

How to Bear Much Fruit Part 2

By Bruce Wilkinson

Bruce Wilkinson:

I remember teaching college up in Oregon and finding that when a person came back to school, when they were a little bit older, they were altogether different than a student who came right from high school. Like, you know, I went to college right from high school, and then went right to seminary. But I found on the other side of the issue, when you all of a sudden became a teacher, that you notice a tremendous difference among the people who have been out, because all of a sudden they, they know where they are itching, and they know the questions, and they can value the answers to some of the questions that they're asking. And so oftentimes in college, you're not yet-you haven't yet had life experiences because you've been in school all your life. To really know the issues that you're going to wrestle with when you get out. I've thought so many times, I wish I could go back to graduate school now, and uh ask the questions that really are out there.

One of the greatest uh, one of the major reasons I come to these kinds of weeks is not only to minister to you, or try to minister to you, but also to share time with the other speakers. And um, we get together at all-all hours of the day. Any time we're together, we just have a ball. And last night, Earl, and Joe, and myself went out to dinner, and we had a tremendous time. And one of the things we were talking about is, is how few decisions in your life really affect your whole life. There's probably four or five decisions you will make in your life that will affect your whole life. Right before I left to come out here, I'm on a 10 day trip, from here I go to Arizona, and then back to Washington, D.C. for some conventions. And Darlene, my wife, and I were laying in

bed, and we're both trying to emotionally get ready for this trip. You know, it's hard to be gone ten days from your family. And I was trying to let her know how much I loved her, and I just started reminiscing, um, how my life is of value to me, and how much I enjoy it and relish it, because of my marriage to her, and how different my life would have been had I married someone else.

You know, I could have married a lot of people and so could have she. We both loved other people. We both almost married other people. But because we did marry one another and the personalities we each have, we both were convinced that had we not married each other, things would have been very different. She'd have lived near her parents, and um, would have lived in a much more secure situation. And I probably wouldn't have developed the courage to do some of the things that we have been doing. But because of her life and mine, it's changed us. I think one of the other things that is a major changing point, is uh, is the school you go to, the kind of school you go to affects you. You chose Biola. Well, you will have a mark of Biola on you for the rest of your life. I believe it's a good mark, or I wouldn't be here. Had you chosen some other schools, they would have also marked you. You'll leave here with certain values, more in concrete, and certain kind of drives, and uh you are marked because of this school. When you pick a graduate school, whether it be secular graduate school, or seminaries, or whatever else you--or choose not to go, it will also mark you.

Because I went to Dallas Seminary, it has marked me. I'll never be the same. It has marked me, mostly positive and some negative, but it's marked me. And those few decisions impact me for the rest of my life. And I've oftentimes uh thanked the professors at graduate school and

undergraduate school for how that mark continues. I'm trying to deal with another area that I feel will mark you. And when I came, this time, I didn't necessarily pick the typical light, humorous subjects that college kids enjoy. I picked a seriouser one, because I wanted to try to impact some of you more deeply than normal. And so um, I really hope that it does that to you. And I'm trying to deal with your life on a philosophical basis. You know, I remember in college they had a course where I went called the philosophy of missions. And I thought that course was terrible. I felt it was so irrelevant and boring. And it was one of those courses I felt that a college that they required you to go, because it's required, you know. And if it wasn't required, even the teacher wouldn't go. And um, it's funny how at that age when you're in college, you don't truly understand the power of your philosophy.

They--all of you in this room already have a philosophy. And all of your life is an outworking of the philosophy that you have. You might not sit down, most people don't have the self-discipline to do this, to sit down and say, "I'm going to put together my philosophy of life on one or two pages. That's all. And then I'm going to live my life and not allow other people, even the teachers, to change my philosophy of life." I remember when I went to seminary, the first year I allowed the teachers to determine my value system, that some teachers demanded a great deal, and because I wanted good grades, I did a great deal for them. When my value system wasn't attached to it at all. And it wasn't till the second year that I decided that those professors, um, should not have control over my life, that they are there to serve me. And so I rearranged my life and said, "What do I want out of the second year of graduate school?" And my wife and I worked it through, and then I determined that if I wanted to accomplish these kinds of things in

my life, then in this course I'm going to get a C on purpose. On this course, I'm getting a B, on purpose. And this course I'm getting an A plus, on purpose.

And you just decide. And then no matter what the teacher does or says, because that teacher is trying to give his or her values to you, you have to value them and weigh them, and say, do I really need to get a handle on this subject the way I need to get a handle on this subject? For instance, I really wanted to know how to study the Bible for myself. I wanted to come out of Dallas Seminary an expert in it. And therefore, I determined that will be my number one course, and I would take every course it's available, no matter if the teacher was boring or exciting. I took every course. And I aced every course. I took some other courses, and I said, I don't really want to become that proficient in these, but I want to know something about them. I'm going to get a C. I don't want to get anything above a C. If I get above a C, I failed. So I aimed at a C, and I hit a C. And you know what I did? I celebrated.

[Bruce Wilkinson laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

Alright! I made my goal! See, so many times we celebrate over the wrong things. You know, it's a riot. I have yet to have one person ask me the grades I got at Dallas Seminary. I've never--you know, there's one person who asked? You know who that was? My mother.

[Audience laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

It's okay, if you've been given a tremendous amount of intelligence from God, you ought to use it all. And for you, some of you in this room are gifted enough to say, I should get all A's and I should do the other things, too. I have some friends who are like that. I wasn't gifted that way. I was gifted more normally. So for me to get straight A's, I had to say at the same time, less time with my wife, less time with my kids, and a low priority to Christian service. And I wasn't willing to say that. For me to get an A and Hebrew and in Greek in the same semester would have been wrong for me. And it took a long time to understand that. It's the rare person that you and I meet who controls their life, who actually says, "This is what I feel God's calling me to do. And I'm going to do it." And who doesn't allow people, and demands, and teachers, and parents, and boyfriends, and girlfriends to get you off the beam. I challenge you to think about these things, and what I'm really trying to do in this, rather than entertain you, which is a normal thing you do at a college campus as a speaker. You bring your best jokes, your best stories, your lightest talks, and you come and give them. Because, you know, people will laugh and they'll enjoy you.

And um, this is my fourth time here. And this is the first time I came without that goal in mind. I came as a goal, a purpose, of trying to affect a small number of you deeply. Yesterday, if you were here, you probably heard some off the wall kinds of thinking. They were different. I had never heard what I talked about yesterday by anyone else. And in sharing with men and women in the business arena, they had never heard it either. You know, one of the hardest things as a business person in the church today, is the pastor never preaches to the business community. Never. I've never heard one sermon ever to the business people in the church. And yet 90 percent of all the men, and probably 50 percent of all the women are business people. We somehow

separate this concept of spirituality and religion from everything we do the next morning, you know? And it's not meant to be divided. It's meant to be integrated. And it's my prayer with my prayer, was my prayer last night, and I prayed it this morning, that some of you in this room will leave our three sessions with a new sense of integrity in your life. And if you have it, and if you guard it, you'll be so unique in your society that God will bless you and use you in ways you never anticipated being used.

I said yesterday that, that typically in Christian life, we separate our-our work from our religion. And it's almost like we take a pie, and we divide our pie up, you know, you've seen this, and this is my work life, and my family life, and my Christian life. And it's a part, it's a piece of pie. We've also seen the situation that-that that is not integrity, it's not supposed to be pieces of a pie in your life, and you're different in this piece, in this piece, in this piece. That is hypocrisy. That's what Christ hated about the Pharisees. They did not have integrity, even though they knew the Bible better than you'll ever know the Bible, better than I will. They knew the Bible, but they did not put it together. And so typically what we do is we say, don't make pieces of the pie, but draw a circle and put another circle inside, which is Jesus, and then as the pieces of the pie come out, Jesus is the center of each piece. You know, that's not right either. You're not supposed to have pieces of a pie that Jesus is a part of each piece.

[Bruce Wilkinson laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

You ought to be one person, and you ought to be the same. You're to have integrity about your life. You know, when Jesus Christ came, He was so utterly radical. He was, He was shockingly

radical. He was shockingly radical in that He took all the norms of His day in the religious group, and He shattered them all. I don't know of one that He left standing. I'm trying to shatter just one in your life. About a century and a half ago, people had this more clear in their mind. You know, it wasn't-wasn't these great big businesses, that-that's now a part of our life, you know, as you drive them down the freeways, you see all the great big buildings, and everybody has a little room, or the Herman Miller furniture, and their own little telephone, and they do this nice little job. One hundred and fifty years ago, it was hundreds and hundreds of thousands of little little things. Country store, a little farm, a feed store, a hardware store. And it was built upon a person who lived in a little community, who didn't live in an apartment building, that you could be anonymous for 30 years and not know your next door neighbor's name, and not be bothered about it. Everybody knew everybody else.

And there was a lot more integrity in those days as believers who were in church, you know, and their friends saw them, the same guy was the guy down the street who ran the little hardware store. And he would make comments to you as you walked in. How did you enjoy Sunday's sermon as a way of life? And there was a sense of wholeness in people's lives, and in families' lives, that we are missing today. There's a lack of, a sense of uh, pride even, in a rightful sense. There's a lack of it. And what happened over the years is, as time went on, and these things and people came together, they separated out religion and work. And they said this is weekend work, and Wednesday night, and this is all the week, and please don't mix it. And we've accepted that hook, line, and sinker. That's right from the pi. That's right from the pit. Jesus Christ's comments about a believer is you are to be salt right in the middle of the problem. And you are to be light right in the middle. You aren't to take your light, put it under a bushel and set it over here, hoping

that someday somebody will ask you what's under the bushel? But when we go into our typical work situations--

[Bruce Wilkinson laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

--We feel comfortable about taking our-our light, and putting a cap over it starting Monday morning, and taking it off Friday night. That's hypocrisy. That's lack of integrity. That's being something you are not. And they had that concept of being God's representative in their society that we have lost. For instance, the word vocation. You know? I could say to you, what's the vocation you're going into? And then if I stopped and said to you, what is the meaning of the word vocation, you would probably say a job. And then if I said no, no. Think for a minute, what's the meaning of vocation. You know what it means? A vocation came from the root meaning, 'which is to be called by God.' And therefore, one hundred and fifty, two hundred years ago, believers, true believers, had a concept that said--if you can ever break through this in your mind, you'll be forever marked, you'll be different--that not people who go into churches and lead it are the only ones called by God. That every person who ever lived is equally called by God. And that there is no split down the middle between those who, quote, "are called into the ministry" and those who are called into business. That division does not exist anywhere in the Bible. You can't find it.

You can find it in society, but you can't find it in the Bible. There is no split between business and religion. There is one, and you are called, all of us, equally, into the ministry. The ministry of priesthood, universal priesthood. And you are called just as much as everyone around you is,

to bearing fruit. Spiritually. And when Jesus Christ died on the cross and you accepted His death in your behalf. You gave up rights that many of you have forgotten about. You gave up rights to your own life when you received Christ. You said, I am giving up my life back to You in thanksgiving for Your death for me. That's why Paul over and over says, "I am a servant. I am a slave. I have no rights." And therefore, as a servant and as a slave, you have-you have one goal, and that is, do what your master wants you to do. And you must hold in the recesses of your thinking, and way down deep inside of you that God is involved in your life, like John was saying yesterday. You know, the numbers of the hairs on your head. And there is a divineness, a divine vocation for you. And for me. And therefore, no matter what your vocation ends up, you better never, you better never allow yourself to think that God hadn't called you there.

And you better have that same sense of, this is obedience. This is a step of obedience, before you go. It's worldly to think that I'm uh, I'm going to pick the major because I enjoy it, or I'm good at it. Those things are irrelevant, as a believer. What's relevant is, have you sought? Have you hunted? Where is the calling? The second you take over your life and grab it back is the second you start making your own decisions. And your own decisions are, what major I'm going to be, what I'm going to do with my life because I'm not called into the ministry, and since I'm not called into the ministry, I can make my own choices. Hey, you can't divide it like that. That that is not biblical. And so you have to uncover your vocation, your calling. I don't mean you have [unintelligible] in the air, or you go through some mystical experience, because that happens so rare to people. That's a rare thing. Don't seek after it. For God's Spirit will give you a sense of peace in time. And that's what we need to search after. You know, the other thing, not only a vocation, but also a profession.

You know, I could say to you, what is your profession? You can say, I have a major in finance, that's my profession. You know what the word profession means? What do you think it means, to profess? What do you think it meant when they gave that word? Come on. What did it mean? You know it? That's right. It meant to profess Christ, in your calling. And therefore they realized that, I hope you guys are catching-catching this, so much to give at one time, that your job needs to be viewed, as a Christian, as a calling from God. There is no separation of a ministry calling and a non-ministry calling. You can't find it anywhere in scripture. And if you can't, then you better watch out [unintelligible] that concept. It's a great rationalization. The second thing is, follow it now, your calling, your vocation, is in order for your profession. As you evaluate with God all the different opportunities that are open for your calling, the question you want to be asking yourself over and over and over again is, which vocation will give me, and my personality, and my gifts, and my drives, and my dreams, the greatest platform of profession.

See it's altogether different, isn't it? How you view your life as a believer? The world says, pick the one you can be most successful at, the one in which there are many openings in the next 10 years, the ones in which the salary trends are up, and the ones that you pick, you do pretty good in, and pick it. Right? Many of you have made those decisions. I know because I've talked to enough college students to know. It's rare when a person doesn't ask those kinds of questions, and says those things are all temporal, aren't they? Every one of them is temporal. You see, what has happened, as Dr Rod Mocker talked about yesterday, is we have so thoroughly allowed the world to squeeze us into its way of thinking, that the only thing that's different for a believer and how we think, is we think about Christian things at prayer time and on Sundays, rather than

integrating it all the time. The degree in which you make temporal goals in your life, is the degree in which your life will be given away for temporal things. The degree in which you make spiritual goals, is the degree in which you will store up eternal things.

If I would have asked you when you first came in, list me your goals without having this information we've been talking about, when you graduate, most of you would have said to find a good job. Hope I find and get married, to buy a house, to get involved in my local church, maybe you would have thought of that. See, all those things are right, and all those things are necessary. But they are not, not one of them, is an eternal value. They're all a temporal value, aren't they? The degree in which you aim at temporal values is the degree in which you are going to hit temporal values. And you know what you're gonna end up doing? What the rest of the world does. And that is celebrate your hitting the temporal values.

[Bruce Wilkinson laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

You will get a great big charge out of saying, okay, I got that position! Alright, that's fine. But that's where you get your kick then, your fulfillment. If you set up your goals, and they're temporal, and you work hard in your life to accomplish those goals, that's the things you're going to value, and treasure, and feel good about. And my challenge to you is, your life is to be a vocation in which you are called, in order that you might have a profession. Those to-those then are the goals you're aiming for. I tried to point out yesterday, that there is a mix up in how we think regarding our jobs, when you guys graduate. And that typically, we view the goals that our boss gives us, or the goals that we set for ourselves, as the goals we're to give the days of our life

to accomplish. And that so many times there is a reversal of the means and the end in a life. There's a there's a reversal of what it's supposed to accomplish.

And it reminds me of um, a story that happened to me in high school. When I was in high school, the greatest thing you could have besides a steady girlfriend was a car. And the best kind of car you could have when I was going to school was a woody station wagon. And it just so happened that my parents had an old woody station wagon as their second car. And in the second, in the last semester of my senior year, in the last six weeks, they said, you can have the woody station wagon for six weeks. And I remember, uh, you know, fixing all the rotting wood with three cans of plastic wood, and putting in two speakers and nine yards of remnant carpet, and almost wearing my arm out, trying to shine a paint that went right through three layers of colors. It was great. I remember that first day I drove that to high school. I couldn't have been any prouder. You know, here comes the woody. And I drove it over to senior row, you know? And what do you do in high school when you drive into senior row? You rev your engine.

And I remember those days, you know, you open the hood and you look at the [unintelligible] and everything else, and you talk about overhead cams, and are you going to put glass mufflers on it, and it was tremendous. And we sat there as a bunch of seniors revving our engines. And then the girls would come over and go, "Wow, look at that!" As we revved our engines.

Speaker 1:

Please turn the tape to side two for the continuation of this session.

[Silence]

Bruce Wilkinson:

--Talk about overhead cams, and are you going to put glass mufflers on it, and it was tremendous. And we sat there as a bunch of seniors revving our engines. And then the girls would come over and go, "Wow, look at that!" As we revved our engines. I used to think about that as that that's the ritual of the revving. If you were to come out from this meeting, and you were to find me in my rental car out there in the parking lot revving my engine, you know?

[Makes engine revving sound]

Bruce Wilkinson:

My little four-cycle car. What would you think? You'd say to yourself, what would you say? Come on! Huh?

Audience member:

You need to warm it up.

Bruce Wilkinson:

I need to warm it up. Yeah, let's say it was already warmed up.

Audience member:

[Unintelligible]

[Bruce Wilkinson and audience laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

That's right, what's this guy trying to prove, or that's weird. But, you know, nobody felt that way, except the teachers, in high school. How many guys can remember doing that? Yeah. Some of you don't want to admit it, but those were the good ol' days.

[Bruce Wilkinson and audience laugh]

Bruce Wilkinson:

And um, what was right at one level in your life somehow goes away as you get older, doesn't it? Yeah. That that-at that stage, wasn't immature to me and to the other guys I hung around with, it was the thing to do. And today, as an adult, for me to do that which was acceptable back here, is immature. Now, what did I do that was immature? Well, I reversed the means and the end. What was the purpose of a car? To get me somewhere. In other words, the car was a means to another end. Alright? And what I was doing as I was revving that engine, I was saying, I'm excited about the means as the end. Look at the revving of the car! And I was getting thrilled over the means. Now, when you look at your vocation and your profession, typically you view it, and we view it, as an end in itself. Don't we? I make my salary, I make my living, I get ahead, I get a promotion. And we sit there, as far as God's concerned, and the scriptures concerned, and get a great big charge out of revving the engine!

[Makes engine revving sound]

Bruce Wilkinson:

And say, "I'm getting ahead!" And God saying, "Wait a minute! Your job is not ends." What is your job to be? It's supposed to be the means to bearing fruit. It's supposed to be the way in

which you profess your Christianity. It's the way in which you stand on top of the rooftop and you shout your message. Just like when Abraham went around, and he built a well, and he also built right next to it a what? An altar, in which he, behind the altar, preached. And as people came to the well too, he got up and gave his testimony, and preached about the God of Israel. God of Yahweh. And so, so many times those of us who separate and say, I'm not going into the ministry, I'm going into business, get excited about the wrong things. We get excited about the means, which is acceptable to all the nonbelievers around you, but which is immature as a believer. Why? Because every one of those are temporal goals. Not one of them will last, an advancement won't last, a promotion won't last, how much money you make won't last, and a new product won't last. None of them last.

And it's okay as gentiles, as nonbelievers, to get excited over those things because you don't know any better. But Jesus' sermon is so radical, He said, "Don't seek after those things." So, don't seek after them. Use your job as a means to bear fruit. Is that making sense to you? All three of you are shaking your heads. Let's have a time of question and answer for a few minutes before I unload anymore and, let's see if it's coming through. Yeah?

Audience member 1:

[Unintelligible]

Bruce Wilkinson:

Yes, it sure is.

Audience member 1:

[Unintelligible] --because, you know, we're here, we're invested in the fact that we need to [unintelligible] our ministry with-with our jobs and vice versa. And it's like, boy, this is scary, with uh, all the enormous costs of everything. How can we, you know, it's a matter of trust also. Yes. How do we get through, you know, this experience here at Biola, you know, financially and otherwise, academically. You know, with uh, without CEOs temporal-the temporal things, [unintelligible] studying, not time spent with people. No person who wants to graduate in four years has to take 18 hours to graduate.

Bruce Wilkinson:

Sure.

Audience member 1:

It's 16, 17 hours. That means hardly any time, you know, interacting with people in ministry. Like you said yesterday, how many times did you plant seeds, you know, you can't do that with a library all the time, unless you're intellectually gifted, like you said earlier.

[Bruce Wilkinson laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

You asked about eight questions in a row. Let's take them one at a time. Number one, um, I'm not saying to go crazy. Go way off the beam. Uh, yes, you do have to earn your way through college, many of you. Some of you have your parents giving you money to get through, or friends. Probably the most of you don't. Um, you have to do that. You have to accomplish that.

But it's not your deep seeking, is it? To make the money for school? That is a means to another end. It's when you get messed up and you make the means the end that it's wrong. And um, the next question was, how-how do you get this imbalance, you know, about sharing your faith while you're at school? Get your priorities straight. That's what it is. You know, when I was in graduate school, I felt that graduate school was full of pressure. Dallas Seminary, and most seminaries, are full of pressure. And I remember thinking to myself, I can't wait to get out of Dallas Seminary, and get in the ministry and slow down a little bit. Not have anymore these papers, no more pop quizzes, no more tests over declensions, you know. No more exegesis of Ephesians two, verse eight, the first three words.

[Bruce Wilkinson laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

And I remember um, I was just asked recently by Dallas to write an article for them on if, knowing what I know now, if I were to go back to seminary today, what would be different? And one of those issues is um, at the pressure of the ministry is far larger than the pressure of school. You guys think you're under pressure now? You are to a degree. But wait until you get out. You think a pop quiz is bad, right? Unannounced? When you're-when you're at home, and in the middle night, you get a telephone call from somebody whose marriage is just on the rocks and they've been fighting for three hours, and they ask you to come on over before they divorce. That's a pop quiz, instead of trying to give you the 10 reasons, you're dealing with two people's lives. Or you think getting a term paper ready once every two weeks is hard? Well, you have to produce three sermons every week, and you get graded by the people's faces and their attendance, and how much money they put in the plate. Every week, no mid-semester breaks, no

Christmas vacations. Reading a lot of books. Doesn't compare, it doesn't compare. It's a matter of perspective.

And I found out, to answer your question, you're either going to control your life now or you're not going to control your life when you get out. That, believe it or not, it's easier in school to control your life than it is after school, because you have a nice, simple, structured life right now. You're told what courses you have to take, you're told what time you have to be there, what books you have to read, when to do your papers, what to do your papers on, even have classman beneath you or above who have had the course and tell you what the tests are going to be like. And you have all this motivation going around, you know? You get every time you get a grade back, that's motivation. Plus or minus. If people around you love you, who care about you, who encourage you, you're not responsible to make the money to live. Then all that life, then it gives you external motivation, and so many times we college students think we're really doing a good job of motivation, but 90 percent of its external motivation, it's outside of us. It's the teacher, it's a threat of failure, it's a paper, it's a practice that I have to be at. But all of them are done by somebody else telling me what I have to do.

The second you get out of here, it depends upon your self discipline. And it's a whole new ball of wax. That's why so many people who go through Biola, or Dallas, or Talbot, and get straight A's in school and can work when it's structured for them and motivated for them, get out in the ministry or out in the business world and fall flat on their faces. Because they have not learned that school is not life, and school is not--listen, school is not preparation for life. You weren't--you weren't at school preparing to live. You're living. You're living. This is life, isn't it? It is life

right now! And if you feel 18 hours of credit, or 21 hours a credit, makes it so that you can't share your faith or make your own priorities, when you get out, you won't either. And if you don't believe me, just start looking around for the people who are out. Other questions. Yeah?

Audience member 2:

[Unintelligible].

Bruce Wilkinson:

Sure. The question is, can you explain a little bit more clearly what a calling is or a vocation? That's a banded around subject, isn't it? I'm sure you talk about it in dorms a lot. You know, does God call you, does not God not call you? Does God have a specific will for your life? Or does God not have a will for your life?

[Silence]

Bruce Wilkinson:

I have about 100 people working for me. And uh, I've yet to have someone come to me and say, "What do you want me to do?" And me not tell them. Now, I might not tell him as clear as they want, because I might throw it back to them. You know the goal, what are you going to do to get there? Give me your plan tomorrow. But when you work for another person, there is accountability upward, and there is accountability downward. I wish--no, I shouldn't say that. I used to wish that God spoke more clearly to me, and I tried many years to force Him to do that. "God, I'll do anything You want, but just tell me what You want." And uh, I took a long walk with Him at the beginning of this year in the middle of the rain, and I made my commitments

between Him and me this year. And one of the commitments I had with Him was, I'm not having any expectations about You and me this year. Not one. You don't have to uh, You don't have to be open with me, You don't have to give me any emotional times. You don't have to make any verses pop out of the Bible to me. You don't have to give me any special moments this year. I'm not counting on them. I'm not depending upon them.

I'm going to walk with You, that's my commitment to You. And I'm going to obey You. And I'm going to try and uh, and to be more of a disciple this year than last year. And I found that to be a tremendously freeing situation. On the other hand, I trust that God does lead, and I seek for it. And there comes a time in all person's life that you have to make a step of faith that, don't you? Yes, you do. And if you believe that you don't have to have steps of faith, you have a warped concept of true biblical walking by faith. If you expect God to give you all the revelations to the hard questions in life, you're expecting that God wants you to live by sight. You say, "Lord, what do You want me to do? P.S. I don't want to walk by risk. Please tell me." And as a new Christian, you know what God does? He tells you. It's amazing how it happens in new Christians' lives. Weird things, verses that are totally in error when they say, "Look what God showed me!" And you sit there and you say to yourself, that's totally wrong. But God uses it anyway. In new Christians, there-there's a-there's this place for immaturity that God overrides.

And at times in your life, you go through that, you know, God, I-this is too big for me. Give me a fleece. And at times, God will allow you to have a fleece. But as a mature believer, you need to learn to risk, then trust in God's goodness. And um, it's working at your own salvation with fear, honestly, with fear and with trembling. Am I making a mistake? Lord, don't let me make a

mistake. I believe this is what You want me to do, I have to make a decision tomorrow. And unless you redirect, somehow, I'm gonna do it. We've just been trying to interview a man at Walkthrough who's run a 40 million dollar division for a national corporation. And uh, I met him on a Thursday, and I asked him to fly out to California with me and went up to John McArthur's church for a walk-through seminar. And he said yes. So the next morning he flew out, and we spent a whole weekend together. And we came back in and we thought about reorganizing our ministry to make room for this man.

Well, I don't believe God gives any one-person complete wisdom at all. So I brought in the V.P., he's an executive V.P., and we hit it for two hours, had no peace, brought the man in the next day for another two hours, and went at it again. No peace. I called a bunch of references. Highest recommendations you can get, I've ever gotten on any man. President of linear business [snaps]. Hundred percent recommendation for this guy. And all the way through it, still no peace. And I was leaving on this trip, this man had offers that were three times more than our salary, three times.

[Bruce Wilkinson laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

It's amazing. And God worked in his life, and he was willing even to sell his house, because the house payment was almost as much as we were paying him. And then God worked in his uh, his life. But God wasn't working in my life. And he wasn't working in any of the V.P.'s nor the executive V.P. And we agreed that when I was gone yesterday, that we're gonna have him back in, and then we're going to sit and talk and pray. And I said, if there's not unanimous greenlights,

it's not God's leading. And I called yesterday, and the three V.P.'s said yellow lights, the executive V.P. at a red light. And I had a red light. Now, nowhere did God say, and I really wanted to hire the man, but God, when you seek Him with all of your life, you will at the-at the end, be willing to risk that. And, you know, I don't believe there's one, two, three reasons, three ways--you can't box God in, gang. There's no way. We've all tried, haven't we? If I have my devotions every day for an hour, and if I pray every day, and if I witness once a week, that God will tell me what to do. He owes it to me. You know? We try to make Him owe it to us. But He does not owe it to us.

And all the time, He's trying to grow you up so that you are not continually begging Him for, the assurance that requires no faith on your part. It makes you more dependent and less independent. Any other questions? We have five more minutes. I have many more things to say, but maybe this is more helpful. Yes?

Audience member 3:

[Unintelligible].

Bruce Wilkinson:

Very little of?

Audience member 3:

[Unintelligible].

Bruce Wilkinson:

Great. I have four couples from my church over who are in business, to my house for a nice dinner, and I would say I feel a real lack in my life in knowing how to minister to business people, because I have nothing in business. But the Bible relates one hundred percent to those of you in business. I want to walk away at the end of the evening with the top 30 problems in business. And I want you guys to tell me what they are, and at the end, I want to prioritize them. And right there be my preaching for the next year. You know what? You're going to hit people where they need a puncher. So you just ask! Just ask. Other questions? You know, some of you in this room are catching on to what I'm saying. I can see it in a few of your faces. It's frustrating to some of you. And it is-it is frightening, but it is liberating. You know? When you let Jesus Christ be the Lord of your life, you give up ownership. And that ownership goes down to what you do in your life. You do not have the right to make those decisions without asking the boss what He wants, and seeking. In the flesh, I'd hire that man vroom, just like that. I wanted to hire him.

And from all external things, he was the man for the job. I spent three whole days with the man, I knew what I needed to know. I met his wife, met his kids. Yes, he is the guy. God was seeking you. You know, he waited. He waited eight days. We never offered him a job, or didn't offer him a job. And he said, you know, "I've been a Christian for 12 years, and this is the first time I've ever seen Christian businessmen put God into business." It's exciting, gang. It's a whole new way. It's called Biblical. I'm going to close with one story. While I'm telling this story, I want you guys to think of one question that you wish, if you're planning on coming back Thursday, that I would answer or try to answer. Okay? I've been sharing what I thought you might-could

help you. So be thinking of one question. At Walk Through the Bible, one of the things that we do is we give seminars, and um, God bless those seminars. And I was living out in the country at the time, a couple of years ago, and I was asked to come speak at a banquet, a Valentine's banquet at a large liberal church. And it was a Valentine's banquet, so you know what you do with Valentine's banquets?

You know, I read all these stupid little quotes and the poems and the stories. You know, I felt like Cupid, you know. And I came in and tried to give a nice little talk, and I gave it, and people laughed, and smiled, and husbands hugged their wives. And it was, you know. Wonderful.

[Audience laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

So afterwards, the guy who invited me to come speak said, "Let's go out for pie and ice cream." I said, "Sure." So we went out, and I'm always trying to find out if I'm hitting the mark or missing the mark, because it's important to me. And I said to him, "How did it go?" I'll never forget. He had a fork, and he had a piece of cherry pie. He'd eaten all the ice cream. And he started playing with the cherries, and he didn't look up. And I began to get panicky, you know, and I said, "Was it that bad?" "Uh huh." "No kidding." "Uh huh." "Were my stories flat?" "No." "Were my jokes no good?" "No, they were good. Sort of." I said, "Did the people enjoy it?" "They enjoyed it." "It was no good?" "Uh huh." I was sweating. And I said, Darlene, she's my wife, she was praying like crazy. And um, I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "Bruce." He said, "For the last six years we have been trying to get an evangelical in this church. Six years, to give the gospel. Nobody

has ever heard the gospel in this church. And he said, we finally prayed you in. And you never gave the gospel." You know, if Christ could have slapped me, I was slapped.

And I was so broken at that moment, because I had sat and revved my engine. I'm not called to entertain. I'm called to use entertainment in order to-- . And that night, I got on my knees and I just asked forgiveness for getting my priority system out of sync. Well, the next month, we had our teachers fly in from all over the nation. 30 of them. And we got together, and I confessed my lack of leadership in that area and I asked for forgiveness. And I said, "We need to redirect some of the goals of these seminars in the area of salvation." That whole year, we had led around three hundred and eighty people to the Lord, which is a lot of people. That's as many as about, nationally averaging, 200 churches during a whole year. That was about an average of one a day. And I just pleaded with the man, let's set some supernatural goals in our ministry, and ask God this next year, He wouldn't use us to lead 10 people to the Lord every day. Three thousand six hundred. You know what? In the next month, we led seven hundred and eighty people to the Lord, and before the year was over, we led three thousand seven hundred people to the Lord.

You know, the seminar didn't change one bit. The teachers didn't change one bit. The audience didn't change one bit. What changed? All of a sudden, somebody took off those dirty glasses and said, "Man. We haven't been seeing clearly what God wants us to hit, the hearts of men is what we're supposed to hit. And use the seminar in order to hit those hearts! Don't make the seminar an end in itself. Make it a means to an end." I called two teachers last night. One man taught a seminar of 216 in a charismatic Episcopal church. Another one taught one in the good Bible Church of 190, in which the man who pastors the church said, "These are all Christians. Don't

you know, don't give the gospel." The man smiled and said, "I might." He led 40 people to the Lord Saturday, and the man at the Episcopal Church led 46. Ladies and gentlemen, if you set your heart under the lordship of Christ to bear fruit, you'll find such fulfillment in your life that all other things will fade away, fade. You'll count them as, somebody else said, rubbish? And you'll press on to the high calling of God. Questions, and then we're going to break. Any questions? Make up one, so I'll feel comfortable when I leave.

[Audience laughs]

Bruce Wilkinson:

Somebody. Please make up something. Yes, thank you.

Audience member 4:

What's your organization do?

Bruce Wilkinson:

What's my organization do. I don't want to talk about us. Give me another question.

[Audience laughs]

Audience member 5:

[Unintelligible]

Bruce Wilkinson:

There is no guarantees in life. Yes, there are.

Audience member 5:

[Unintelligible]

Bruce Wilkinson:

Oh, sure, there are. Tomorrow we'll talk about some of that, God's guarantees. Let's stand and have a word of prayer together. Our Father in heaven, how we want not only in our mind, but also in our very innermost part, to be disciples of Your Lordship. And how much we don't want to end up before You, and You say to us, You did not aim at the right target. How much we want to bear fruit that lasts, how much we want to have a vocation, and a profession, and how much we want to bear fruit that lasts. Bless the rest of this day and thank You for the last hour. In Jesus' name amen.

[Audience applauds]

[Audio cuts out]