

Where am I? 1981 Torrey Conference

By Mark Lee

Speaker 1: Welcome once again, a warm Southern California welcome to the second.

Lee: Thank you for that outburst of emotional affection that was prompted by our great leader. If you have your Bibles, Exodus 18, Exodus, chapter 18. Have you ever really thought in the terms of reading about a conversion in the Old Testament? You're impressed by, for example, reading the story of the conversion of the Apostle Paul on his way to Damascus? Here you have the conversion of a worthy man who is a pagan priest and comes to the point of worshipping the Lord, probably through what he sees God to be doing in the life of his son in law, whose name is Moses. Notice the conversion of Jethro, Moses father-in-law, the first twelve verses of chapter 18 of Exodus. Now, Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, his people, how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.

And Jethro, Moses father-in-law, took Moses wife, Sephora, after he had sent her away and her two sons, of whom one was named Gersham. For he said, I have been a soldier in a foreign land, and the other was named Eliazer. For he said, the God of my father was my help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. Then Jethro, Moses father in law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was camped at the Mount of God. And he sent word to Moses, I your father in law, Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her.

Then Moses went out to meet his father in law, and he bowed down and kissed him, and they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that

the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey and how the Lord had delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. So Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods.

Indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people. Then Jethro, Moses father in law, took a bird offering and sacrifices for God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses father in law before God. Now, you may not recognize in all of that language what the story is, but the story is the conversion of Moses father in law. Jethro, keep that somewhere in the back burner of your mind as we talk about the issues of the evening.

Monday night, we talk to you about building mountains, mountains of cursing, mountains of blessing. We use the story from the Old Testament, Mount Garrison, the mountain of blessing, Mount Ebal, the mountain of cursing. And we discovered that it's up to you to decide whether or not the problem before you is going to be turned into a mountain of blessing in the way you solve it, or a mountain of cursing by falling under it. So we talked about that. We talked about ideas being cursing or blessing.

We talked about stereotypes being cursing or blessing. And then we talked about our emotions, which is a dominant thing in our time, of becoming cursing or blessing to us. And then last night

we talked about, who am I? And we discovered that we are intimate persons born to love. We are intimate persons, and then we ought to be persons of service.

We have been called for a reason outside of ourselves, and that reason is that we may become service. And then finally we rise above the ordinary in human creation by the developing of personal integrity, we become someone that is Christ like if we're Christians. And tonight we're going to talk about Where am I? A much more difficult question to answer than the question, who am I? Now, I'd like to set a little background.

I think life is a serious Disneyland, if I may put it that way. You enter into Main Street and you go onto the concessions. You get to the first concession. It's not too difficult. You find out that it's called teeter Totter. And what happens is that you get one idea at this end of the teeter totter, and another idea there. And the secret is to keep them in balance. One of the signs of maturity is to resolve the balance between the obvious contradictions of all of life. The ability to understand this becomes very perceptive to people who understand their theology. For example, the scripture makes it clear that I have an enormous responsibility, that a lot rests on me.

But at the same time, the scripture makes clear that that which is eternal rests upon him. How do I ever get the balance between my responsibility and God's Grace? Where does that really come in? You see, I understand the scripture when it says to me, I shall work out my own Salvation with fear and trembling. But it's God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

And if you get with some people the moment you emphasize everything on God, they'll say, oh, yes, but what about your responsibility? And if you begin to talk about your responsibility, you're bound to get a theologian and say, hey, you can't do anything. God does it all. And therefore, one of the secrets to great maturity in your perceptions is to understand how to bring out a balance in your life between the yolk in which you rest and you work. And so the yoke in which Jesus also works. We are true yoke follows with him.

Well, I go on to the next one and the next one and the next one. And then I got to a little section that's on life. And there I discover that life, according to the people who are playing it here, is like checkers. Now, checkers relatively simple. It's just my luck that I get a checker player in here. It's going to challenge this. But checkers, I think relatively simple. You can learn all of the moves in a few minutes. All you have to do is to take the red men and the black men and you move them one block at a time.

Unless the opponent gets in front of you and there's no one beyond them, you can jump him. The secret is to get as many of your men up there to the King's row. And then you can move back and forth at will. And it's not very long until you have mastered the moves. Now, I didn't say that you could beat every checker player, but you know the moves.

And as you look at it, you realize that checkers is a relatively simple game. And as you watch it, you look around and the crowd is there and they all want to try it because they realize that they can play that game. That is a relatively easy game to play. And then someone taps you on the shoulder and say, Move along, move along. I'm satisfied here.

Well, I may not be satisfied here, but at least I know what's happening. There's just not too much complexity. And the person says, on this particular understanding, you've got to move along. And so you move along and you discover chess. Now, chess is considerably more than checkers. You discover that each move has its distinctive direction. And you understand that the front row of pawns can move two on the initial move if you want to, one if you like. When it comes to an opposite one, it simply moves diagonally and takes that piece if they want to take that piece. And so you understand how the pawns move. You learn that the Castle goes in a straight line as long as the line is unobstructed.

You learn that the Bishop goes at an angle, never in a straight line, but at an angle. And of course, you like the knight. The knight is my favorite piece because you can be tricky with the knight. You see, they just don't watch that knight carefully enough. It can go up two over one, up one over two. And that's especially well done when the opponent is not really up on his game. And then, of course, the King can move one block in any direction as long as he doesn't move into check.

The King probably is the simplest one to move. But of course, you've got to protect him because if he's in check, you've lost the game. And then the Queen of course, is the last piece, and she can move in any direction, just like real life. Now, here you have the chess board and you look around. There are not so many people around now.

And you hear that if you do this well, you'll get your name on the front page of the newspaper. You may even get to play the Russian master Spassky. And so you begin to work at that. And after a while you think, boy, this is a tough game, all right. But there's something wonderful about it because there are a lot of people who aren't here. They're still over at the checkerboard because they would like life to be just that simple. Just three or four major moves, that's all. And if that's the way I can get through life, that's fine. But you find out that the people who really count are the ones that are perhaps around this board until someone taps you on the shoulder. Move along. I thought this was enough. Move along and you go and you discover that chess can be played in Multidimension. Not only do you play it on a horizontal plane, but you can play it on a vertical plane. And so you have this board and this board and this board and this board, and you play it in every direction that you can go and you shout as soon as you can, stop the world. I want to get off.

If this is the complicated life that I have to live, dear friends, it's more complicated than that. One of the problems that we face is that we constantly want life to be simplified. Keep it simple. Keep it simple. Keep it simple. And by the way, I'm all for keeping it just as simple as we can keep it. Because when you kept it as simple as you can keep it, it's still more complex than multidimensional life really is. It's complex. And the people who want it just so that everything is lined up and you can tell just exactly what the numbers are and just where the letters are. It just doesn't come out that way. The really mature person understands that.

Now let's talk a little bit about those Multidimensions and whether or not we're going to build them into mountains of blessing or mountains of cursing. Now, these have been talked about

before. They've become popular in the last three or four years because of several books on the market. Probably the most popular one was Gayle She's Passages, but it appears in many different approaches. And in fact, it appeared in a good deal of research before she popularized it and did it very well, as a matter of fact, in her book. So let's talk about it. There are four of these dimensions I want you to understand.

The first one is hiatus. H-I-A-T-U-S. Hiatus. Hiatus is a good word. It used to be used more than it is today. Hiatus, is simply a break between the normal activity of your life and the resumption of the normal activity of your life. For example, if you are a College student and you have finished the full term, you have the Christmas hiatus. We tend to call it the Christmas vacation, but it is a break in the semester until the start of the next semester or you have the summer hiatus, the end of the spring term until you have the beginning of the fall term. Everyone in the course of his life will discover that he has a number of hiatus periods that will occur in his life. And unless he is intelligent in treating them, those hiatus periods may indeed destroy him. Where am I? I may be in a hiatus period of my life.

Now if I am in a hiatus period of my life, am I going to turn it into a mountain of blessing or a mountain of cursing? Second, I may be in a traditional period of my life. A traditional period simply means that you've drawn upon your blood, you've drawn upon your family, you've drawn upon your past experience, you are a part of a great tradition, a tradition of language, a tradition of culture and all the rest of it. Now some people are turning all of that into a mountain of cursing. They're trying to escape it, they're trying to dump it, they're trying to say that it doesn't make any difference, they're trying to put it down.

But as a matter of fact, we can turn our tradition either into a mountain of blessing or a mountain of cursing. Third is the discovery period and most of the persons in this room are in the first really large discovery period of your life over which you have some control. The first great discovery period of your life was your birth, but you don't remember that too well. And that period of discovery when a whole series of things happened in your life, that's marvelous and I'll admit that. But now you have something to say about what's happening in the discovery period of your life and we'll discuss it until finally you come to the fourth period.

And the fourth period is the ending of some of the goals and objectives of your life. Usually when we talk about goals, as I oftentimes do, and enjoy it enormously, we talk about beforehand, we talk about setting goals and then how people get them going and then we just turn you loose and we don't know what happens. Now I'm going to this evening get you at the other end. You made the goal back there. You spent whatever resources needed to be spent of yourself or whatever was available to you and now you're at the end of the goal.

What do you do now? What do you do now in this period that ends with the achievement of some of the best goals of your life? Those are the four things we're going to deal with this evening. Let's go back to Hiatus.

And by the way, if time permitted, we would simply sweep through the Bible and find quite a number of illustrations of each of these. But I'll leave it to you. I'll suggest perhaps several here at the beginning so you get the feel of what I'm talking about. If I would sweep through the

Bible, I find a number of people in hiatus. I find the Apostle Paul in hiatus for three years in the backside of the desert. He knows what he's doing. He's on his way to Damascus to continue his work, especially as it related to his religion. And he is converted. He goes to the backside of the desert and he's there for three years. And in the course of that three years, Saul of Tarsus becomes a changed man.

And the man that we recognize as Paul, we find very difficult to recognize as Saul of Tarsus. He's been through a hiatus in his particular case. If we can take his word for it, there is reason to believe that he turned it into a mountain of blessing. He said neither went I up to those who were Apostles before me. There was something he learned in hiatus that made him the man that he became, made him the man he became.

Now we could take others. Jesus went into a hiatus for 40 days, during which time he was enormously tempted, as we very well know, the temptation of Jesus. And so we could go through the various persons of Scripture and what they did in entering into a blank period, what could have been a blank period in their lives. The longest hiatus I know anything about occurred to Moses. And this is one of the reasons why we turned to Moses and his father-in-law.

Moses was trained, as you very well known in Egypt. I don't have to recite all of that. He has all of the education, he has all of the culture, everything that belongs to a Prince. There is some reason to believe that if Moses waits out his time, he may become the Pharaoh because he is the son of the daughter of Pharaoh and he may become the Pharaoh, but you already know the event. He is a key man in the murder of an Egyptian who is in some confrontation with a Jew. And

Moses knows who he is and lifts his hand against the Egyptian. Now he must run away. He gets down into the desert of Midian, and there he must do something other than a Prince would do.

He becomes a keeper of the sheep.

Now, if you've ever seen anyone that was overqualified, it's got to be Moses. And I can just see him sitting there watching the sheep. And by the way, sometimes you can be humbled, but you can be humbled with a capital H when you're keeping the sheep of your father in law. And there he is. I can just see him going over this here. I was born in such a way as to become a Prince in Egypt, and here I am working for my father in law.

Now, the whole thing may have been even a more dismal story than we could make it in the 20th century. We have reason to believe perhaps his father in law may have even been younger than he was. Remember that when Moses is in the backside of the desert, he is there between the ages of 40 and 80 years of age. And there are reasons to believe that he is near being the brother age of Jethro than that Jethro is the older man. And of course, we know that many of these men, married women who were very much younger than they were.

So we don't know what Moses has put through. But for 40 years, he could have turned that whole thing into a mountain of cursing. He could have grumbled against his father in law. He could have grumbled against God. He could have felt that this was something that was imposed upon him, and it was just too much.

It was virtually being in jail for something that had happened. And then, you know the story of the burning Bush, and he becomes the one who leads the people out in the next 40 years. But he is in a Hiatus period of his life. Now, when you talk about the Bible, oftentimes we can sit there and kind of nod because that happened perhaps 3200 years ago or 3400, depending on what dating you take. But I know a fellow in San Francisco who is 24 years of age.

In the morning, his mother and father get up and go about their work. The father has his professional job, and the woman is very, very busy in her community. This son of there is 24 years of age, waits until he hears no other sound in the house. Mother's gone, father's gone. He's curled up in his bed in the fetal position. He gets up, goes down, shakes a few cornflakes into the bowl and some milk into the bowl, eats the cornflakes, goes back to his bed, crawls up in the fetal position and stays there until the afternoon, sometimes turning on the television, sometimes turning it off, sometimes turning to a book, but seldom doing so. He is in a hiatus period of his life, and if it goes on, he is destroyed. He's destroyed, I do not know. And by the way, when you get to be parents, watch it, your children sometimes will want to do that. They'll want to retreat to themselves, and everybody needs some Privacy, I'll admit that.

But when it begins to happen in such a way that the person has withdrawn, and then it begins to show in their attitudes, they don't like anybody, but that's fair. No one likes them either. They don't think anyone cares. But that's all right, that's fair. They don't care either. They begin to lose any concern for their appearance, as any counselor knows now. Dealing with many of these people, they don't even bother to wash themselves when they get that far. There's every reason to believe that we oftentimes find ourselves on the edge of making that kind of decision, of just

giving up, entering into a hiatus period of our lives, feeling terribly sorry for ourselves and never getting done the things that ought to be done.

Adanija Adenijah couldn't stand the Hiatus period in his life, a time when he like Jesus or he like the Apostle Paul, or he like anyone that goes away in some retreat and creates a hiatus for himself so that he can learn something that he wouldn't learn otherwise. Adanaija couldn't do that. Adanija decides he will seize the throne before the senile father, David is gone. If he had waited, there's reason to believe that perhaps Adanija would have been raised to the throne instead of Solomon. But Adanija can't wait. And now Solomon understands the weakness in Adanija, and Solomon tells Adonijah what he must do. He must go into hiatus, house arrest in the city of Jerusalem. And Adanija can't take that either, and finally runs away and returns. And when he's returned, he's taken, and he loses his life because he cannot accept the pressure of the hiatus period in his life. Now, if instead of that, we would take someone like Moses and study what Moses does when he is separated from all of these other things, when he is full of what I consider to be a sense of emptiness. And there are persons in this room who have certainly gone through that. You are going through it now, a kind of feeling of not knowing for sure about your own existence, not knowing for sure the direction that you're going to take.

You must feel like Moses must have felt a thousand times in the 40 years that he was in the backside of the desert, a kind of hiatus. It is a time of awful turmoil. And oftentimes these people who, even though they are Christians, find that they are not able to pray. They could, but they think they're unable to pray. They think that they're unable to talk to anyone else about what they're going through.

They feel that life is a huge vacuum and is somehow sucking them up till they don't know where. If you could recognize that that is a normal kind of experience, you can either turn it into a mountain of cursing like that 24 year old young man who's done in San Francisco. And by the way, I can repeat those illustrations if you want them. They are all tragic. You can build those empty spaces in your life into a mountain of cursing, or you can build them into a mountain of blessing.

You can go in as Saul of Tarsus went in, and you can come out on the other side, as the Apostle Paul came out. On the other side, you can go in as Jesus went in. And sometimes it comes after an enormous victory, as Jesus had when he was baptized. He comes out of the water. A voice comes from heaven. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. A Dove lights upon his shoulder, illustrative of the Holy Spirit. And he himself is the Son of God. And we read that he is immediately driven into the wilderness to be tempted.

We discovered when we work with married people oftentimes that there is a short period right after they're married in which they're not even sure if they love each other. There's a short period afterwards when all of the goals and all of the hopes and all of the projections that they've made for themselves seem to fade because something has happened, because almost always you'll have a reaction to an action. And if the action is good, the reaction may be just as strong as the goodness in the action. And mature people will know that. And when they know that, they're going to make sure that those dark tunnels of their lives and they can't see the light at the other

end, yet they're going to know that the tunnel does come out. And whatever's on the other side is further up the line than they were when they entered into the tunnel to begin with, hiatus.

The second one is the business of tradition. Tradition. Today, in our time, many of us have lost the enormous benefit of tradition. Tradition. Do you remember the story in Fiddler on the Roof? Nifila goes from the farm into the town, the Jewish gentleman, the farmer who's working with these Russians, and he's selling the milk and cheeses and all of the dairy products that he's provided. And he wears a little prayer apron. He doesn't seem to be a very prayerful fellow, but he's got a prayer apron. And a fellow points to him and asks him what that is. And he says, It's a prayer apron. And then he says, well, why do you wear prayer apron? And he brings himself up and he says, Tradition. And you realize that there is strength for the Jew in his tradition. Some of us have tried to dump our tradition.

We fail to realize that God gave that to us. In fact, if anyone would ask me over the 5000 years or so of human history that we know anything about, what do I suppose is a significant, most clear evidence that God is working in the lives of people would be tradition. It really would. Up until this century, if your father was a storekeeper, you were a storekeeper. And you felt that God guided you that way. Because God gives storekeepers sons who'll be storekeepers. If your dad was a farmer, you'd be a farmer. Why? Because we believe that God is so good that he gives farmers, sons. And by the way, if you want to read some great history, you'll read the history of preachers, because oftentimes a preacher would have a preacher's son who would even succeed him in the pulpit.

Some of the best-known preachers succeed their fathers or grandfathers in the pulpit. Go back and read the story of Jonathan Edwards, read one of the greatest evangelists of England in the last century. They were persons who succeeded either their father or their grandfather. And by the way, sometimes generation after generation in the same pulpit, and they became a tradition that was honoring to God. Jonathan Edwards was such a one.

For example, we have one son who is a true traditionalist. I can remember that. I got caught up in our times because David would come and talk to his mother, come and talk to me. And he said, dad, this is what I want to do. And I tried to talk him out of it, and I tried to talk him out of it for only one reason. That is because I did it. I don't know why. Whenever I think that what I do is so superior that I was talking my son out of it, but I was trying to talk him out of it. I found out that he wanted to be in the same major that I had majored in. He wanted to do some of the same things that I was doing. He wanted to take some of the same fields of work that I had taken. And here I was trying to talk him out of it. Everyone else talking about it. His friends say, oh, you don't want to do what your dad does. And the answer came back from David.

Why not? Well, you just don't do that. Well, why not? Well, you just copycat after your death. No, I'm not. How do you know? Because I'm doing what I want to do tonight. I'm talking about a 32-year-old man, our son David. He took the same work that I did. He did many of the same things, even had some of the same professors that I did.

I had them at the beginning of their career. He's got them at the end. I don't know who had the best of it. No, I don't know if it's better to get them when they're young and bright and don't

know what they're doing or old, know what they're doing and don't do it as fully as they might. But nevertheless, this is the way of it. He went to some of the same schools. My wife knows exactly 25 when he was 25 years old, when he was 25 years old, he was teaching exactly the same course in the same College that I was teaching the hour he was born. I mean, that's tradition. That's tradition. And by the way, the way he prays, the way he talks, the way he acts.

One of the most beautiful things ever happened to my wife and me was in 1979, right up here at Forest Home, where I speak for several weeks every two years on the odd year. I'm not sure why they chose the odd year, but nevertheless, on the odd year. And Bob Craning, bless him, invited our son David all the way from St. Paul, Minnesota, to be the morning speaker. And I was the evening speaker. And my mother was told, his grandmother, my sisters were told, our other children were told. And my wife and I sat there with that family of ours listening to my boy, let it fall, friends. Let it fall. There's no question in my mind, you see.

And by the way, I could use a lot of illustration here. I could drop a number of names out on you. And right away, a whole lot of tradition falls in whether you like those people or not. The Kennedys. You follow back the life of the Kennedys and the tradition that they have, the tradition of their religion, which happens to be Catholic, the tradition of their politics, the tradition of what they are in the state of Massachusetts. And even if we do not care about some of those people and their conduct, as a matter of fact, their tradition is built in their state and they are someone to be conjured with there.

If we'd say, Ford, Henry Ford, what would Hesel Ford, his son, ever have been without him? What would Henry Ford, his grandson, have ever been without him? Tradition, Rockefeller. And so I could add the words, and when those words fall upon you, it's not necessary that you care about those families. The point to be made is simply this, that those people understood tradition, not very much turmoil there. They know fairly well whom they're going to marry. And those marriages, believe it or not, up until recent years, are fairly successful in the course of the lives of those people. Why? They're part of the tradition.

One time old Henry Ford was going to fight it next Monday when the workers came to work in his plants. I think it was in the late thirties, 1930s. He went home that night and his wife said, Henry, what's going to happen? He told her, she says, that's not a part of our tradition. And the next Monday morning I'm making all of this short. The next Monday morning, the member of his Goon squad came in and he said, Call it off. He said, what do you mean, call it off? We're going to fight those strikers. No, we're not. He says, no, we're not. He we laid out all the plans last week. We can win. Don't you believe we can win? Yes, we can win. Well, why not do it? Because my wife said, we don't do that in our tradition. And they called it off.

And he signed with the unions because it wasn't a part, his wife said of their tradition take a look at the scripture. You can build a tradition out of your family. It's something beautiful, something worth holding onto. We are full of them in our family. And if you'd ask me, what has happened as a result, we've all been strengthened by them. A part of our tradition is our Christian way of life. And we look at it and we don't try to think that we're so unusual from everybody that's

preceded us. But we have built a mountain of, I think, devotional tradition that makes all the difference.

Take a look at the Scriptures, those that made tradition good and those who made it ill. I feel sorry, of course, for Jonathan. Jonathan becomes the beloved friend of David. And as he talks to David, it's obvious that David wants Jonathan to come and join him. And indeed, if Jonathan had joined David, David would have been a better man for it. I haven't any doubt of it. But finally, Jonathan looks at David.

And although he extends all of the energy he can to save the life of David, when it comes time to make a decision, he's going to stay with his father. And so when his father goes down to battle, Jonathan goes down to battle with him. And the same battle in which his father loses his life, Jonathan loses his life. Before he goes, he says to David, My father does nothing, neither great nor small, without telling me. There is a closeness between Saul and Jonathan, father and son.

Though the one has become so terribly wicked and the other seems to be impervious to the wickedness of his father, he still loves his father, and he dies in the same battle. David sends down and brings back the two bodies and says, over the bodies a beautiful thing. They were not parted in life, and they'll not be parted in death. There's something beautiful about the tragedy of Jonathan, but it's built for him into a mountain of cursing. Here's Isaac.

Now Isaac can't possibly do what Abraham does. Abraham is a great and good man. Isaac is a good man, but he doesn't have the greatness of Abraham, but he recognizes it. And what makes

Isaac great is the ability to stay within his tradition. And when he goes back to the property that his father's had and he cleans it all up, and the oases are restored and the water comes up into the Wells, we read some beautiful little things, things that you don't pay attention to.

He called them by the names by which his father had called them. He called them by the names by which his father had called them. I hope you have the great, good wisdom that if in your tradition there are those who can Mark blessing to you, that you'll take some time for them. Wisdom didn't begin with this generation, nor with mine, nor the one that preceded me. And if you learned the secret of it, something will happen in your life.

Make a difference. Third one, discovery. This is the tough one. This is the one that many of you are probably engaged in at the moment. You can either go into discovery, which is an enormous period of turmoil. I'll admit that the turmoil is almost equal to the turmoil that you'll find within yourself. If you're in a terrible hiatus. But it's full of turmoil.

Now, you can either enter that discovery period as every normal person should, either in an affirmative way, building mountains of blessing or a negative way, building mountains of cursing. You can either look at your mother and father and virtually curse them out and leave them in anger, as many of us do.

And then we step out into life. We don't know exactly where we're going. The only thing we know is what we don't want to do in working with young people today. This is one thing that

really hurts. When we went off to school 40 years ago, 41 for me, when I went off to school, about three out of four of us knew fairly well what we wanted to do.

And when we knew what we wanted to do, we had a pretty good feeling toward our parents and the elder generation. But I discovered something, even in my generation that those of us who were young, who didn't have any idea about what our direction was. We weren't really clear spiritually. We weren't really clear occupationally, professionally. We weren't really clear about our attitudes toward the opposite sex.

We weren't really clear on some of these matters. These individuals began to create all kinds of problems, not only for themselves, but oftentimes of friends around them. Why? Because they were not discovering something. They were discovering escape only. I can leave my mother and father with a spirit of appreciation. I can leave my father with a spirit of gratitude. I can leave my father and mother and squeeze them and say, I love you. Now send me on my way with your blessing. Or I can leave with a spirit of rebellion. By the way, that doesn't mean I have to do something outward that is ugly. But I know that the rebellion is inside. I may not know who I want to be, but I know I don't want to be Mark Lee's son. I may not know where I want to go, but I know this. I don't want to be in La Mirada.

And if this is the extent of your knowledge of discovery, you're in trouble. You're in trouble, and you want to turn that around and begin to build a mountain of blessing. Not what you're leaving, not to rebel against what you're leaving and the people who are behind you. But what have I to discover? What is there new in my life? It is a beautiful period. It's a period in which you're

going to be afraid. It's a period in which you take some risks if you do all that you ought to do and all the time you're thinking of some way in which to protect yourself because your ego is so large. Therefore, if something goes wrong, you've got to blame it on someone. If the grade isn't right, you blame it on the teacher. If your roommate isn't right, you've got to blame that on somebody else, probably the roommate. And instead of recognizing that, here am I. Now, who am I and where am I going?

There was a fellow on the practice field, and he was going across the practice field limping. There was a parent talking to the coach over on the sidelines. And the parent was upset that the coach obviously saw the student and didn't do anything about it. And so the parent berated the coach and said, don't you see one of your boys there? And the coach said, I see him. Well, he's hurt. The coach said, yes, he is. Well, aren't you going to do anything about it? He says, yes, I am. Well, when are you going to do it? He says, when the time comes. When's the time? When we're alone. When you're alone. That kid may have a broken ankle. He doesn't have a broken ankle. And he says, well, what's he got there? He's hurting. He says, he's got a loser's limp. And the man says, what's that? He says he's just run a race. He thought he'd win. Everyone else thought he'd win. He didn't win. And he says, I can always tell you lose his lip because I see his face before I see his ankle. And he's going across there and he's going to say to his buddies, boy, I could have won, but I don't know, I sprained my ankle on that last lap. He didn't spray his ankle. And the best way I can treat him is when no one else is around. What a wise coach. What a wise coach.

But there are many of us in this room that when things don't go just right. We want to be discoveries. We want our discoveries. We want to be mature. We want to be set free. We want to be our own person. But the moment we get the chance, we get the loser's limp, we get the excuses. We blame it on somebody else. I don't know where I'm going, but I do know where I don't want to be. I don't know what my name is, but I know what name I don't want. And as a result, we do not discover ourselves. And whenever I follow through scripture and I find people who do not discover themselves, and I find those that do. Here's Timothy, he's trying to think of an excuse, any kind of losers limp, excuse that he can give the Apostle Paul.

And the Apostle Paul won't take an excuse. What a coach. Let no man despise your youth. Don't come and tell me you're too young. You've got the Word, you've got the Holy Spirit in your life. You've got Jesus Christ to preach. You've got a congregation to preach to. Stay right where you are. Stay right where you are. And Timothy was hoping, like everything, that the Apostle would call him to be the associate evangelist in that big campaign he's going to hold in Rome.

But the discovery, the discovery that's possible to you when you're willing to take the risks and you're willing to take the blame and you're willing to take the heat, because when it's all over, you're going to be a winner. Because in the kind of race you and I are in, you can all win. Not the way the world runs, the way the world runs, one person wins and all the rest lose. But that's not the way it is spiritually. You run to receive a prize check again, one Corinthians, and you'll discover it because it's so beautiful.

Every single Christian can win when he puts it all together, he really can. And there are no losers in that. You see, for me to make a dollar, I've got to take it away from you. You've got to be out a dollar if I add a dollar. And for the most part, we get caught up with the world's values, because that's the way we think. But that's not the way God thinks. He's made it possible for every single person in this room under Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, to win. And when you win, it doesn't mean that anybody else loses. That's not the kind of competition that we run with him. He is our only competition fore aft. And we need to understand that the last one, the last one is what we're looking at, because we want to know what we're going through hiatus and tradition and discovery for.

I remember when I finished my PhD degree, well, I hadn't finished yet. I had my orals. Everything you do, you aim for those orals. And I can remember my mentor, who's the chairman of your committee. Wonderful fellow. If you have one as much of a champion as mine, you've got a gift. And he was an Italian, Dominic LaRusso. I appreciate Dr. Dominic Laruso. And he came and got me. I was to wait in a certain place until the committee had met and decided what they were going to do to shoot me down. So he came and got me. And as we were walking from the end of one building, Partington Hall in Parrington Hall in the University of Washington, and all the way up to this place where I was to meet them, he tried to encourage me. He says, now, don't worry. I'm not worried. He says, Well, I don't want you to be nervous. I said, I'm not nervous unless you keep talking the way you're talking.

He says, Well, I just don't want you to be nervous. I said, okay, I'm not nervous. He says, Well, I am. And I said, Is that because you're nervous because of this or you're nervous because you don't think I'm going to make it? He says, no, I think you'll make it.

But he said, I'm nervous. When we got to the door and before he opened the door for me to enter in for the next 3 hours to be cross examined, whether or not I knew my stuff, he turned me around and he says, Mark, I just want to tell you something. When you get in there. He says, You've worked hard enough, and I know what you've done. You know more about your subject than any man in that room.

Now, those are top notch scholars. They know what they're talking about when they talk about what they know about. But it so happens that you've done a research in an area where you know more than they know. You know more than I know. See, that's the way you get to be a scholar. You know more and more about less and less. You know everything about almost nothing, and then you get it. And so I don't know. That kind of encouraged me. I had discovered something, and that discovery was my own. And I went in there and it turned out just exactly the way he said there were many minutes in the course of those hours where I was the teacher to scholars whom I would never be able to match simply because my discovery and what I had done was something that they had not yet done. When we walked out of there, he said, Stand right there. And I had to stand while they took a vote. And you do all of those years of work, so they take one vote after you finish your oral on your dissertation, and then you either made it or you didn't make it. It's either all or nothing.

So I stood there. Then I was getting a little bit nervous, and he walked out. He put his arm around my shoulder, stared down the hall. He says, you made it unanimously. I said, thanks. He says, has it hit you yet? I says, well, when I get my wife here, I'll feel better. And he said, well, it hasn't hit you, has it? And I says, no, I guess not. What's supposed to hit me? And he stopped and he said, do you realize, pardon me, you don't have to take another examination. You don't have to hand in another book report. You don't have to do another research project. I can see the relief just sweeping over this congregation. You don't have to satisfy another course. You know, he was right. And all of a sudden I felt the animation. I never had to do it again. The goal was over, and I realized it was worth it. I didn't realize until that moment it was worth it.

We've had four children. I adore them. I give my life for them if giving my life would save theirs. We have four children, but they're all reared. The oldest one is 36. The youngest one is 26. All of the things we were supposed to do, we were supposed to provide clothing for them and food for them, protection for them, shelter for them. All the things you're supposed to do for children, we did those things, but it's all over now. The goal is done. We don't have to at least, I hope we don't have to feed them anymore and shelter them and so on. In other words, we can look back and see that it's done. It's up to them now to do the same thing for their children.

Now, when you reach that when you've achieved those goals and you ought to make some so that you can get to the end of them and realize what's happened in the completion of those goals, and you look back over it and you realize what wonderful, wonderful things have occurred. I followed the Apostle Paul. No wonder the Holy Spirit gives the Apostle Paul the authority to write about what happened to him and how he ended up until finally he says, I have done it all.

I've run the race. I've finished my course. I'm ready to offer myself up. No wonder the Apostle Paul becomes for us the champion of what it means to be a Christian, because he does exactly the thing that we've just talked about. I mentioned, I think, last evening about Harriet Harrod should have come to the end of 45 years as the leader in that part of the world.

In Palestine, after all he had done. He was a rhetorician. He was a man of enormous ability as far as administration was concerned. He was a builder who had built what was the temple in the days of Jesus, the generation following, and all the rest of it. Instead, when he could have stood on the laurels of a job well done, Harrod becomes an ugly and weasand crippled, spiritually crippled old man, because he hadn't learned the secret.

Now, I've said all of that to say this, and by the way, you won't find this in any of the literature in the field. It's multi-dimensional chess. Now, what do I mean by that? The literature suggests that you're either in hiatus or in tradition or in discovery, or you're at the end of some of the goals of your life. In my opinion, you have all four of them going at once. That's what makes it so difficult.

All four of them are going at once, if time permitted. I would tell you about my wife and I and how we are going through a hiatus in one aspect of our lives. We're going through a tradition in another aspect of our lives, a new discovery in one part of our lives and setting new goals after reaching so many of our goals. We didn't realize that you set goals, made them. And now you've got to make new ones again.

So you go up a new mountain on the other side and we're in the process of doing that. And when that happens to you, if you're not spiritually mature, if you don't understand what's happening and you don't do the things that you need to do, you're going to build mountains of cursing instead of mountains of blessing. And in some aspect of your life, some of you are going through a hiatus in your social relationships and it's just about to kill you. Doesn't anyone care about me? And you get a feeling of panic.

You can go through a period of tradition and someone's laying it on you because of some kind of obligation that may relate to your family, your paternal family. And you say, hey, I want to be free of that. But there may be an obligation. There a new discovery, a new opportunity, a new service, a new opportunity for Christian service, perhaps. Are you going to take it and try it?

And you've come to the end of a goal and you kind of honor yourself and give yourself a luxury and you go out and have a banquet or some such thing. Fine. But what's the new goal for a new mountaintop in the development of your life? All four of those are going at once. Your life is a multi-dimensional program. Where are you, our Father?

Shall we pray? Our Father, we pray that you'll help us to sense not only tonight, but what we've said before and what will be said tomorrow night, how we get there, that we will do the things that need to be done as Christians who are mature and there are those who in this moment can make decisions to turn dark places into meaningful places, uncertainties into senses of direction, and all of the other things that we can think of that will give a sense of impetus and desire, an

awareness of what God has achieved. Help us to be able to say with the Apostle Paul and with others that we have finished our fight. We've kept the faith so that when we've gotten on the other side of these dimensional programs in our lives, we will know that we will have succeeded because Christ is with us and his spirit guides us by the day and by the night. And we pray that we shall sense with Israel that there is the pillar of fire and the pillar of the cloud. And we will follow it because Jesus will make that way. We thank you for it in your name, Jesus Amen.