's kind of like like that and you can squeeze pieces of information out of them.

But there's kind of weird looking people because they have become swollen in their own conservativeness. Yes, I know that. I don't need to hear that. I know that. I know that. Very good. But look at your tiny little tail and your pathetic little body. Now, this is real simple stuff, there has to be simple, goodness gracious, it's it's two 20 in the afternoon. This is a bad time to be asked to speak at a worse time to be asked to listen. Especially on such a beautiful day, if I was that teacher, I'd take this class outside immediately. To the beach, we would be gone, you do

some evangelism, but we can't do that because we're supposed to do this, so I better just stay doing what I'm supposed to do.

But you don't have to be a genius. When we listen and do nothing about implementing what we have had, we deceive ourselves as to any any profit that we might think we are receiving from the preaching of the word of God. So he says, don't merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. And it's not simply a cult activity. You will notice that if it was simply a cult activity, you would say, do not merely listen to the word and so you deceive yourselves, do something.

So people say, well, I've got to do something. So they go out and do something and they do something, says do what it says. In other words, he issued a call. To habitually submit to and comply with the requirements of the word of God, you want to go deeper into the love of Christ. Then let me tell you, you must submit habitually to the requirements of the word of God. The establishing of holy habits is directly related to a meaningful discovery of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So when you meet individuals who say, well, I'm not getting anything out of the word of God, we know that we need to make two immediate checks. And if I am the individual saying I'm not getting very much out of the word of God, I need to check these two things. One, the soil of my

soul, the soil of my soul. Now, I'm not a farmer or a farmer's son, but I do know that seed sown that is the same seed from the same bag does not necessarily produce the same product.

On account of the nature of the soil in which it sown, so if the soil is alkaline too much or too acidic or whatever it is, it has an impact on the way in which the seed is prospered. Now, that's the verses before us, which we're not going to get into, but it tells you why you can never really make a go of it. If you go to church on the Lord's day with a filthy mind or an angry heart, if you fill your mind with garbage for six days and then expect to get it flushed instantaneously on the first day of the week, you got another thing coming.

Get rid of all moral filth, the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. So a dirty mind and angry heart. And a proud spirit will prevent the benefit of the word of God. And if you think about it, when there have been times in each of our lives when we have wrestled with any or all of these things, we've known that we go and the person can be a wonderful speaker. We go and everybody else seems to be encouraged. We come out and we hear them speaking about it, and it's absolutely zero for us. Now, it's one thing if we understand ourselves to be in the position and are concerned about it, it is a far more devastating thing. If we deceive ourselves into believing that, having heard it, we're actually living it. James says you've got to look out for that. Now he uses a picture that is very, very helpful, in fact, James is a wonderful illustrator of material.

He uses all kinds of pictures, the bit in a horse's mouth, the rudder of a ship and so on. And here he says, think about it in relationship to the mirror. Now, all of us have used a mirror. Now, let me take that back. I'm seeing some of you, most of us today, most of us looking at no one in particular. Most of us today have used a mirror. Some of us should have stayed in front of it a little longer. And others of us, having seen what was going on inside of it, should have dealt with the problem. But somehow or another, we walked away. We did. We did. If you like a James on it, we looked at it and we said, oh, goodness gracious, look at that. And then somebody said, Would you get that for me? We turned around and got that. And now our friends are standing, talking to us, saying, oh, goodness gracious, look at that.

Because having seen what we really looked like in the mirror, we went away and did something else before we tackled the problem. Now, just for your interest, the mirrors of James's time were generally small, handheld, polished metal, bronze, silver, or if you had plenty of cash, even gold, there were no glass mirrors until the 13 hundredths, which, of course, I'm sure you all knew each other going knew that you that your friends going, liar, liar, you did not.

But you now do. You're going to impress people with that trivia. You know, most of the mirrors were actually metal up until about 30 in hundreds. And your friends are going, yeah, well, take a look in it, but it would do you good. Now, what's the picture? The picture is that the mirror is the

word of God. When you look at the word of God, you find out what you're really like. If you read Augustine's Confessions, you'll find in Book three, Section one that when the word of God you remember it came to him, take up and read, take up and read.

And he took it up and read it. And in the course of reading the word of God, he then makes this striking statement. He says to the Lord, You took me from behind my own back where I had put myself all the time that I preferred not to see myself. Isn't that an amazing picture? You got to be really bright to come up with that idea. You took me from behind my own back. I'd like to see somebody get behind his own back. But the picture is graphic. I was hiding behind my own back so that I would not see myself and you took me from there and you set me before my face that I might see how vile I was. And I saw myself and I was horrified. Now, what had happened to him, the middle of the word of God had confronted him with what he was really like, and having confronted that, although he had been hiding, as he put it, behind his own back.

He was at a point of great departure. But A is absolutely useless when we refuse to take notice of the truth that it reveals and when we fail to implement the change that it demands. The same way when our approach to the scriptures is just a casual gaze, gaze, rather than a consistent looking into it, then we will be poverty stricken. I can make this I can impress this on you any more strongly than this young people. If you are not going to be people of the book, forget being strong Christians.

It's not going to happen. If you think you can love Christ and ignore your Bible, you're crazier than a hoot owl. It's not going to happen. Don't let anybody tell you it's a legalism to read your Bible every day. It's not a legalism to eat your breakfast every day. It's common sense. It's not a legalism to brush your teeth every day. It's vital. So don't fall into this trap. I don't read my Bible every day. I'm not going into that legalistic stuff, you know, I just he walks with me and he talks with me. Oh, yeah. Bright boy. How does he talk with you audibly? Come off it. He talks with you in here. So I'll believe you when I see you looking in the mirror and I see you changing as a result of doing what you've seen in the mirror. And you have every legitimacy for judging my own profession of Christ in the exact same way.

Not does he know the Bible, but does he, when he has seen himself in the Bible, bring himself by the enabling of the spirit of God into line with the truth that he has just discovered? Or is he like the man who looks at his face in the mirror, goes away and forgets what he looks like? Years ago I was I used to visit all the time in the afternoons. I was an assistant pastor and you had to take flowers to old ladies on Mondays because they took all the flowers from the front of the church and broke them up and gave them to the assistant pastor, which was me.

And I had to go around with a big bunch of flowers and I was driving in the car and I noticed as I parked the car that I had a huge orange thing sticking on my nose. When I see an orange thing, I

mean, a big like someone had taken a magic marker and drawn an orange of my nose. And I can't remember what happened. But I think and I think I went to open the door and I saw it. And then the guy blew his horn at me. And then then I just stopped to bless him for a little while and and give him encouragement in his life and some something which is a synonym for lost my temper and showed it again. And something happened. And I and I close the door and got the flowers and went in and gave them to the lady and spoke to her and did all this stuff and prayed with her and they'd all like this.

And then I got back in and I realized that I did the whole performance with a huge big orange thing hanging from my nose because I looked in the mirror. I forgot what I looked like and I went on my way. Some of you don't know how ridiculous you look. So that's not very nice to say. Well, let me turn it around. Some of us don't know how ridiculous we were. And you know why now, because we don't have a murder, because we looked in the mirror, we forgot what we looked like and we went away, we said, we're going to take care of you.

We never took care. And we came back and we looked just the same again. I don't really like mirrors. I've got to tell you that I am not big on mirrors anymore in the hotel where I'm staying, they have mirrors in the most unbelievable places I can go into it and a mixed audience. But they got mirrors in places they shouldn't have mirrors. They they are places you can see yourself doing things you don't want to ever see yourself do. Why do you put a mirror on the back of the door? I don't know. Directly in front of the toilet. I have never had AIDS. I would I was sitting

looking at myself like, this is disgusting. What what what is this about? Who's the interior designer in here who came up with that idea? Now in that case, I want to immediately forget what I look like. But there's other stuff, you know, just the normal full length mirror you see yourself.

You know, you're now in the Abercrombie and Fitch, you know, extra large boxers, you know, and you still get things that hang over the end of them. I mean, the only way that I can get my boxers now to look and like reasonable is if I pull them up to about here, because so far I don't have anything hanging over from about this point. But the further down you go, it's all there. And I look at that in the mirror and I want to immediately forget what I look like.

Now, what I really need to do is what my daughter told me today. She looked at me, said, hey, dad, maybe a few sit ups would be nice. So I thanked her for encouragement. Quite to run, they say that I had told her I'd never bring her to California again. That's not true. If you get the point right? Yes, of course you do, you're fed up with a point. OK, let's go.

Let's go to another point. Let's try another point. We very that point there is no question that point is buried. The danger of self-deception, deception. That was the first point. This clock is still at eight, 30, incidentally, I'm going to assume it's eight thirty in the evening. They'll make

me go quicker. Now, that's the danger of self-deception. Verse 22, verse twenty three, verse twenty four, then he goes in verse twenty five and he provides us with an important spiritual equation, an important spiritual equation, and here it is summarized herein.

Plus obedience equals blessing hearing plus obedience equals blessing. Now there are three aspects to this and I'm going to go through them swiftly. Because, man, is it hot in this place. Yes. All right, verse twenty five, it involves looking intently, but the man who looks intently into the perfect law, the Greek, for those of you who care it is for Paraka says. And it is the same word that is used of Peter and Mary going to the tomb and peering inside.

It wasn't that they were just going started as they were walking down the streets of Jerusalem, no, they went inside and they had a real good look. It is the same word, incidentally, that is used in First Peter, chapter one and verse 12 concerning what the Angels desire to look into it concerning the nature of salvation. He says, even the Angels desire to look into these things. In other words, it is hoped the group says it is in order that they might look intently into them and find out exactly what is going on.

In other words, this is the individual who takes the mirror in both of his hands and he holds it and gazes at it until he is gripped by what he sees. Which is a marked contrast from the individual

there in verse twenty four. In other words, it is the absolute opposite of the casual passing window shopping approach. It involves coming face to face with truth investigators looking into it, ensuring that we understand its relevance and its practical application. Let me say this to you, the standard of application and the seriousness that we give to study in other spheres of our lives computer class, business class, French class, literature class, whatever else it is, the standard of application and seriousness that we give to study in other spheres must be the minimum standard that we are prepared to give to the study of the word of God.

Because if you think about it, if you for those of you do science, you got that periodic table of elements down about which I know nothing except that there is such a thing. But when you took that apart and you memorized it, or when you memorize irregular verbs at the end of your French textbook and you immersed yourself in them so that you're able to identify them immediately, can you imagine the impact of taking that same level of endeavor and applying it to the study of the Bible?

Now, that is that is the notion here they are the people who look intently into it, what are they looking into? They're looking into the perfect law that gives freedom. There's no way that you get a distorted image when you look into this, it is absolutely perfect. It's a law insofar it is the authoritative body of God's truth upon which Christian faith is built. It gives freedom. It is the freedom that comes when we come into bondage to it, because it is this law which what commands us and empowers us and it sets us free from the pool of our own nature.

It takes us via the hard part. We have obedience into new experiences of liberty. Someone says the believer is not free from the obligation to do God's will, as revealed in his word, but love works in him, the desire to do the father's will. Men and women are free when they want to do what they ought to do. That's when you're free. You're truly free when you want to do what you ought to do. But when you want to do what you ought not to do, no matter how apparently liberating that may appear, that is actually an invitation to bondage.

An invitation to liberty is when I want to do what I ought to do. And that's what you see here. Now they look into it intently and also you will notice that they continue to do this, but the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom notice and continues to do this. In other words, there's not intermittent Christianity, it's not an isolated act of obedience. It's not a glandular approach. Well, I haven't been feeling like it lately and been feeling like looking intently into it lately.

Oh, really? Yeah. How have you been feeling about pressure lately? Well, you know, I haven't been feeling that much either. You know, I have a worship, public worship. How are you feeling on that? No, you know, I haven't really felt real felt strong about that, about witnessing the great commission. You know, I haven't really been feeling that either. So what is what is this, a

glandular condition? Is that what Christianity is, a glandular condition? Let me give you something, if you only and Charles Wesley prove this because he determined that he would not share his faith in Christ with another person until he felt like it, and he went for five weeks and never told anybody about Christ and suddenly the lights went on for him. If I only do this when I feel like it, I'm never going to do it because I so seldom feel like. I don't go to church on Sundays because I feel like appetite.

I go to church on Sundays because I ought to go to church on Sundays so that I can get recalibrated. I don't particularly like the pastor of our church, but that's by the point. That's by the way I can get over that. I'm not sure he really likes me either. But it's continuous, it's a long obedience in the same direction. It's not a little emotional bursts. Take my life and let it be a little and then and then out the door and off to whatever it is you were doing anyway, you know? And then back and then a few weeks later, I'll take my life and then off to the next thing again, and you wonder why you're not a spiritual giant, you're a spiritual. That's what you are because you're committed to and with intermittent bursts of my life. You want to know how I know so much about this? I have this T-shirt. I've done all this stuff. I've run this race. I'm in this race. Less having preach to others, I myself become a castaway.

So is it necessary for you to hear this this afternoon? I don't know if it's necessary for you to hear it, but I jolly well know it's necessary for media. Because if people can become professional listeners. You can sure become a professional talker. Looks intently, continues to do so, and

notice doesn't forget what he heard. But does it, in other words, looking and doing or synonymous? Freedom and blessing are intrinsically linked to the doing of God's will.

So there's a spiritual equation. First of all, you have a danger of self-deception, kidding yourself because you heard it, you did it when you didn't, then an important spiritual equation, when I hear it, follow it with obedience, that it brings blessing. And then finally, three tests of real religion, which come in verse twenty six and twenty seven, I hope you can see that what I'm saying is actually in the Bible. Can you see that?

I'm actually in the text here. That's important. So you can read it for yourselves afterwards. It's interesting, isn't it, that James uses the word religion if anyone considers himself religious. You tend to spend so much time explaining to people that we're not religious, you know, well, we're not actually religious, you know, we are. Yes, we are. We're religious. This is religious. Religion is basically the manner in which men think they may honor God and worship him.

That's religion, the way in which we honor God and worship him. So James says, let me tell you, if you think that you're honoring God and worshiping him and you're absent in these areas, you said you better take a long, hard look at your faith. Now, don't misunderstand versus twenty six and twenty seven. Because people take versus twenty six and twenty seven and they try to

substitute often benevolence, particularly in verse twenty seven for biblical Christianity. When James says that he is telling us what religion is, he's not telling us everything that religion is, you understand it is not the totality of what religion is. When he says if anyone considers himself religion religious and doesn't keep a tight rein on his tongue, it isn't so. But religion that God our father accepts is pure and faultless is this. This is not a totality of what it is. This is a part of it. So three tests of a genuine.

Mirror image. Looking intently. Obligatory. Christian faith number one, a controlled tongue. A controlled don. You said, well, I'm a Christian because I'm such and such a day, I did this and I went there and I held up my hand and I walked down here and I wrote it in the flyleaf of my Bible. There you are. And our friends said, well, why do you care so much? If that is true, why are you such a slender.

Why are you a flatterer? Why do you see things to people's faces that you would never see behind their backs? This is where flattery is saying something to somebody's face you never see behind their back. Because behind your back, you're saying the guy's a bum to their face, you're going, hey, wonderful, great job like that. Let me tell you something flattery is like perfume. You can sweat, snip it, but don't swallow it. A controlled turn now is going to come to this in Chapter three, and we'll never get to that.

But it's so striking, isn't it? We get to chapter. These are not many of you should presume to be teachers because, you know, we will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone has never a fault in what he says, be a perfect man able to keep his whole body in check. And then he goes on, he says, the tongue is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire and is itself set on fire by health.

Why do we tell lies and what is the vehicle that we use to tell lies our tongues? That's why you see, when Christ changes in life, he changes the way we use our tongues. Some fifty eight, verse three, says even from birth, the wicked go straight from the womb, they are wayward and speak lies. It's interesting that when there's so much lying going on in our country. You get a little guy and he's old enough now to talk for the first time and his mother leaves him in the room and he takes the the the little rose glass and and gives it one of these, you know, and she comes back in and the coffee table is awash in the roses lying on its side.

She goes, Jeremy, did you knock over the vase? Jeremy, there's only one person in the room. Jeremy, I don't think you're telling the truth, to me. Who knocked over the vase? Another person. Another person in Jeremy, where is he now? He left. And here's this little guy, you know, he's not let's say he's not knee high to a grasshopper and he's lying through his teeth. He's just

brilliant. I just read a psychological journal which said, no, it was not a psychological journal, it was Child magazine quoting a psychological journal which said that the early lies of a child are very important dimension of its spiritual, of its of its emotional development.

So instead of smacking your child boughten for telling lies, you're supposed to sit around and go, Oh, Jeremy, I'm so glad to here in this very important moment in your development here. And let me just congratulate you on doing such a great job. And if you keep this up, son, maybe one day you become the president of the United States. OK, don't tell me you're a Christian if you don't have a controlled tongue, perfectly controlled, no, that's why he says in Games three, if anybody's got perfect control of their tongue, they're perfect.

Man How many perfect men have you ever met? None. How many of you ever heard of one Jesus of Nazareth? OK, but the fact is a controlled tongue. Secondly, a caring heart, a caring heart. If you consider yourselves to be religious, he says, and don't keep a tight rein on your tongue, you deceive yourself and your religion is worthless, he says. But let me tell you what it's like. God reveals himself. He is the father of the fatherless and he is a defender of the widow. And when he adopts, as is his children, into his family, he expects us to bear the family likeness. And here in orphans and widows, there are two groups which symbolize human need. I mean, these are is expressive of human need is anything you can find kids that have no mom and dad and widows that are bereft of the support system that they needed for the living of their lives, he says.

Now, listen, if you genuinely have been looking in the mirror and being transformed by the truth of the word of God, one, your tongue will be increasingly sanctified and to your heart will be increasingly. So a controlled tongue, a caring heart, and finally an uncompromised testimony, an uncompromised testimony to look after orphans and widows in their distress and notice and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. In other words, the maintenance of personal holiness.

The challenge of the boat being in the water without the water being in the boat. The standards of our lives being the standards of heaven worked out in an environment on our. And the key to it all is regular exposure to God's word, accompanied by a true obedience to God's word. There you have it. A great danger. Being self deceived. A wonderful equation. Careful looking. With increasing application. Progress. And three little tests. To see how we're doing.

My tongue increasingly controlled. Is my heart increasingly Sture? And there's my life.

Increasingly, Holly. I go to the exercise club not as much as I should. Obviously, when I go there, I see those photographs of people that I will never be. They have muscles in places that I don't even have places, and I look at them. And if just looking at them. You know, you could, like, transmute yourself and just sort of absorb it. I'd be like, oh. But I look at them. And then I

look at all this thinking equipment that you have to. Then I look at a Domino's Pizza truck going by and I'm going to. You know what, I really want to be a muscular person, and I'm just going to go and get a pizza and. Come up with a training schedule for. Don't do that in this we. Don't do that. The devil's favorite word is tomorrow.

Start today. Spiritual milestones, spiritual crossroads. You become a sermon member of Biola, had it all, listen to it all, know it all. Nothing ever stirs your heart. I'll tell you what, your future's looking good and. That's a lot to soften up your heart. Give you a hunger for his word. And who knows? What you will do with your life? Listen, I want to thank you so much for sitting in here all this time, and I'm going to pray with you and for you and then we can leave.

And one day when I'm rich, I'm going to donate a complete air conditioning system to this. And I think I'll go home and sell my BMW and send the money here for a oh, I'm in I'm in my own disorients. Father, thank you for the Bible. Thank you for his clarity. We confess that any confusion is on our end. I pray, Lord, that my words will set forward your desires for our lives rather than hinder them in any way.

Appears not to be self deceived. They were here at. Look intently into it, continue in that. And by your spirit, put it into practice, help us, Lord, to be a help and not a hindrance to each other in

Begg: Growing in Christ

these things, to be urging one another on in the race of life so that when our days are over and we look back down over the corridor of time. We can thank you for an afternoon like today.

In an environment like this where somehow you chose. To start as a fresh. We commit the day to you in Christ's name, amen. Thanks again and you're dismissed.

[End of Recording].