

Values, Lifestyle, and Discipleship: Session 3

By Bob Kraning

Bob Kraning:

[Recording begins abruptly]

...Us are sort of here. Others aren't here yet. They'll wander in. Big game last night. Most of you there?

Alright. Always good to meet Westmont. Don't care about anybody else, but always good to meet with and Azusa, right? Yeah.

Okay. And you stomped them. I saw that score early in the year. Didn't you beat them like 20 points? Big. Yeah.

And you play them again the last... I keep track of you guys, and so that's good. Those of you that aren't into basketball, tough, you missed out on good things. But that's okay. I grew up in Indiana, so I grew up on a basketball.

My father coached for 18 years. And I always dreamed of being 6'5" and playing professional ball. And by the time I became a senior in high school, I suddenly discovered I might be less than 6'5" by a foot or so, which got to be a little frightening.

This morning, we want to kind of shift gears a little bit now, and hopefully this will kind of all come together. Let me just say a word about yesterday when we closed.

We closed kind of suddenly because I ran overtime. But let me just say a couple of things about the last little thing we did yesterday when we did those little charts. Some of you can use charts. Some of you that's a drag and you just kind of burn it. But if you do use charts, let me tell you the secret of charts.

I'm not a big chart person, but that one chart has probably been the best thing I've ever done for me personally and for my family. The best thing that charts are good for is consistency. If you only use that chart once, it will do you no good. It's when you get about six of those that you can lay out in front of you and take a look at them, that they really begin to make sense to you because you suddenly see where your problems are. You suddenly see that in personal devotions it is always a minus.

I mean, it's a lousy area or in your study. If you're working on study habits, like some of you probably have incredible study habits. I went to school. I had a roomy my sophomore year in College that was unbelievable.

It was a very frightening thing to be as totally disjointed as I am and live with a guy who studies consistently like three and a half hours every evening. Every morning, he's up an hour before anybody else and cranks his best hour and a half of the day into his books. And Consequently was a 4.0. And he was a bit of a drag. He was kind of a social... you know... Anyway, but he was good for me.

He got me to the point where I studied 30 minutes every now and then, which was an incredible move for me to get into the books consistently for 30 minutes without walking into the hall to talk to somebody or walking out of the library to stand on the porch. And little by little, I begin to discover that you can discipline yourself into areas, and these little charts are helpful if you use them so that you can look at them. If you're having problems with your parents, the little thing that was done yesterday morning on the prodigal, if you've got a prodigal spirit, you ought to be working on that. I'm not going to speak on obeying parents this week. I thought about it seriously because I'm doing the obedience thing.

But I think one of the great things that a College student has to put together if you've had parental trouble is to get a concept of honor in your head. What does it mean to honor your parents? Obedience is a child thing, so you're no longer children. Obedience is a dog thing. We have a dog in our family that does not come in a certain room because he's been whipped enough that he knows he doesn't belong in there.

That's called obedience. So you can teach a one year old a two year old. You had a two year old often enough when you tell him not to go in the street, he associates the pain on the rear with the Knoll, and he doesn't go in the street. That's called obedience somewhere you've got to make the transition to honor, and you got to honor your parents. Why?

Because it's a biblical command. I don't think anybody doesn't honor their parents has any right to go out on the street and share Jesus with people and say, it's wonderful to be a Christian if we

haven't put our own parental thing together. See, that's a biblical responsibility. Honor thy father and mother. Why?

So that your days will be long on the Earth. It's kind of saying, hey, if you expect to be honored, you'd better learn to honor. That's a very important thing. If you've got problems in that area, get them on a chart, what they are, and then begin to work on them. And then another little piece of paper is how I get some progress made on any one of those items.

And what I try to do is just every now and then pull my folder out, take about the last five, and just spread them out across my desk and look at them. And man, I can see the minuses. They'll go right across the sheet. I have others that will be minus plus plus minus plus. Those don't concern me other than rectifying and squaring them every time it happens.

I got others that are minus right across the sheet. Family devotions this year has been a minus right across the desk. Well, it really bugs me, and I don't have it solved yet, but it's been bad because of schedules. And then you let schedules become your excuse and it's the pits. You just end up saying wow.

We're not doing it, and you have to get at it. So that's why the charts are helpful. So I encourage you to if you're going to use them, do them consistently for a period of time, something you're working hard on, use it every week or two. I spread them out now over a monthly or a five week thing. But when I started, I did them every three weeks.

And just because of my scheduling process, and that was helpful. Okay. Now we want to kind of talk about a discipleship concept. Let me ask you, if you have a Bible, turn over to 1 Thessalonians chapter five. Incidentally, I don't know whether you're all here or not, but I hope you heard Jill this morning. That was just as good a thing on the Potter and clay as I've ever listened to.

That was just exciting. I love that. It's a great thing. And particularly the end when you really begin to realize how much God has a hold of us and how much he has his hand inside and outside of us and working with us. Okay.

All right. 1 Thessalonians chapter five. We want to now try to talk about discipleship and trying to tie these things together, because it seems to me that what we are as disciples really is kind of formed and thrust by our value systems that we've been talking about for two days. Let me give you a little story that's out of Sports Illustrated, and it was one of those little quips they've got in the back sometimes when they've got those little blurbs in there. And the thing in Sports Illustrated was about Mickey Mantle.

I've used this often because it's a great illustration. It's about Mickey Mantle. Mickey Mantle used to play baseball at the New York Yankees. He now does beer ads. But there was a time when he was a good athlete and Mantle was playing for the Yankees, and his first year that he came up, he came up at 18 years of age. He came to the Yankees the year that DiMaggio retired. Before he ever went to spring training, he was heralded in the New York Times as the next potential Gehrig, DiMaggio and Ruth. Those are the three guys. They said he had the potential to

be like three of the great Yankees of all time, three of the great baseball players of all time, kids 18, right out of high school, never been in a professional uniform, goes to spring training.

At one stretch in spring training, he hit eleven home runs in 13 days. In spring training, he hits the headlines of every paper in the country. I mean, every paper in the country, AP stuff all over the country. Mickey Mantle, new sensation New York Yankees, huge things. In the middle of all of that, he gets a Telegram from his father.

The Telegram says this. Mickey, Congratulations. You have made the headlines in every paper in the United States. Now why don't you settle down and see if you can make the Yankees?

Great information from a father. And he's saying, hey, you've made the headlines and that's neat. But Mickey, it's spring training. Don't let this thing get up here to the point that you end up never wearing the pinstripes because it goes to your head and you play crummy. In professional baseball, there are people, some of you guys that follow baseball. Remember a little guy by the name Billy Berkowitz that played for the Dodgers when they were in that search before they found Ron Cey, some of you baseball fanatics that carry baseball cards or remember Berkowitz, he was one of my favorites when Berkowitz came to the Dodgers. And I've spoken to Dodgers in Chapel for years and I just was so enamored with Berkowitz. A good looking little guy and just classy and fun and exciting on the field and a lot of pepper and true heart, great arm.

And everybody just said, this is the answer the Dodgers are looking for at third base. He lasted seven months in five years. He played on eleven major League clubs and he's out of baseball. You know why?

He can't play a whole season. He is great in spring training. He is great for about a month. And then it all comes apart and nobody knows why his batting average sinks. He makes errors, everything comes off. The wheels, come off the wagon.

And, you know, the Christian faith is like that. Have you ever noticed how we tend to herald people, particularly notoriety people. Guy that scared me to death was Coulson. Coulson accepted the Lord, wrote a book, and almost overnight he is packing sports arenas around the country talking about Jesus, and he doesn't even know what he's talking about yet. Thank God there were some people that got a hold of him and ministered to him.

But you know something, somebody finds the Lord and we immediately the cheers go up. I'm sure that happens right here on campus. Maybe somebody comes to school in the fall and they're not a Christian. All of a sudden it goes around the campus. That so and so finally got things together with God and the whole campus kind of celebrates.

People have been praying for him and everybody kind of goes, all right, and everybody is jazz and they're praying in the doors and people are thrilled to death that have been praying. Then that person blows it. They go do something really weird, get in trouble to school. All kinds of weird things happen. Maybe all the way gets kicked out of Biola over some thing they did.

What is your tendency at that point? Is it to really get on your knees with a group of people and pray that somehow God will hang on to them and care for them? Or is it to walk on their hands

while they're down and criticize them or make little statements like, everybody make this statement. I knew it wasn't real. I want to strangle people who say things like that.

I knew it wasn't real. I never thought they were serious at the beginning. Do you ever make a statement like that? Let me tell you something, folks. It's a long trip from the headlines to discipleship, and it takes your whole life, and that's what it's all about.

Now in Thessalonians chapter five, we're just going to get a glimpse of some things that disciples are and do. And I want you to see this, and I want you to try to get it in the context, not of somebody else's life in this room or on this campus. We're great at that, aren't we? I do that. People preach, and I think, boy, I hope so and so is hearing this. When God is saying, hey, Turkey, listen up, listen up. There's some of this that would fit you. And I think that's where we've got to work from if we're going to be disciples, because it's all an individualistic thing. We've got that stamp and we're our own pot. And that's one of our problems, isn't it?

I got to live with me. I got to live with me before God. Let's take a look at this. Now, this is just a great passage of scripture in my thinking. Chapter five, 1 Thessalonians, let me say first of all, about Thessalonians.

And I'm sure you're familiar, but we have three men involved in the salutation of this book, Paul, Silas and Timothy. Paul is considered to be the writer of this. Many people feel that his writings came under the inspiration of God. After reports from Timothy, who had visited in Thessalonica. Many people feel that maybe Silas penned the letter for Paul.

And Consequently, you get the greeting from the three people, Paul, Silas and Timothy. Timothy comes with faithful messages about the Thessalonians basic thing we read in the opening of Thessalonians that many people have preached on is their work of faith, their labor of love and the steadfastness of their hope. And he talks about in that opening section through those first seven verses, that marvelous little thing. When he's saying, wherever we went, wherever we have been, we have heard this about you.

And that's a great thing. He's really commending him. He's saying, we keep hearing about your work of faith, your labor of love and the steadfastness of your hope, and all of this go wherever we go. And people say something about the Church of Thessalonica. That's what they're talking about.

I've done a comparison study between 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. That's a great study to do incidentally. To see a Church that was really in trouble. Just probably the most carnal Church in the New Testament is the Church at Corinth. And then you come over into the Church at Thessalonica, and you see this marvelous Church that has all of these things going on.

So he commends them and he talks to them about all the good things they're doing. He gives them information throughout the letter. And then he comes to the end of his first letter or near the end of this first letter, and it's like all of a sudden he's saying all of this positive and then some things that have maybe been fed back through Timothy or whatever. Suddenly these words come out. Now notice verse eleven of chapter five.

Therefore, he kind of finishes this positive, therefore, encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing that finishes that thought. Then we read the little conjunction. But. In Scripture, when you see that word, it always turns the thought patterns around. I'm sure you're aware of that. We do it in our writings and they did it in their writings.

Ephesians, chapter two. When he's talking about that we are dead in trespasses and sin, the only thing it responds is our flesh. And you go through those first three verses that are just awful. And then suddenly there's that little conjunction. But God, who is rich in mercy, who loved us with that great love even while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Boy, that is just spectacular. The whole thing just twists. And the remainder of that chapter all runs a totally different direction. You get down to those areas where he's already seated this in the heavenly. For by Grace are you saved through faith that and not of yourselves. It is a gift of God. That's all the rest of that chapter all turned around by one little conjunction.

Just one little word turns the whole thought process same thing here in a completely different fashion. Encourage one another, build up one another. Just as you're also in the thing. You know, it's a great thing to call somebody in and say, hey, you're doing super. It's kind of fun to go talk to a teacher if you're making an A in the class.

Isn't it just fun to go visit? And they just kind of say, boy, you're doing such good work in this class. Some of us would not know that. I mean, we've never had that experience, but there are

some who do that regularly and they're just kind of everybody talks about that marvelous student. So they go together to go and talk to a teacher when you've just flunked and when you flunk, particularly because you've been goofing off and you know it and they know it.

It's one thing at Forrest home to call somebody in who has gone above and beyond the call of duty and really done a job with somebody and just been a great Minister to somebody. I just had one of my guys who heads up our Buildings and Grounds Department. We had a police conference at Forest Home, and we had a young cop in that conference who met the Lord. We had about nine of them but that one young cop had car trouble the day he left. And one of my maintenance guys, who happens to be a good mechanic on Sunday night, was coming up the road, saw this guy having trouble, stopped to find out what the deal was.

And at 11:00 that night, he's under this guy's car in our shop, putting a new starter in his car that he now, in the meantime, has driven 60 miles to get and bring back to the Hill. And he's putting it in this guy's car. And this guy's standing there and he's saying, Are Christians really like this? And Steve is under the car working as this question comes down, and Steve is going, Well, I can't say it's always like this with me. I kind of got involved by asking, what's wrong?

But it was great to call Stephen and say, hey, I just want to tell you something. That's just a great thing you did with that. And we talked about it, and he was thrilled. Tears ran down his face when he tried to tell me how thrilled this guy was as a new Christian, that somebody cared about him, somebody helped him. And it was great to pat him on the back and say, it's super.

And he walked out about this high off the floor. And I just kind of stand there going, Boy, that is neat. It's another thing altogether to call somebody that's just really blowing at their job and you're calling them in to kind of tack them down and say, hey, this is the third time. And if you do this one more time, you're not going to be on this staff. And I have to do that every once in a while.

I let two guys go. Last year. It was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. One guy was a guy I'd worked with for a year and a half just to try to get his life shaped up. Great employee, crummy lifestyle.

And I had spent hours and hours and hours trying to get that guy to turn. And I finally just gave him an ultimatum and said, either get your life shaped up or in 30 days, I want you out of this place. It's up to you. I trust you. I trust you that I'll either see a change or I'll see your resignation.

And I got his resignation. Those are hard kinds of conversations, but you know something? Those in charge in the Church and in the work of Jesus Christ have that responsibility to admonish people, and that's a responsibility they have, and we need to accept it. You know, when I look back over my years in the Ministry, two guys stand out in my mind more than any other, too. And there are two men who admonished me severely at points in my life when I was a little younger. One of them called me in. I'll never be as long as I lived. I had worked for him for three and a half years. He called me in one day and he said, Kraning, I want to know why. Boom.

And he laid this thing out. I said, well, and I started giving him all these he said, I heard this from you two months ago. He said, I want to tell you something. You've got two weeks to prove that this is where you belong or you're gone.

And I was kind of waiting for him to smile. I thought it was a joke. I thought he was going to say, hey, I'm just kidding, but I do want it done. But he didn't say that. The longer I looked at him, the more I knew he wasn't going to say that.

But I want to tell you something. The fur flew for two weeks. Kraning got his wheels in gear. I look back and in fact, I just about seven or eight years ago wrote that guy a letter because I never see him anymore and just thanked him for that 30 minutes in his office, which was awful, but it changed a whole section of my life. And I believe I haven't whipped all of those problems yet, but I believe he made me stronger because he chose to do that.

Now my whole point to you is this one, if you're going to be a leader in the Church, you've got that responsibility. It's going to be yours someday. And some of us kind of start out in a position where we don't have all the leadership and we kind of cruise, and then suddenly it hits us. That's my responsibility. The other side of that is how do I respond to admonishment?

How do I respond to being admonished if I need it? See, some of you have been admonished a great deal in your life. Some of the rest of you have seldom been admonished. You have to think a little bit to think of anybody who's chewed you out. Some of the rest of you don't have to think three days.

You just go, oh yeah yeah I just had that happen about a week ago, you know. Because we kind of function like that. But how do we respond to it? Now he's saying to us in this passage, see those who diligent labor among you, who have charge of you, who admonish you, what is your responsibility as a disciple? That you esteem them highly in love because of their work. Now think about it. I very often at Forest Home we have family camps, and I'm always intrigued when somebody writes on we have an evaluation at the end of the week.

I'm always intrigued when somebody writes on their evaluation sheet, which I read all of those where it says Church affiliation, they write down looking for a Church. I'm always intrigued with that, particularly if I see it the second year there at Forest Home, it was on there the first year, and now it's on there a year later again. You know what that tells me? They don't go anywhere.

They shop a little bit. They go when they feel guilty, but they're not really part of a body. And I think sometimes we tend to feel I want to get into a Church either where I like the preacher or my personality fits his personality or he's fun. I want to go here so and so because he's fun. I enjoy hearing he is just it's fun to go hear him preach.

You know something? There is nothing in scripture that says I should identify with a body of believers because the preacher is fun or because my personality fits his personality. And this is kind of my place. I've had people say to me, we just can't find a Church that really fits our thing.

Ever wondered what that is? I've asked them, what is your thing? And their answer is usually, well, you know, if I knew, I wouldn't have asked. I'm always intrigued that, well, you know, you know what I mean? I said, no, I really don't know what you mean.

What is your thing? Well, and then they'll tell you all the things that have been wrong with the places they've gone. And usually it has had to do with personalities. It has not had to do with Ministry. It has not had to do with admonishment.

It has not had to do with instruction. It has had to do with personalities. Usually not all of us, but usually. Let me just give you what I wrote down. I wrote this down.

Our discipleship, our relationship in a Church, our responsibility cannot be based on personality likes or dislikes. It must be based on what God wants for us. Because Christian worship and the mission of the Church is far too important to be based on personalities. The Ministry that we have in the world is far too important to be based on personalities. For me to sit around and fuss about a guy's personality when I've got a whole body of believers that need to be moving and I need to be moving within that and among them and be sharing my gifts and what I am.

And I can't somehow sit off to the side and say, well, he bugs me. I happen to be a member of a Church where the pastor of that Church and I don't agree on a number of things. We have lunch regularly to discuss our differences. And I love him dearly. I love him dearly.

I have tremendous admiration and respect for what he's done, but we don't agree in some areas. And I love disagreeing with him. And I think he loves disagreeing with me, but I support him and I pray for him and I care for him. And I've seen that Church move among people in our community and people find Christ and begin to grow and move. And for me to sit off to the side somewhere and say, well, boy, I didn't agree with what he said this well, big deal.

And I'm just saying, hey, if we're going to be disciples, we've got to be responsible for the leadership that's over us, and that never changes. I'm now the director of Forest Home, and I have a board of directors, 16 guys who are my bosses. And that is really frustrating sometimes. I got 16 guys who are in their spare time tell me what to do, and that's frustrating sometimes, but that's the way the organization is set up. My responsibility is to them.

I can go out here and run into walls on my own, but it won't accomplish the purpose of what Forest Home is there for. And that's part of what we're all about if we're going to be part of the Church. Now, let me give you a little thought about what maybe we need to be to one another. Maybe that'll fit good into the structure. Look at 2 Thessalonians chapter three.

I just want you to think about this little portion of Scripture. I don't know whether you've read this or not or studied it. It's an interesting little portion of Scripture beginning at verse eleven.

Now notice what it says for we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all. That may fit well for some on this campus, I don't know, doing no work at all, but acting like busy bodies. Plenty of time to gossip, not much time to work. Now, such

persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. He's saying, hey, get your act together.

But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. Now notice these next two verses. If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him so that he may be put to shame. When you first read that verse at face value, you kind of go, Whoops, what is that? Then it comes on down and says, yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Now, may the Lord of peace himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all. As I study this verse, I became intrigued with the fact that he's kind of saying to us this, when there is a brother or sister that's in trouble, when there's a brother or sister that's not doing what we know is pleasing to God. We got a brother or sister out here in left field somewhere. He's really saying, don't contribute to their problem, don't support their problem.

Don't pretend that it's okay to do that. But you have a responsibility as a brother or a sister in the Lord to admonish them and care for them. He said, don't treat them like enemies out there. He said, you have a responsibility to admonish them. Have you ever admonished a fellow student on the campus.

I'm sure some of you have somewhere along the line, some of you would be that scared you to death. Just the thought of admonishing someone, the toughest admonishment is peer admonishment in my thinking. See, when I admonish somebody as a director of Forced Home,

there is a rank of the organization that comes into play and it's kind of expected. Somebody's blowing it and they know, I know I think they'd be disappointed if I didn't say something because it's expected, because of my position that I would react to that or respond to that. However, when you live in the dorm across the hall from each other or when you go to class together every day, it's a whole different ballgame. You're admonishing a peer.

Now, see, and yet he's saying his brother's, sister, we have a responsibility to keep one another accountable and that's really what he's saying to us. You have the responsibility to keep someone accountable. Let me tell you, one of the best things you'll ever do if you haven't done it. And some people never learn this, guys don't learn it. I never got in a group like this until about seven years ago is to get two other people preferably people that are not your best friends, people that you kind of know like here on the campus, maybe a couple of people, you know of your own sex and like three guys and just have a place set and once a week you meet in that place for a set amount of time.

Guys I meet with, we meet for 1 hour, you might meet for 30 minutes and we basically share with one another where we are spiritually. We basically share our hassles with one another and we share our observations of one another. That's been the most helpful thing I've ever had is guys looking at me and questioning my schedule, guys looking at me and saying, Kraning, how come this or how come that? But they're not guys that are saying to be nasty to me. They're guys that are saying because they love me.

If I was in trouble today in South Africa, I could call those three guys and they would do anything they had to get to me if they thought that I needed them. Hey, you don't have lots of people like that in the whole world develop a relationship like that where we hold one another accountable, see, and we admonish one another. That's part of the Brotherhood of discipleship. That's part of what we're for to one another. We're not here to be backslappers all of the time.

It's great to be an encourager. It's also great to be an Admonisher. Let me give you a little illustration of this. Rob Scribner. Robbie has been a good friend of mine for a lot of years.

Used to play for the Rams. And Robbie, one day I did a Rams Chapel and we had lunch or had breakfast afterwards. And we sat and talked a long time. And Robbie was telling me about another member of the Rams who I won't mention his name, but he's extremely well known and has been around for a long time. Robbie said, you know, this guy claims to be a Christian. He comes to Chapel every week, very much involved with the Christian guys on the team.

And he said on the road he lives awful. He said he's got women in every city. And he said he is just an absolute disaster. And he said he is really hurting the Christian faith. He's really hurting the young Christians on the team, the guys that are new in this, that are really trying to live for Christ.

He said, they watched that lifestyle and they just say, hey, this thing doesn't go together. And he said, he's klling us. He said, what do you suggest? I said, I suggest you take him out to dinner

and just hit him right between the eyes with it. And he looked at me and he said, have you seen him?

I said, yeah. He said, up close? I said, yeah. He said, you know he's 6'5"? Yeah.

You know he weighs 260? I said, yeah. He said, have you seen me Kraning? He sitting across.

He said, have you seen me Kraning?

He said, he might kill me. I said, Granted. I said, you're asking me what do I owe this brother? I said, do you believe he knows Christ? He said, yes, Sir, I do.

He said, I just think he's never got his lifestyle plugged into what he believes. I said, Then you owe it to him.

He said, I don't think I can do that. I said, well, fine. I said, you don't do it for me. I'm just telling you. I said, I think you owe it to him.

Well, to make a long story short, he did it. They went out to dinner, sat in a restaurant. Good restaurant. I got all done eating. Bobby says, kind of ready to go.

And the other guy said, hey, great meal. Great. I want to thank you. Ready to go. And he's ready to get up. His Hulk is ready to get out of his booth.

Said, no. He said, I brought you here. I wanted to feed you, but I want to talk to you. And Rob just turned to him, said, I want you to know something. You're killing us.

And he just unloaded on him. And Robbie later said, he said, I didn't know whether he would throw me out of the booth. I didn't know whether he'd get up and leave and whether he never speak to me again and whether he beat me up. He said, I didn't know what he'd do. And he said as we sat there, he said, all of a sudden the big tears started to run down his face.

He said, that big football player looked at me and he said, thank you. I never thought about it. I didn't really realize what I'm doing. I want to tell you something. In the last three years, that guy has changed tremendously.

He's still got some problems, but he has changed tremendous because a brother said, hey, you're killing us. He admonished him. And we need to do that for one another. And then we, in turn, need to be responsible for the leadership that is over us, to esteem them highly in love because of their work. Okay, let's take the next little section.

We want to do one more. Second thing that I wrote down is the disciple and the weaker brother or sister. Now, let me give you some thoughts on this. I don't have this all put together, but I've got some thoughts on it. And he talks to us about this whole concept in verse 14. And we urge you, brother, admonish the unruly, which we've been talking about, encourage the fainthearted and help the weak.

Let me ask you a question. Scripture talks about weaker brothers and sisters in the faith. How do you identify them? You ever thought about it? Have you ever looked at somebody or have you ever had a mental concept, even if you didn't say it, that that person seems to be a weaker brother or sister?

You see somebody that kind of struggles along and maybe you've been a Christian a long time. Maybe they've been a Christian a short time. However, that is no criteria. I've seen long term Christians that are really struggling. I've seen short term Christians that are flying and so of you.

How do you identify a weaker brother or sister? Anything in your mind strikes your mind? That would be things that would make you say to yourself, Gee, that's probably a weaker brother or sister in the faith. Anything strike your mind.

Student:

Lifestyle.

Bob Kraning:

Lifestyle. Okay, probably lifestyle. The fruit that is a result of them being a Christian that doesn't seem to be visible. Okay. Anything else strike your mind?

Student:

Conversation

Bob Kraning:

Conversation, maybe language. The way they talk things they talk about things they don't talk about. Anything else?

We have a responsibility there. Obviously, we have to make an identification. Right. Let me give you my suggestion. Don't know that I'm right, but let me give you my suggestion.

And it was pointed out to me at a dinner I sat at recently that really hit me. Sitting at a dinner in a home. There were ten people there. Two people across the table in the middle of the meal said to me, does so and so work on your staff at Forest Home? And he named a long term employee at Forest Home.

I said, he sure does. And he said, well, they live around there. I said, oh, yeah, his wife. We talked a little bit about him, and my mind is churning on this guy because he's a good friend, but he within the structure of our staff I look at him as a weaker brother, I'll tell you why. He's a kind of a person that if you don't commend him on a very regular basis, he assumes he's doing terrible and his whole production comes apart.

There are people like that. If you don't get to him very regularly and say, hey, you did a super job of this, or you're doing a great job or thank you for such and such, he assumes there's something wrong. I got other guys on my staff, they just go and they assume everything's okay until you stop them. They just run that way. Everything is neat, and they're just all of a sudden you say, hey, you're doing... Really? And they're totally shocked that they didn't do it well, and they function that way.

They're very strong people. He tends to be a weaker brother. You've got to constantly keep him going. Good if you keep him going, but you got to work at it. They said to me, you know those

two people, that gentleman, his wife led my wife and I to Christ. And then he said, I guess he's the strongest Christian we've ever met.

And we got in the car that night. My wife said to me as we got in the car, she said, honey, did you hear that statement? I said, yeah, did I ever. Because she and I have talked about this gentleman because he's a dear brother. She said, did you hear that statement?

And we spent the whole rest of the way home talking about who is the weaker brother. You know what I came to a conclusion on? Every one of us are weak to someone in some areas. Every one of us are strong to people in certain areas, every one of us have areas of weaknesses and we have areas of strength. Now, some people have very visible areas of weakness.

See that's lifestyle that suddenly comes out and we see that and we in horror, say that is a weaker brother. See what they did. Some of us have a lot of stuff going on inside of us that we're just smart enough and clever enough to cover up. And we've got weaknesses.

That's why meeting with four guys an hour every week is very helpful to me. I can talk about some of the inside gut stuff that's going on in me, where I'm hurting. I've had the last year, probably the toughest year in my Ministry, just personally just trying to figure out where I am at this point in my life. I kiddingly. Said, I talked to Guernsey yesterday morning about my midlife crisis.

I leaned over to Guernsey on the platform and I said, Guernsey, I think I've got a midlife crisis. Can you help me? That's when Guernsey leaned over and said, Kraning, no way. He said, it'll cost you. It's my friend.

But, you know, it's interesting. I've just had a lot of struggles in that area, and it's been neat to have somebody to sit down and be able to kind of unload that and get it into perspective. I can't get it into perspective when I'm wrestling with it. I got to get it out and have somebody like a Guernsey who he did talk to me about it yesterday, get it out and get it into perspective for you by just asking you some questions. We need that from one another because we have areas where we're weak.

Now, some people are obviously weak. The rest of us have areas of weakness. And when someone has an area of weakness and that happens to be a strength with you, your responsibility within the family of God is not to say, well, I will never have that problem. That's what we're inclined to do mentally, or we're inclined to be judgmental and say, how could they possibly be going through that? Say when God is saying, hey, help the weaker brother or sister at the point of their need.

You don't classify people and say, weak sister. You pick out an area of your strength and their weakness and you Minister to that brother or sister in that area. That's what the family of God is all about. That's what the Church of Jesus Christ is all about. And when you get a body of believers together, you've got all these strengths and all these weaknesses and all these strengths can Minister to all these weaknesses.

And what that ends up being is you and I ministering to one another, and that happens all through the body of Christ. Some people, it's a very close ministration because they are our best friends. Other people, it's a very distant thing because we only touch contacts through a Sunday school class or through serving on a committee or being a part of something together within the structure of the organization. But that's what the Church is all about. Help the weak be available to the weak.

See if you're flying in one direction and here's somebody who isn't. How available are you in that area? Let me give you my best illustration out of all of my Ministry. I was walking out of a building at Forest Home several years ago. This girl has now graduated from UCLA.

I was walking out she was that year going into a senior year in high school. I was walking out of the building after three big winter conferences back to back. We had had 1500 kids on the grounds in nine days. And I was tired. And I had one thing in mind and that was to go home.

And I glanced at my watch and as I started out the door, this girl came in the door, and she was a girl that was large, she was tall, she had a husky male voice. And she came up to me and kind of approached me. She was in bib overalls and came up kind of strong and said, Mr. Kraning and she said, Could I talk to you? And I immediately glanced around the room to see if I had staff guys there that I could give her to because I glanced at my watch again.

It was eleven minutes till eleven. And I thought, I want to be home by 11:15 and I've got a 20 minutes drive. Well, as I'm looking around, I see everybody has left the building. She says to me, do you have time for me? I said, yeah, let's sit down.

So we sat on the floor and as I sat down, I glanced at my watch. I'll never forget it was eleven minutes till eleven. And in my mind I'm thinking, at 11:00 I will be in my car on the way home. Whatever her problem, I will solve it in eleven minutes. And I sat down with every intention of being out of there in eleven minutes.

I walked out of that building at 2:15 in the afternoon and probably met a person who affected my Ministry as much as anybody I have ever met. She began by telling me that she had seriously tried to commit suicide twice, which I found out later was really true. You're never sure when somebody tells you that how serious they were. Then she shared with me that her father was a paraplegic. She shared with me that her mother was an alcoholic and that her brother had run away and nobody knew where he was.

And she laid out this awful picture of her family. And then she shared her hopelessness and helplessness with me. And then she said to me, and I'll never forget it. She said, But I came here and for the first time I can remember, people spoke to me. People seem to care about me.

And I met Jesus as my savior. And this big smile broke across her face and she said, and I have hope.

And as we were talking, I noticed that she had a beard that she shaved all across her chin.

And later on I said to her, I said, Tell me about your voice. And this. When I was a little girl, she said, I had a childhood disease. And she said, they gave me male hormones to correct the disease, but nobody ever did anything about the male hormones. Now I have all these problems and the big tears were over.

She kind of shared with me where she was. I guess we spent 3 hours doing that.

She walked in here today. You would never dream that's the girl that walked in that hall that day, God's done some beautiful things with her life. She led her mom and dad to the Lord, she led her brother to the Lord. And she's graduated from UCLA Magna cum laude.

But you know something? I came within an inch of missing that whole experience out of selfishness.

Just an inch. I have never since been anywhere when people choose up sides that I'm not aware of who gets chosen last or who gets told sit over there and you can play next week.

Do you know there are people around us that get told that every day? Listen to what I wrote down and we'll quit. This is the thing I wrote down. Most of us are inclined to spend time with the strong and the successful and the dynamic, in our opinion. Why?

Because they're attractive to be with. They would be more useful to the Church, and they certainly appear to be more wisdom to the world. So we choose to spend our time there and the weak and timid and the fearful stand in the parking lot while the dynamic go have pizza.

And that's often how the family of God functions.

I'll tell you something. There are people wherever you go in life, including this campus, who probably need a piece of your time and a piece of your life far more than the people you spend all of it with. Some of you aren't even aware they're here, or if you are, you view them from afar and aren't quite sure how you'd even talk to them if you had the chance.

I want you to know that little Gal really plugged into my head about what responsibility is about, what discipleship is all about when it comes to the disciple and the weaker our brother's sister, in our estimation. See, we estimate who's weaker. Occasionally we see something that's obvious, but many times we estimate who is weaker, and we make our criticisms. Jim [inaudible].

Some of you know Jim, he's a Biola Grad. Great friend of mine. A great statement. He said, the Christian Army is the only army in the world that tends to shoot its wounded.

And we're kind of like that sometimes. He said, hey, you want to be a disciple, you want to set up a value system. You have a responsibility to weaker brothers and sisters in your faith, and you are one and you are the other to them. And that's how we function. [inaudible]

So I encourage you. Okay, take a break. And we'll kind of crank the rest of this passage tomorrow. It's great passage of scripture. We'll kind of crank.

This is discipleship. This is what it's all about. It's a walk out of our value system. Okay, we'll do it again tomorrow and finish it up.

[First recording ends. Clip from a secondary, unconnected recording by Bob Kraning begins]

Doing then he gives us this little thing. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you and have charge over you in the Lord.

And depending on your translation, the next word there will be and admonish you or instruct you. You probably have one word or the other there, depending on what you're looking at, either admonish you or instruct you. Now notice 13 that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. The first little thing that I wrote down is the responsibility of a disciple to leadership, which you will have for all of your life the responsibility of a disciple to leadership.

Some of you in this room probably are going to be in positions of leadership within the Church, and you're going to be on maybe the other end of this to a point. Many of you may be in the school of business. There are other kinds of things that you're going to be doing. You're going to be layman, hopefully in churches that are good evangelical churches that are building you up in the faith and encouraging you and helping you and admonishing you. And within the ranks of

that, if you're going to be in the position you need to be as a disciple of Christ, not just a headliner who cruises through, but a disciple of Christ, then you have a responsibility to the leadership in that Church.

Currently, the greatest practice you would have would be to practice toward the leadership of this institution. See, you are here to be a part of this institution for a period of time for the purpose of an education. You've come here primarily because either you or somebody in your family was keenly interested in that education, having a Christian thrust or slant to it. So whatever your field of study and pursuit is in this institution, those are the reasons, probably why you're on this campus. There are people in charge on this campus who have various areas and they're in charge of it.

You have people in dorms that have certain responsibilities. You have people in Dean spots that have certain responsibilities. You have a person in every classroom who is a teacher who has the responsibility of that classroom. And it would seem to me the greatest thing we could do within this context, plus most of you probably worship at a local Church would be to get this thing set in our mind that we have a responsibility in this area toward leadership that is part of discipleship and must be a part of our lifestyle. Now, let's see.

Let's just look at it and see what he talks about. I wrote down four or five things that really struck me. He says, we requested you, brethren, appreciate those who diligently labor among you and have charge over you. First of all, he says that those who labor among you. He's saying, first of all, it's hard work.

It's not easy being in charge. It's an interesting thing when you work in an organization and you discover very quickly that the further up the ladder you move in the organization, the more different your role becomes in that organization. I went to Forest Home as the high school director at Forest Home, and I started out and worked for six years in that capacity. I just kind of ran high school camps and ran around the country and spoke to high school people. And I did about 100 assemblies every year.

I was with national assemblies, and I just kind of cruised and did my thing and I didn't have a lot of responsibility other than the camps I was in charge of I was everybody's friend at forest home. When I was on the grounds I smiled at everyone and they smiled at me and I spoke and they spoke and they said, hey, Kraning is fun and I said, hey, they're fun and I did my thing. Then one day some things begin to change. When Stanley Collins was our director one day he called me in and he said, I am interested in you taking a new position at forest home. I would like for you to be the associate director of forest home in charge of personnel.

Well, for a guy who's been cruising around the country talking to high school kids that didn't really excite me at all I said personnel he said, yeah, I want you to run the staff. Well, you know, when that was announced ultimately, it was amazing how much certain relationships changed. Suddenly I was in a position to call some shots and everybody knew it and people talk to you a little different. People are not quite as jovial as they were before. When you call them into your office they come in a little tense particularly if they don't know the nature of the call and all of a sudden you find yourself in a strange position and for me it was a very strange position where I

was trying trying to kind of be a nice guy And I was trying to say, hey, let's just do it together and then finding that I got somebody who's not performing well and I've got to call them and I got to [secondary recording abruptly ends].