

# Who Am I

## By Mark Lee

Announcer 1;

John 4:24, says they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. In a crowd of this size, we've all come here with different problems and trials and adversities. And I think right now we just ought a bow in a few moments of silent prayer. And just prepare ourselves for the study of the word this evening. Let's pray. Again for who and what you are, and we'll praise you and honor you and glorify you in Jesus precious name. Amen.

Announcer 2:

We again want to welcome those that would be off campus guests. Perhaps there are some of you that are here for the very first time. We want to tell you we're delighted to have you here. Our only regret is that you've just missed one of the evening series of Dr. Mark Lee. We have programs in the back ample for you and would like to invite you as well to all of the morning sessions. And of course, the Dobson film series, which is being shown in the afternoon and is very well attended. We appreciate the head resident staff that sponsored this film series. I asked several students today if they were describing a Dr. Mark Lee or introducing him, how they would introduce him. Many of those I would not be able to share with you this evening, but a few I will. They said that they feel that he lives where the College student lives. That is extremely practical, that they appreciate a sense of humor on occasion. In fact, they qualified and they said they appreciated a real sense of humor and that they realized that he's a man who has sympathy for College students and love for the word of God.

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We're really glad that he is part of our sister school up north, that he loves the Lord and is willing to share with us the word again. Dr. Mark Lee, let's welcome once again, please.

Thank you, Ron. I appreciate it and your attempt at humor. This week, as I told you. And I'm going to move along because I know 08:00 basketball makes you all unspiritual. And last night I talked about the barriers that we build, barriers we call the mountains. You build mountains that you cannot get over, you cannot get around, you cannot tunnel through, or you build mountains that simply lift you to new elevations so that you can go to other elevations. In other words, you build either mountains of blessing or mountains of cursing. We discovered in Deuteronomy 27:28, if you build mountains of cursing, you're on Ebal. If you build mountains of blessing, you're on Mount Gerizim. We talked about three aspects of that. The first one was that ideas come to condemn us. We turn those ideas oftentimes into mountains of cursing, as indeed much of our study has done for us in the world. Witness the enlargement of warfare and the threat of the mushroom cloud. Just think if we weren't so smart, we wouldn't be as afraid as we are, or we build mountains of cursing in our stereotypes. We stereotype people, we stereotype races, we stereotype ages, we stereotype our sexes.

And after a while, we lose the benefit that we are to each other. When God looks, he looks in a certain direction. Isn't it funny how man will twist that and make that a mountain of cursing? You walk out in the fall and you look out over the trees and they look so beautiful. You have green leaves and brown leaves and red leaves and yellow leaves. And you look at it and say, Isn't it beautiful how God has splashed the paint upon the woods. And then as soon as he gives the same color to our skin, Lo and behold, if we don't build prejudice to each other, he wanted to

paint us as beautiful as he paints leaves, at least. And yet we turned that into mountains of cursing. Must be awful. And then finally we turn the whole business of our emotions, those things that can make us feel so good, and we twist them until out of emotions, we do some very horrible things. Now, I'm just as moved as anyone else today that the hostages received all of that attention, 52 plus the one that came partway through that long, hollowing ordeal.

And yet it just blows my mind that we can talk about 53 hostages held for more than 400 days, and we can feel very happy that they come back alive and relatively well. And yet from 08:00 this morning until 4:30 this afternoon, we killed that many people on our highways carried with the emotion of literally 53 persons lives saved. And yet today, in one day, not 440 plus days, we killed as many as came back. And we apparently can do so little about it. There was a blackout in New York, and in the blackout in New York, some terrible things happened. People began to rifle stores and various other kinds of crimes were committed. And then the next day, we got this splash from people who are supposed to know better, carried away in some way, even in their ideas and their emotions and stereotypes. And there was a sociologist here in Southern California that said, when you have a blackout in New York and people go through and rifle those stores, if we would do right by them, if we would give them jobs, if we would make enough money, then they wouldn't have to steal the food in the night when darkness fell upon the city because of the collapse of their electrical system, and they wouldn't have to steal furniture.

And then some simple fellow that didn't even have a College degree the next day challenged that sociologist. He says, I'm tired of listening to this. And the sociologist said, what do you mean? And the answer came back, if they were hungry, why did they walk by Safeway stores and break

into the liquor stores? And if they wanted furniture. Why did they walk by the furniture store and go into the electrical shops and steal TV sets? And you know what that sociologist did the first time in my life as any kind of a College teacher? He apologized to the American people. He says, I think many of us, we sociologists are just plain stupid. We have followed the fads of our time, and that is to find fault with the innocent. To find fault with the innocent. Leave the keys in your car and someone steal it. And Lo and behold, you're the naughty one, not the fellow that stole it. In the old days, you could ride a horse into town, throw the reins over the hitching post, go in and do anything you wanted to do, come out and the horse was there. If he wasn't, they had a simple way in which to do it with a piece of rope over a limb of a tree.

And that seemed to limit the number of horses that were stolen. Now, I'm not all for hanging everybody that turns the wrong key in the wrong car. Don't get me wrong. It's simply that we have been carried away in many ways with ideas and stereotypes and emotions, and we haven't really dug down to find out where we are. This evening, I want to talk about who we are. As I suggested to you last evening, the most common question asked the last 15 years is, who am I? Who am I? Now, if you would jump back nearly 200 years and you would begin to read whatever literature was available, you would discover there wasn't any such thing. Really, there wasn't any such thing as what we call adolescence. If you'd asked someone at the year 1800, what is adolescence? They couldn't have told you. They couldn't have told you. If you look at an old painting. And by the way, a lot of these paintings were made in these simple villages where people developed the arts fairly well. And there was someone in the village that would paint every family when it came time for the family to think about it.

And here stands this man. When they got out of the peacockery of the latter part of the 18th century, you remember when they wore the satins and the frills at the neck and the powdered wigs. I wish they hadn't given that one up. But nevertheless, when they did all of those things and with the coming of the United States, they came back to a point of simplicity. And so this man would stand there with his white linen and his string tie and his frock coat, you'd see, standing next to him, a woman who undoubtedly would have to suffer through the rigors of the frontier. And there she stands with this beautiful cotton dress on a frock that reaches the ground. And as you look at her, there's something that really speaks to you of all that she's got to go through. And if I took time to describe that, you'd agree with me. On the other side of her stands her little girl, seven years old, 911, whatever it is. And as you look at the little girl, she looks just like her mother. In fact, she's dressed in a frock that looks just like the one that her mother is wearing.

Perhaps it was made from the same bowl of cloth from which they took the material for her mother's dress. And then if you look at the father, on the other side of him stands his son, how old? 7, 9, 11, whatever it is. And if you look at him, he looks just like his father. White linen string tie and a black frock coat on that boy. Now, thank you very much. If those come out, send me one, would you? I need something for advertising. At any rate, the point is that as you looked at these people, they gave you the feeling of being a family. They gave you the feeling of being persons. And if you had said to the father, oh, your boy's going through puberty, he's going through what? I wonder if there's a medicine for that. And the girl's going through, she's going through what? You see at that time, even though there were a lot of mistakes made in the rearing of children, as a matter of fact, they thought of them in the terms of little persons. And then

ultimately they would have rites of passage. Now, these rites of passage could be found in the simplest kind of tribes.

For example, a young man seems to be ready to become a man. So they would simply put him out in the woods, give him a tool, perhaps a weapon, and he's to come back when? Five days, ten days, a moon, whatever it was, he's supposed to come back. Now, he can come back anytime he wants. And he's received back into the tribe without any dishonor. But when he comes back into the tribe, if he doesn't fill out the rite of passage, he's still a boy. But if he waits out the full moon or whatever number of days for the rite of passage, he comes back. From then on, he's treated like a man. He's a man. And there is something that's terribly beautiful about that whole thing. Well, what happened? By 1850, they began to emerge, a kind of literature about adolescence. You see, the more and more we got to study things, the more we had to come up with something new. And so we created adolescence. And then we told the young people ultimately how adolescents are supposed to act. Then they began to act that way and then that offends the old folks.

When you realize that 2000 years ago there was a little girl. I'll call her a little girl. By our standard, she was 15 years old. Her name was Mary. And the Holy Spirit hovered over her and put in her body the Lord Jesus. And she is a woman of purity, probably 16 years old when she gave birth to the one whom we call Jesus, who is the Christ. Do you know anyone 15 or 16 years of age that has the purity, the perception, the spiritual depth of a Mary? You see, one of the reasons why we do not is not that you're so different than Mary or that Mary is so different from us, but we have created all of these things so that now you have infants and then you have

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children, and then you have adolescents, and then you have young adults and you have middle aged adults, and you have old middle aged adults and young-olds and middle-olds and old-olds. I just found out that I belong to the young-olds. But the point is the point to be made is that we have now slotted and divided people in such a way that I can understand that they begin to ask the question, who am I?

Permit me to read the first five verses of Esther three verses. Esther Three. What a wonderful passage of scripture. And you'll remember, it was Esther Three on which we wanted to base some ideas. Esther, chapter three. After these events, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. Yeah. Watch what you call your kids. And advanced him and established his authority over all the Princes who were with him. And all the King's servants who were at the King's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for so the King had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage. Then the King's servants who were at the King's gate said to Mordecai, Why are you transgressing the King's command? Now it was when they had spoken daily to him, and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew. Wow. Wow is not in the scripture. For those of you listening to the tape. When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage. Who am I?

Now, the question, as I suggested to you on the first night, is not so difficult as the question we'll try to answer tomorrow night. And that is, Where am I? Who am I? Is relatively easy to answer, but we still get the question. And the reason why you still get a question is because people won't

accept the answer. I can give you a number of answers to the question, write directly to you and answer your question. Who am I? One of the interesting things that's happening nowadays is that adopted children, and we're having more and more of them because of the abandonment of children and because people are having children out of wedlock and do not keep those children or even persons who have children wedlock may not love their children. Let them go. And the parents that I have seen oftentimes who love their children the most are what we would call adopted parents. That is to say, they have taken someone that is not blood of their blood and bone of their bone, and they've reared those children. But for some reason, as those children come along, they have a desire to know who their parents are.

They're biological parents. Now, if I felt like it, I could stop them and say, hey, why? Probably your adopted parents loved you more, gave you more, even with their faults, that then your biological parents would give you. And especially if those biological parents let you go, it wasn't because of you that they let you go. It was because of their own weakness. They may have let you go. They may have been forced to it. I'm not trying to judge that, but there are people who spend enormous manpower and a great deal of wealth to find out who their biological parents are. And we're having more and more people do that. In fact, laws are now being passed in our States in an attempt to help people who have been adopted to go back and open up old files so they can find out who their biological parents are. When they do, even when they're disappointed with the discovery, they come back and they're almost euphoric. And I say to them, what are you happy about? And the answer almost invariably comes back, now I know who I am. I said, Isn't that interesting? I know literally thousands of people who know their biological parents, and they're still asking the question, who am I?



Now, what is the problem? The problem is they're unwilling to accept that answer. You see, if I'd come to my mother and I were smart enough to ask the question, she'd be smart enough to give me the answer. But if I were smart enough to ask the question, I'd say, mom, mother, who am I? And the answer comes back. You're Mark Lee. You're sometimes a brat. You're my son. I love you. Go cut the lawn. And I'd have a pretty good idea. I'd have a pretty good idea of who I am. I know I'm her son. I know that sometimes I'm naughty. I know that she loves me. And Unfortunately, I know that I'm competent to cut the lawn. Now, the point is, she's told me a lot about who I am, which seems to satisfy someone else that doesn't know their biological mother. I know her, and I'm still asking the question, who am I? I come to God. And I say to God, who am I? And he answers back in relatively few words, and he says, well, you were created originally by me, but you in your process, as well as those who've preceded you, walked away from me.

You can become my son, and you can bear my name and I will give testimony to you forever. That gives me a pretty good idea that I'm a sinner and I can become his son. And I don't know that I need to know a great deal more. But people are still asking Christians are still asking, who am I? I could go to some of the teachers I've had over the years, and I could ask them, who am I? And they could tell me from the standpoint of my academics who I am. And they can tell me fairly well how I shape up to their perception of who I am. But you see, we still go around asking the question, who am I? Not because the question is so difficult to answer, but because we're unwilling to take the answers. We still are expecting someone to come up with something so sophisticated, so exotic, that they'll just knock us flat when all the time the answer to the question, who am I? Can come from God, it can come from my parents, it can come from my

teachers, it can come from my wife and children, it can come from my neighbor, it can come from the people who know me.

They know who I am. But if I don't like their answers, I'm still going to ask the question, who am I? Because I want my answer, and I don't know quite what that answer is. So I will continue to ask the question, who am I? Because I reject the answers. Now permit me, if I may, to give you the three broad concepts of who you are. You can read about it either in secular or religious literature. Anyone that knows me knows that in many instances we bypass some marvelous secular literature, perhaps humanistic, but nevertheless would help us to understand how the world thinks and something about the way we think. And if you would read such books as Passages by Gail Sheehy, or if you'd read some of the other books, most of the Christian books writing on the same issue are called stages. We sometimes copy what they say, give new words to it, and make it sound religious. So we get all of these ideas. But even they take advantage of something that has preceded them. And I'm utterly surprised that they don't give us something of the sweep of our history, such as, for example, the rites of passage, which were so interesting and followed so carefully a century ago.

And yet I wonder why, instead of just referring to the concepts they refer to or Erikson's research, Erik Erikson's research, they don't come to grips with the fact that people have recognized what I'm about to suggest to you for a long time. Who are you? I'll tell you three things. You are. First of all, you're an intimate person. You're intimate. If you are not, it's because someone's tampered with you or someone's neglected you. You were carried in the womb of your mother for a period of months during that time, you felt the warmth of her body.

You will never escape it. Somewhere in the subliminal portions of our brains there still carries the idea of the intimacy, of the warmth of being carried in the bodies of our mothers. I happen to think that's beautiful. I have no problem with it at all. Then we're born into life, and the umbilical cord is cut, and we have to find our way on our own. And we take those first gasps of air. And one of the most beautiful things that can happen to us is even in the total innocence of that infant, to be laid on the stomach of his mother and therefore her to touch him for the first time, touch her for the first time.

And this child is born to intimacy. He has learned the warmth of it, the prenatal psychology of it in being carried. And now what happens? It depends on what the mother does and the father does and all of the other persons related to that little child what they may do now, what are they going to do? It's interesting that I've been in a number of congregations and asked them, how many of you never remember that your father ever put his arms around you and gave you a hug and said, I love you? You know what kind of results I get? Almost invariably, about 50% here. We're born to intimacy, and about 50% never remember the legitimate embrace of father. Now that surprises me. But the next one surprised me even more. And I ask, how many of you never remember your mothers ever putting their arms around you, and you feel the warmth and the softness and the love of your mother? And I get almost 30% of hands of persons who never remember their mothers put their arms around them. Now, dear friends, if you're born to intimacy, you're an intimate creature, and all of us have this enormous desire for it.

In fact, we establish marriage in part so that we can recover the intimacy that either we had as children in a warm family or that we wish we had when we were children in a family that we

wish were warm. And so we get married with the idea that we're going to establish this beautiful thing. And those of us who have enjoyed it know exactly what that means. And so you make that transition. But let us suppose that here is a daughter who's never had her father hug her and say, Honey, I love you. And God knows I've never had a sensual thought toward my daughters. And I would feel despicable if I did. But for that daughter to jump from absolutely nothing, no affection from her father into the arms of her husband with the intense intimacy of marriage without having the halfway house of feeling legitimately, the arms and the love and the affection and the laughter and the tears of her father. She's going to have an awful time. We call it by a lot of other names. We call it Victorianism, and we call it a lot of other things that have robbed this young woman, perhaps of knowledge of her sexuality.

But as a matter of fact, that's what went wrong. It doesn't take nearly as much education, by the way. I'm not against education. It doesn't take nearly as much education as it takes appropriate and Godlike experience, you see, and it becomes important to us. And we ought to realize that Emily Dickinson writes something that is so poignant in those days when Emily Dickinson lived, which was something over a century ago, she was sitting in the parlor in the presence of the open casket of her father. And in those days, that's what you did when the casket was brought in, it was opened, and you'd sit there day and night. Someone would sit around the clock until the casket was closed and lowered in the Earth. And sometimes it'd be four, five, or even 15, 2025 members of the family sitting around the clock in the presence of someone that they had loved. And finally, Emily Dickinson, sitting there for quite a long time, watching her brother, her brother rises from his chair, walks up and looks in the casket of his father, leans over the casket

and plants a kiss on his father's forehead and then says out loud so that everyone in the room can hear their father, I did for you in death what I was never permitted to do in life.

You see, here is a young man who wants to be intimate in an appropriate way, wants to hug his father and wants to be hugged by his father or mother to son or mother to daughter, father to daughter. And somehow it's taken away. That's the reason why when I read a passage like the first chapter of One Samuel, and there is a woman, one of the most Godly women ever to have lived, whose name is Hannah, and she comes to the altar, old Eli, it's been so long since he was hugged or hugged anybody. He doesn't recognize what's going on. And there's a woman who loves she loves her husband. She does not have a child. She comes before God. No wonder God gives a number of women past the age of bearing children because God understands. And there she prays because she wants the fulfillment of the intimacy of a child, because this is what she believes that God has put into her heart. And indeed he has. He must have. And he gives her one of the finest sons any woman and husband would ever have, Samuel, the man of God, the last of the judges, a gracious, wonderful man.

And he is returned to that Tabernacle where the mother gives him back to God, who has given her the heart desire. And there's something as beautiful with it as you follow it you see, now you can get the whole business. You're born to intimacy. If you don't feel it, you don't feel that warmth, you don't feel that love. I'll even put it this way. You don't even feel the sense of the romance of it. It's because someone's tampered with you. You have been denied something. The warmth of the touch. He touched me, Lord, he touched me. And you will never forget it when he has touched you. And other people will never forget it. When you touch them appropriately, not

in any sexist way, but when you've touched them physically, appropriately, honestly, straightforwardly, because they are intimate persons, and so are you. But when you twist that all around, you get all messed up. You get the Playboy philosophy. So you have literally millions of people across the country who lay down. And whatever the cost of that magazine is, a dollar and a half or whatever it is. So that they can get the illusion of intimacy by looking at someone else's body.

And the whole thing is tragic. I don't find fault with those people. I feel sorry for those people because someone has taken away from them the legitimacy of the whole thing. We don't really know whether or not the prostitute is being used or she's using. She knows that this man wants intimacy, even if it's fate, even if he pays for it, whatever the dollars may be. Because of that fleeting moment of intimacy. So you end up with people like Samson. Poor Samson. Stalled in his puberty, never able to escape every woman he sees. He wants to Ravish. Now, God understands that. Understands what kind of man Samson is. But Samson just lets himself go. He never quite finds out who he is. Because he's unwilling to come to terms with the fact that he's building mountains of cursing. Where other men and other women will build mountains of blessing, both of them on the same basic motives. And that is, they are intimate persons. And a part of that intimacy is shown in their sexuality. But we've got it all twisted. We certainly have it twisted in America. And if you want to twist it, you may have that right.

I don't know. But those who know the Holiness and the beauty of the relationship, when it's rightly cast as God would give it, you will find the fulfillment of it. So it becomes so beautiful. It's beyond my mere ability to describe it. Now, once you've gained something of that control,

you're growing up. And you realize that it gives you so much. It gives you warmth, it gives you gratification. Now you say, hey, I'm an adult. Is all of life an attempt to secure this? And the answer comes back, of course it is not. And so you enter to the second stage. And the second stage in the scripture would be called service. Others like Erik Erickson calls it generativity. You want to generate some kind of contribution to others. And so you begin to reach out to others, the first ones you should reach out to to find out whether or not it's legitimate members of your family. So I want to know as a Christian how you treat your mother, how you treat your father, your brothers and sisters, those who are members of your family. If that's appropriate, you move on to marriage, perhaps.

And when you go into marriage, I want to know whether or not you approach your mate with a sense of service. How do I serve your needs? And when you are a person who is really, truly mature, that's what begins to happen in your life. Why did I choose my text? I chose my text because here are several men, but two of them we're concerned with. One is Haman and the one is Mordecai. Mordecai knows who he is. Haman doesn't. You know who Haman passes himself off to be? He passes himself off to be the King's altar ego. Now, if we can deify the King, thinks Haman, if we can deify the King, then anything that they will do for me as the King's alter ego is a kind of religious relationship. So he has people doing religious obesity to Haman. He uses the argument that what's really happening is when you do it to me, you're doing it to the King. Haman, doesn't know who he is. He certainly isn't God. He's not the King. He's not an angel, which would be an alter ego of the King. God. Haman can't be Haman because he's trying to be someone else.

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But there's a man in that Kingdom who knows who he is. Oh, I love it. And Haman goes by with his strut. And as he goes by with his strut, Mordecai watches him go by. This upsets Haman no end. The whole Kingdom can bow down to Haman. But because Mordecai won't bow down, Haman is distressed, and they come to Mordecai. Hey, don't you know who's going by? Mordecai said, yeah, I know who's going by. I don't know what it is in Hebrew, but you'll translate it. Yeah, I know who's going by. And someone says, who's going by? That's Haman, isn't it? Oh, no, that's the King. He stands for the King. He said, it looks like Haman to me. Don't you know that you're supposed to bow down as though to the King? Look at all those other Jews. They're bowing down. And Mordecai goes to a Jew. You're bowing down? Yes. Well, why do you bow down? We only bow down before God. We only worship God. And the answer comes back. We know that God knows we don't mean it. We don't mean it. And if you read the passage again, read verse four again.

Oh, what a verse. And Haman stands up and Mordecai stands up, and Mordecai says, I will not bow down. Am a Jew. But we've got all kinds of reasons for not being Christians, we've got eyebrow prayers in a place where we're embarrassed to pray over our food. Lord bless it. We've got all kinds of things because we don't know in some instances who we are. Now if time permitted. And I swept you through the scripture, hold the basketball game and sweep through the scripture. What do you find there? You find marvelous people, Aquila and Priscilla, layman man and wife everywhere they go. If I would begin to recite the service of these two people, I wish we had their whole story. I wish someone who had the imagination would do it for us. That wonderful couple of Aquila and Priscilla. Follow some of those disciples, follow some of those men and women as they dedicate themselves so totally to service. And then notice those who



twist the whole thing. And instead of serving so that they can bring glory to God, begin to serve so that they can be honored. Sometimes you can get the greatest service out of people who have no motivation related to God, even Christians, because they want to be some great one.

They want to see their name in lights. They want to be number one. Instead of following as the Spirit would guide them to become the kind of person that God wants them to be, they have decided they are going to serve. So they paid a certain amount of money. A group of men came to me and said, you speak a lot. Why don't you have our agents represent you? What will he do for me? He'll get you \$2,000 every weekend. I said, that's what they do for you. That's what they do for us. I says, what has the Holy Spirit got to do with that? Oh, well, now you've got to put your business together. I said, you put your business together. And I'm going to let the Holy Spirit put my business together. If somehow we could recognize that sometimes we can actually take our service and Warp it because we want a certain name, we want to be in a certain place. We want to have a certain number of people. We want to get certain kinds of honor until we've twisted it. Do you know some of the people in the Bible that could have come up smelling like roses?

One of them would have been Haman. If Hamon would have performed the service in the Kingdom like Joseph did centuries before. If Haman would perform in the Kingdom the way he ought to perform in the Kingdom as Daniel did, we would remember Haman. Did you ever think about a man like Herod? Most of us write Herod off because of the ugliness of the man ultimately, who became so ugly that he saw the death of his wives and the death of his children rather than take any threat from them. But Herod was a man of enormous service. He served as

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King longer than either David or Solomon, 45 years from the time he was 25 years old, he was head honcho in Jerusalem, and he was there for the next 45 plus years. And now past 70 years of age, with 1ft in the grave and the other in a banana Peel. He hears about some children over there, and one of them is going to be King long after he's gone. And he knows it, and he sends soldiers over to kill them. He's just built a temple to Jehovah, the same temple the floors of which Jesus walked later on.

And Herod could have come out of it. Not just Herod the Great in a political sense, but Herod the good and the great, but he lost the sense of service. Like I see other people lose a sense of service even when they keep going. I see a man started out and he builds a company and a business and things are going fine until finally, instead of doing that for the good of his people and the product, for the good of the populace in general, he begins to become power oriented. He becomes a person so motivated to profit until he's forgotten the reason for his service. May I come to the last idea. Tomorrow, I may finish up a couple of those ideas. And the last one is and this is one. The first two, I think you probably recognize the third one. You don't recognize as much because you haven't seen it as much as you ought. And that's integrity. You go from intimacy to service to integrity, and that's the highest of all. Now, we could say a lot about integrity, but permit me just to focus in on it for a moment. Integrity.

What is that? Integrity. What does it mean? What is accomplished? By the way your whole language becomes different. Let us suppose that you're relatively weak and someone does something you don't like. You get angry. And then someone says, hey, what's wrong? And you say, you made me angry. And it's true. That person made you angry because you're so weak, you

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become angry. But when you enter your integrity and you get angry, you know what you do? You don't blame it on anyone else but yourself. I got angry. God forgive me. I shouldn't have been angry. I should have been strong enough to stand. See, that's the difference. Weak people, weak Christians say you made me angry. A Christian of integrity stands up and say, hey, I was angry and I shouldn't have been. I'm sorry. I finished a degree, a PhD degree, and I remember going home. I was sitting in the kitchen looking out the front window. We lived in Spokane, Washington at the time, and my wife was over at the sink washing the dishes. And a man I mentioned this in my goals addressed to you this morning. A man and his wife had given us \$15,000 to finish that degree.

And as I sat there in the euphoria of having finished that great goal. I said to my wife, you know, we've got to do something to thank Pat and Mary for what they've done. And my wife, who's very helpful, looked over and says, You've got to think of something to thank Pat and Mary for what they've done. My wife is very helpful like that. And so while I was sitting there looking out the window, the Mailman came, left the mail. I went down across, opened the box, took the mail. On top was a letter from Pat. I brought it in, took the kitchen knife, sliced it, opened it and read it. And I stood there and balled. And when a man does that, his wife becomes very loving and sympathetic. And she came over and wondered what. And so I handed her the letter. She read it, and she also wept. You know what it said? I'll never forget it. Mark, my wife and I want to thank you that you permitted us to help you. Do you realize what I've just said? I was sitting there rightly thinking how much I owed them, how much appreciation.

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Instead, before I could get to them, they had sent me a letter with it all over and said, Mark, my wife and I want to thank you for permitting us to help you. Do you know what they were showing? They had come to the place where they had to do Christlike things. They had to serve. They had to be the people they were because they had become that no matter what I was, it's one thing to serve someone and say, well, now I'm going to wait and see how much appreciation comes back. That never occurred to them. It never occurred to them. Think of the integrity. There's a lot I want to say here, but I'll quickly get it finished. As I read the scripture, there's a man of enormous integrity. His name is Barnabas. The word comes back to Antioch. Did you hear that Saul of Tarsus, guilty of the first murder of a Christian for his witness. Do you hear that he's been converted? Oh, yes. No, he better not come here. Why not? There's some of Stephen's relatives over there. Barnabas waits for a while. He gets up and leaves the Church.

He goes on a little trip around the Arabian desert, finds Saul of Tarsus, who's been there for three years, puts his arm around and says, Come on, that's enough of this. You prayed long enough. Get up and he gets up and they go back. By the way, you don't have this in the scripture. This is my sanctified imagination. If you do it, it's fruitless speculation. But nevertheless, he brings Son of Tarsus back to Antioch. And you can see them on this Lord's day morning when they come into the Church, congregation. And they sit down.

When it comes time for the congregation to share, Barnabas stands up and they're silent. Brothers and sisters, this man has been known as Saul of Tarsus. I'm convinced that he now loves the Lord and walks with the Lord. We'll call him Brother Paul. And if you accept me, you accept him. If you don't accept me, you don't accept him. If you don't accept him, you don't accept me.

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And the Apostle Paul had a shortcut to acceptance through the integrity of a man like Barnabas. I've seen that happen over and over again. I've been in a lot of Church meetings.

We have a Council in our fellowship about 2000 preachers there debating, and the debate would go on for maybe an hour, maybe 2 hours. And then a man, a tall, thin man, always sitting over to the left of the speaker, would unravel himself, stand up and say, about a minute and a half, he would say what he felt, and then he'd sit down and immediately someone would move their previous question and they would vote what he just said. A.W. Tozer what he had just said. I have seen that happen before. I expect to see it happen again. A man that the congregation thought had so much integrity, they did what he said they should do. May I close with this quickly? There are some wonderful words in the scripture that we don't do much with, and we ought to. One of the words is Rabbi. It's a beautiful word. I suppose you ask people what Rabbi is today. They say, well, that's a Jewish priest, that's a Minister and a Jewish congregation. The answer is that's true now. But 2000 years ago, who was a Rabbi, no wonder these people... no wonder they became jealous of Jesus. No wonder they wanted the same thing said of them that was said of Jesus.

You see, a young man, even a young man might be older, but a young man would ultimately stand in the congregation and someone in the congregation would say, he is my Rabbi, not priest, not scribe, not lawyer, Rabbi. And when Nicodemus came on that night in the third chapter of John, and he says, Rabbi, we know thou art teachers sent from God. He doesn't say teacher. We know thou art teacher. There's no redundancy. He says, Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher. Now, who's a Rabbi? A beautiful, beautiful person. That's who a Rabbi is. Two things that a Rabbi is.

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One in the New Testament, one, he knows the Scriptures. He knows them exactly. In those days when everyone couldn't walk with a copy under their arm, when they had to come to the synagogue, when they took the Scrolls out of the place and would stand there and read from those Scrolls what God has said, you can imagine what a treasure it would be to Godly people that here is someone that's walking around that knows the word of God. Exactly so he knows it. And when the Rabbi would quote it, you knew that it was just exactly what was on that page in the scroll.

Now, the second thing was like under the first. And that is that the Rabbi lived what he knew. Not only did he know the scripture, but he was a living model of what the scripture taught. That what the scripture taught is what he lived. What he lived is what the scripture taught. And when Nicodemus said that to a fellow in his late 20s by the name of Jesus, that older man, that wealthy man, that leader man was saying to this young man, Rabbi, you are my Rabbi because you know God's word and because you live it. That's exactly what Rabbi meant. And if anyone would ask me, what is your great goal in life? My great goal would be that 2000 years later whatever is equivalent to Rabbi in what my people, my wife, my children, my children's children could say, husband, dad, grandfather, you are my Rabbi. And if they could say that of me, then I would know that I had gained the integrity that the Holy Spirit means for my life. Shall we pray, our Father, we pray that you will bless us to understand what it is. We are intimate persons.

So we like the love and the care and the concern and the involvement of someone else. We are persons of service. So we want to reach out and care for the child. For the one who's been denied. For the one who's never heard. But then after all of that, we want to be something and

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not merely do it. For in the end we know that you have told us that being is everything in doing.

And so we would be like him whom to know our right is life eternal Christ in you the hope of glory grant us this privilege in this hour for Jesus' sake. Amen.