

Your Life's Book

By Mark Lee

Speaker 1:

We appreciate Dr. Lee's Ministry and his willingness to minister every evening in an evening series. And we've worked him hard, and he has just been a blessing. We appreciate his his friendship. We appreciate his willingness to come and open the word once again. Let's welcome a final time, Dr. Markley.

Mark Lee:

Twelve would be a good time, I think twelve or so. Don't sweat it. Ron knows that I speak so much at conferences and geared for an hour, and he said, by all means, take all the time you want until 12. Very kind of him and get started late and steal the time from me, but I'm not offended. What do you do after a week? And by the way, I congratulate many of you. The whole week long, you've dedicated yourself to getting whatever is available to you out of the week, and it would be easier to take off do something else, especially when you fulfill whatever requirements there are. And I appreciate having you here, but I really, seriously congratulate you that you've committed yourself to that discovery.

Now what do you do to close up a whole week like this where you've been engorged with the ideas of four speakers, plus the other things have been done in the films, et cetera, and I'll try to put it together for you, if I may. I would like to call it your life's book. As I've looked at life in the course of the years, I realize that the people who get the most out of life plan for it. They do not just take it day by day.

They make things happen. And the things that I admire most, I discovered, took a lot of planning. Whether or not that's a building or a life or a book or whatever it is, it takes a lot of planning. Many years ago I read the book *The Yearly* by Marjorie Kennan Rawlings. Now the reason why I read it, and sometimes you do this when you're working with people. The reason why I read it was that it was on the best seller list for so many months. It may have been the longest bestseller by an American author in our history if I remember correctly. It stayed on the bestseller list for almost four years.

And so I decided to read the book. If that many people read it, I'm going to read it. So I read it. When I read it, I didn't really get hit that hard by its greatness until I read the last chapter. In the first chapter you find Jody Baxter down by the Creek or Crick, depending on the part of the country you're from. He takes two little fork sticks and drives them down in the wet sand with shallow water flowing over the sand.

He takes a cross piece, puts palm fronds on it, puts it down on the fork sticks. He lays there with his face in his hands, watching the little paddle wheel his little toy turn until the sun going down in the west and he gets inside information. It's time to go home to dinner. And off he goes. He's late to dinner. You read through the book. As you read through the book, you realize that this is a significant year in the life of a boy, 12 to 13 years of age. There you have the story of old Slough Foot the bear. You have the story of Fodder Wing in the Rust Forester farm next door, the friend to Jody Baxter. You have the tension that is growing between Jody and his parents, Penny Baxter, and his mother.

You have the story, the poignant story of Flag, the pet fawn who comes into the family adored by Jodi, and one night eats up the corn crop to the objection of the parents. And ultimately, now Jody must destroy Flag. And of course, in this act you realize that Jody is moving from the boy to the man. You've got to make some decisions, some very hard decisions. And if the decision is between Flag and the corn, Flag has to go. It's one of those things which, if you don't perceive it, your heart goes entirely to Jodi and away from his parents. But his parents are right. Flag has to be destroyed. And you get to the last chapter.

And when you read the last chapter, the whole thing just sweeps in on you because you find Jody back by the Creek. He drives two little fork sticks into the sand, takes a cross piece, put palm fronds on and puts down in the cross piece in the water, turns his little paddle wheel. He watches it for a short time, lifts his hand and smashes it. The whole purpose of the book is that when I was a child, I did childish things. And now that I am a man, I put away childish things. That's the whole purpose of the book, to show a 12 year old boy in the first chapter and a 13 year old man in the last chapter. Because if Jodie doesn't take on the responsibility of the farm, they can't make it.

Penny Baxter, for his father, is now an invalid. The whole of the security of the family now rests on the 13 year old shoulders of Jodi. Now, Marjorie Kennan Rawlings could not have known what to put in the first chapter if she didn't know what went into the last chapter. Now there is the secret. The greatness of the book rests partly in its plan, very carefully planned. Although I've read some books recently, I'm not sure follows the order at all. But the best ones are planned.

I go to a man and I say to him, I've got a lot over here and I want to build a house. And he said, let's see your blueprints. And I said, I don't have any blueprints. I don't have any plans. I got a lot. He said, Well, I can't build your building. I said, Why not? He said, because I've got to have some plans. I said, why don't we start in the basement or in the footings and see how it comes out? If he's a decent builder, he refuses. Why does he refuse? Because he has to know the end from the beginning. He's got to know what goes on the roof because he doesn't know how deeply to put those footings unless he knows what kind of weight it's got to support.

Now it seems to me that if I'm going to paint a painting and I can see that painting in my mind's eye the end from the beginning. If not, I don't know what brush to choose, what paint to put on that canvas. If I'm to know the end of a book before I write the first chapter, if I'm to know what goes on the roof before the footings go in my house, I better know a little bit about the end of my life from the beginning. That's crucial because my life is more important than a book. My life is more important than a building. My life is more important than a painting. And if you're going to make those good by advanced planning, maybe I can make my life worthwhile by some advanced planning.

Now I'm going to give broad strokes. I'm not going to talk about specifics. Those are terribly important, but I'm going to give broad strokes. What goes into the advanced planning of my life? Well, it depends in part upon what your value system is. If your value system is money and power and beauty and all of that, that belongs to a carnal world. And by the way, I'm not saying that those are necessarily bad values. It depends on whether or not you have those values high or low in your system. I am concerned about the values that are Christian because I'm talking to

Christian people, and that value system is a different one. It doesn't mean you abandon that one. It simply means you keep it in proportion to the other values.

For example, if I were in the world, I must confess to you that my value system would be profit. My value system would be power. My value system would be that my name would become a name that would be conjured with somewhere in whatever field that I would choose. Instead, I choose God's value system. And that is instead of money and power, it becomes joy. It becomes the concept of eternity. And so these two value systems can easily come in clash unless you learn the secret of putting out your priorities and put the things in the top drawer that belong there and the things in the bottom drawer that belong there.

For the most part, Christians have been caught up in the world's value system, and now they have the whole thing jumbled, and they have a terrible time sorting these things out. So I'm going to talk to you about that system that makes a difference in your Christian perception of life. Five great decisions. Now when you have made these decisions and you've made them properly, you may not be rich. Your name may never appear on the front page of the paper. You may never be powerful. You may never have any of these values that are so terribly important to the world, but you will have joy. And that's what you need to understand. Five decisions. I'll give them to you.

By the way, we took our children aside when they were about ten years old, each one of them, and we asked them to put five words on the inside of their Bibles in the back. And we asked them to pray about those words. I gave them a sentence, but I finally squeezed it down into a word and they were to pray about them and check them off when they felt satisfied that they had

been met. The first word was Salvation. To have God's choice for your life's. Salvation.

Salvation was number one. Number two was Surrender, God's choice for your life's surrender. So surrender was number two.

Number three was God's choice for your life's occupation. And so they put down job or occupation or profession as number three. Number four, God's choice for your life's partner. And so they put down marriage error. They put in parenthesis no marriage because it was a choice between remaining single or marriage. And we made that clear that they had options. And then finally, number five, God's choice for your life's preparation. So they put preparation or education or a word that satisfied them relative to preparing themselves for that which preceded.

Permit me to take each one of those five giving just a few minutes for each one. First of all, God's choice for your life's Salvation. A lot of us take our Salvation so for granted. And we're not very successful in communicating to others because in my opinion, we don't use all of the motivations we ought to use. You go back a little over 200 years and people became Christians because they were scared to death. Surely you've seen something about Jonathan Edwards's great sermon, eminent sermon on sinners in the hands of an angry God. You're walking over rotten boards. The flames of hell are licking up around.

And some people got so frightened, we are told that they grabbed the pew in front of them. They thought they were falling off the seat into the flames of hell. If you know anything about Edwards, as time went along, he had more and more problems with his site. And so he drew his notes close to him and he would read the notes while the people were quaking in front of him. He

was preaching to paper, but he didn't realize what was happening and the people were responding.

One time a man ran from behind him and grabbed ahold of the pulpit. Brother Edwards, isn't God a God of mercy? And Edwards dropped his notes. He's also a God of judgment. And he went on reading. Led the Great Awakening. I mean, the fear of flames seems to have a good effect on some people. Well, then that gave way in the free society to an emphasis on the love of God. When you read this unrelieved judgment of the 18th century, and then you come to the 19th century and gradually it turns over so that many persons in this room have never heard a sermon on hell, the utter, forever absence of human beings from the presence of God.

And if someone had the talent for it, the gift of the Spirit to do it and could preach with tears the fact that men are forever and forever lost from the presence of God, it might give us a great awakening. I don't know. Anyway, we moved to love. Now love is fine. And the most popular verse apparently is John 3:16 For God So Loved the World, etc. You know it. The only trouble with love is that it's become so Sacrament. It's a love that has been so, in my opinion, diluted that we don't really understand that love, and we presume upon it.

I'm a father, and I'm also a grandfather. Those of you who wonder about becoming parents, you'll find it very difficult, and it's not worth it until you get the grandchildren. Then it's all worth it once you get the grandchildren. But it's one thing to rear children. It's another thing to be a grandfather. If my children got online, let them have it. But don't you touch those grandchildren.

And in a lot of our minds, we've decided on the grand fatherhood of God, not the Fatherhood of God. The grand fatherhood of God.

That's all right, son. Go and do whatever you want. Break the Commandments if you want to.

That's all right. That's the way grandfathers are. But he is our father, and he expects us to understand that we are obedient to the Father. We heard some good things about that from Bob Kraning. But what am I after? I've discovered something wonderful, and I became a Christian two days before my 17th birthday. I was halfway through my senior year in high school. I didn't realize at that moment until a few years passed what had happened to me as I began to meet more and more people who found the Lord later in their lives.

I was 20 years old when I had my first Church. I was responsible for the Church. I was also 20 years old when I was married, and I went out to that Church. I'm sure I was unworthy, but the World War II was on, and all of the good guys were fighting, so I was a pastor, and I can remember this night. I had preached a terrific sermon. It was on Moses, 80 to 120 years of age. His eye wasn't dim. He hadn't lost any of his intellectual powers. Oh, it was a great sermon. I don't have it now, but I'm sure heaven has preserved it.

I preached this great sermon, and when I was finished, a man, his first name was Lawrence got out of the seat without my saying a word, and he walked down. I walked over, shook hands with him. I said, do you want me to pray with you, Lawrence? He says, I want to talk to you first. I said, Fine. So we started to talk, and he says, I'm so moved by what you said. I'm going to go away to College somewhere and prepare for the Ministry. Now he could see immediately on my

face I didn't agree with him. And one of the reasons why was that I was talking to his son, Keith, who was only two years younger than I was, who had just graduated from high school. And Keith wanted to go away and prepare for the Ministry. His father didn't know all about this. And so immediately I didn't agree with it. And he says, what's wrong? And I said, Well, Lawrence, you've got five children. You're 43 years of age.

Those five children deserve an opportunity for you. They didn't ask to be born. They didn't have to be born. And if you had left that out, then you could do anything you like. But since you brought them in, you have that responsibility. Not that they assert it, but you assert it for them. And I said, you've got to find out what those five want before you get what you want. And the whole thing broke up. I was really distressed. And as I drove down the road there in Nebraska, I said to the young woman who had just become my wife a few weeks before, I said, I wonder if this is for me. I failed tonight. And for the next two or three days, I spent a lot of time in prayer and a lot of time in study because I thought I had failed a man who came so moved. And when he walked out, he was dissatisfied.

I was dissatisfied. I felt like I'd failed. I don't know why. Wednesday afternoon I was in Adams, Nebraska. I've never been to Adams, Nebraska before. I've never been there since. And I have no desire whatsoever to return. But I was in Adams, Nebraska. I was walking along the sidewalk in Adams, Nebraska, and there was Lawrence across the street. He saw me before I saw him cross the road. And he called me and started beeline. I said to my wife. I said, oh, here we start again. He came and he says, I want you to come and see some road grading equipment that I've just purchased. Now, if you know anything about Nebraska, it needs a lot of road grading equipment.

And I said, Now, Lawrence, what's this? He says, I bought that because I've got to keep my farm going. And I've got to do this because I've got five children to put through school. I said, you told me Sunday night that you were going to do it. He said, well, we've been praying about it. And I said, so have I. In fact, I was really loaded to support my position by this time. I was afraid I was wrong. And after studying the Scripture, I was convinced I was right, and I didn't know how to say it without sounding a little bit spiritually proud. And I said, But I thought you were going to go to school.

I didn't tell him what I was thinking. He says, I think you're right for me now, and I'm right for me 20 years ago I said, Lawrence, you'll have to explain that. He says, If I were 20 years younger, I'd do exactly what I told you Sunday night. That's what I believe I should do. I should have done. I said, what do you mean? He says, Well, I just didn't do it 20 years ago. And now you're right. I've got five children to care for, and I've got to care about my family, and I've got to do that first. But 20 years ago, I would have done it. And I just blurted out, Lawrence, why didn't you do it? He looked down and he kicked and he said, I wasn't a Christian. And I said, you mean to tell me that if you had been a Christian as a young man, your whole life would change? He says, my whole life would change. The consequences of not committing my life to Christ when I was a young person is something I now know that I have to live with for the rest of my days.

The consequence of knowing that I'm not doing what I ought to do. By the way, dear friends, that's been repeated to me. I don't know how many times. You can't imagine how grateful I am now as I move toward the end years of my life that I became a Christian, when it was time for me to make the decision of who I would marry, because that had something to do with my

Christian life, where I would go, what schools I would attend, what I would ultimately do with my life. If you'd ask me right now, right this minute, if you had your choice to do anything in the whole world and you were given the privilege of doing it, what would you do? I'll tell you what I do. I'd be standing in the gymnasium at Biola College talking to you. I am doing exactly what I want to do.

And if you'd ask me why, the answer is because on January 21, 1941 over 41 years ago, this high school boy from West High School in Akron, Ohio, found Christ, and it saved my life. 13, 14 years ago, I had cancer. I was supposed to die. I was in Spokane, Washington, and they sent me to that hospital several times. Deaconess Hospital. I was operated on by a very well-known fellow who ultimately ran for Congress. Lost, but he ran for Congress. And after it was all over, I looked at John and I said, John, let's thank God for my life. He's given me my life back. And John looked at me and said, do you know why you lived? And I suppose you want me to say I had a great surgeon. He says, Well, I don't mind. And I said, okay, I had a great surgeon.

He said, no. He says, you know why you lived? And then he said something I don't suppose as long as I have my straight Wits, will I ever forget it. Medical science has yet to discover why men like you, who love God and are loved by their families, get well and others don't. Medical science has yet to discover why men who love God like you do and are loved by their families, get well and others don't. Now I know I'm going to die even though I love God and my family loves me.

But the point is, he said that there are times when we guess we just can't explain it. And we know that when we look at these people, it's interesting. They have something similar in their lives and it seems to be God in their lives and family in their lives. And he says, I think that had a lot to do with your getting well. You were not supposed to get away. You were supposed to die. Dear friends, if someone could come through that door and show me by some evidence that Christianity is not true, my response to them is, Dear friend, it saved my life.

Not pie in the sky by and by which I expect, or at least a fig tree or two. But the point is that Christianity for me is a living daily reality that has everything to do with my life now. Second, full surrender. So much to be said here. Quickly, I'll just put it in. The world is just filled up to eyebrows with the kind of Christianity they see. A poll was taken by the most famous pollster in the country and discovered that one out of three Americans claims to be born again.

And so he sent to a lot of College presidents, including the President of this College, and to me, an invitation to meet last year in Washington, DC, because he wanted to know. He wanted to know why it is that one out of three Americans claim to be born again. And it doesn't make much difference. You still have a crime rate. You still have all the problems handling pornography. You still have the drug scene. You don't have any control to change the lives of the people. How can one in three, the highest that any statistic has ever been for any people anywhere. And things are getting worse.

My response was because Christians, in many instances, are just fire escape Christians. I'll believe just enough to get to heaven. But what I do with my private life is my business. And

therefore we do the same things that the world does and the world looks and they say, if that's a Christian, I'm doing the same things. It doesn't make any difference to him. It doesn't make any difference to me. Something very interesting. I don't know if you read the Agony columns or not, but Anne Landers had this story of this man who wrote to her.

And it went something like this. Dear Anne Landers, someone told me I'd be writing to you. I'd say they were crazy. But my son read your column, and perhaps you can straighten him out. He can have the world on a platter. I've got a business where he can get rich. But lately something's gone wrong with his mind. He's talking to his College counselor about how to become a medical missionary. Would you straighten him out? Signed downhearted, dad.

And I'll never forget our first line. It's classic, dear Downhearted. If you had his brains, you could throw yours away. What a privilege to be the father of such a son. And the fellow thought that what you ought to do is to send the misfits to the mission field. A woman came shook her bony finger in my face, and she said, don't you talk my daughter in becoming a missionary. I know you. You talk about missions. I said, yes, ma'am, I do. My daughter is very competent. She can get anything in this country that she really wants. Sets her mind for. We've got a few young people in our Church that can't compete. You get them.

Let her alone. I said, hey, lady, excuse me. Don't you let me know who your daughter is. If she's all you say she is, I'm going to get her. She went away angry at me, but that was perfectly all right. I haven't even tried to straighten it out. The point is simply this. Where is your surrender? Where's your wallet? Where are your affections? God is looking for surrendered people who are

not going to ask, how much money does it pay? What's the chance for my improvement? When can I become the boss?

God is still speaking to us the way he's always spoken to us. And don't let Americanism be a substitute for the Christian experience. As much as I love my country, don't get them mixed up. The third one. Have God's choice for your life's work. I do not know why so many Collegians struggle with God's will. I think you can line up the lights and you'll have God's will. Jot down these words. First of all, what do you want to do? What are your affinities? A lot of us have the idea that God is up there. And if we let him know what we like to do, he'll stop us.

That he's in the business of making us miserable. Someone defined a Christian one time as someone who has a mortal fear that someone in the world is having a good time. That's simply not true. There was a missionary came back with one of the converts from the land in which he served. And they went into an ice cream parlor for the first time. This native friend was having ice cream, ordered a milkshake. The missionary friend took a draft of it. His friend took a drink, and when he did, he pushed it away. And the missionary said to him, what's the matter? Don't you like it?

He says, oh, it's so good, it must be sinful. He had decided that anything that tasted good had to be against God. First of all, what do you want to do? Take it seriously, what you want to do. Second, find out what your abilities are. I didn't say gifts. That's a whole new sermon. I didn't say gifts that the Holy Spirit may give you. But what are your abilities? What are you born with? Some people have this marvelous ability for mechanics. They have what we call the motor skills.

I don't have them. I'm grateful someone does. It just happens that I don't get those to work on my car, but some people do. And if somehow you've got those abilities, what are your abilities?

What have you been trained to understand and do that you like to do? There was a fellow that played the first violinist for Serge Kusovitsky in the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra many years ago, about 30 years ago or so, and he became a Christian. And like a lot of all of a sudden, he wants his life changed.

So he decides he's going to be a preacher. He gets up to preach. It's awful. It's awful. He can't get the nouns and the pronouns and the adjectives and the verbs together. Remind me of the little boy who when the teacher told him to put the paragraph on the board, he put the paragraph and put a couple of commas and a question mark and some quotation marks. And he said, Teacher, you put them in, you know where they go. And this fellow preached in such a way that you'd have to put it together. He wasn't going to put it together, but could he play the violin?

And he loved playing the violin. He loved it so much that without nagging, he would spend 6 hours a day as a little boy practicing the violin. His left hand had fingers that were curled as though they were always on the scroll. And when he put the violin under his chin, he just had to let his fingers drop. He could play the violin without knowing how to play the violin. Those fingers were going in the right place. And when he played the violin, even if you don't like violin music, you loved it when George played.

And I can remember when he tried to preach one time I said, George, I'll tell you what. Either you play the violin and let me preach, or I'm going to start playing the violin. That'll fix you. And

he says, oh, would you? I said, you play the violin and I'll do the preaching. And the most famous evangelists of our time sat out there one night. He said, hey, you guys are good as a team. We were in our 20s. He says, I'll tell you what. I'll send you across the United States. And that summer he sent us to every city, every night across the United States in the most wonderful privilege a young preacher and a young violinist ever had in his whole life, because I was doing the thing that I think God would have me do, and George was doing the thing that he ought to do.

What are your circumstances? A woman came up to me in her wheelchair and she said, I want to be a missionary. She knew that I was on the board of our denomination and that we were the ones that decided who would go to the field. And we have hundreds of people on the field. Would you send me to the field? I says, we can't. She says, Why not? I said, if we send you to most of those fields, we've got to send a nurse, and even most of the fields won't accept you, even though we guarantee the nurse and make a deposit in one of their banks.

Now, if you stay home and if you pray for the missionaries, get your prayer manual. And if you're willing to give and ask other people to give, just think of all that you can do for missions, and then the nurse that we'd have to send with you, we can send her to help those poor people in whatever country she goes to. And finally I got to her to see that her circumstances were such that she was miscalculating the need to have a missionary vision and a missionary burden without necessarily feeling that she had to go to the field.

What are your circumstances? Keep lining them up. How do you respond when you pray about it? Because that prayer is going to give you some kind of response. What happens when you read

the word? Because that word is going to give you certain kinds of assurance. By the way, I didn't believe that. I heard that once or twice when I was a young Christian. And I remember I was singing with the choir that traveled in the College where I was attending, and we were in Detroit. We were on our way to Toledo, and I thought, that's a good chance to talk to her. We're going to that very religious city. I had heard many people say, Holy Toledo.

We were on our way to Toledo. And so when she got on the bus, I broke into the line and sat down next to Ruth and I said, Ruth, it seems to me of all of us who are students, all of the students, you know more about where you're going and what you're doing than any of us. And I've got to find out the mystery. And she says, well, how do you find God's will? And so I lined up all of the things in which I think I find God's will.

And over the years it's worked. The things I've told you really work. You just line them all up. Line them all up. And she said, well, you left one out. And I said, what one did I leave out? She says, well, you've left out the scriptures. I said, well how do the scriptures, tell me a specific thing. She says, I'll show you. And she says, Open to this pass, say not yet four months, and then come with the harvest, but lift up your eyes under the field for the ripe. I said, I know that by heart. She says, apparently that doesn't say much to you. I said, well, it tells me what it says. She says, but when I read it, the Holy Spirit uses it to burden me more for the field.

And then she was able to show me how when you read the scripture with sensitivity, the Lord gives you a kind of assurance in the direction in which he wants you to go. Do you know that woman turned down marriage opportunity? She turned down so many things that would have

been an opportunity for her because she had said in her mind she was going to French Indo China, which later became Laos and Vietnam and Cambodia.

And she was out there, and she served out there now for decades. Her brother cut in half with bullets from the Viet Cong on the Tet Offensive. So many things that had happened to her. I'm not worthy to stoop down and loosen the latchet of her shoes. Why? Because she understood the surrender. She understood all that God would have her do. And she lined up all the ducks. And when it was all over, there she is. And some of us will stand by while the last go first and the first in the attention of the world go last.

You see, put it together. And when you put that together, you'll know what God would have you do. Now, why do I put that chapter before the chapter relative to family? The reason why I do is to make sure that you do not fool the one that you would love. I am grateful I'm married to someone who can accept what she has to accept in my Ministry. Can you imagine? There have been occasions when people knock at the door in the middle of the night and my wife has had to sleep all night with that drunken woman because if she didn't, the woman would kill herself.

She had just drunk a bottle of aftershave lotion to get whatever alcohol she could find in it. And someone would call and I'd be gone for two or three days. And she'd have to care for the children. Not every woman has the resource for that. Therefore, we need to find out whether or not we're willing to go in that direction. I met a lot of ministers, wives who are not married to ministers. I met a lot of ministers not married to ministers' wives because they didn't lay out what their life plan was and said, Will you share this with me? Will you go with me? Not that my

job comes ahead of my family, but I make sure my family knows what my job is, because anyone can accuse you of letting your job come ahead, even if you're not, if the person is jealous of what you're doing and you've got to work that out.

And I think it's impressive that we do that. When I talk, even to Christian young people, when I talk to Collegians all the time, I discover that usually I get some things back. They don't know what they're saying. In some instance, it goes like this. The young woman is oftentimes interested in some kind of security. She puts it in a funny way, on occasion I saw this girl and there was Tom and Dick. Those names are made up. She liked Tom better than Dick, but she was going out with Dick. And I said, why? If this fella has all these virtues, why is it that you give more time to Dick? She said, he has wheels.

I said, you mean to say you go with Dick because Dick can take you where you want to go? She says, exactly. And I said, you mean to say you're giving up the opportunity of a relationship with Tom simply because Tom doesn't have wheels? She says, I guess so. I said, you're due for tragedy. And then the guys, they're usually interested in some kind of physical attraction. They put it different ways, of course, but that's what they're after. And they fail to recognize that that's not really where it all is. It may be enough to get the motor started, but later on that's not going to be enough. The happiest couple I ever saw in my life.

I think he looked like an oversized fireplug, and she had a figure like an ironing board. Those two people loved each other. They really loved each other, and they did the things that amounted to a blessing upon their lives. I've discovered there are two things that are going to mean

happiness and the choice of your family. And one is that you want to do the same things with your life. If he wants to invest himself out there in Africa, you want to invest yourself in Africa. If he wants to invest himself in the business world, you want to invest yourself in the business world.

This woman came and said, my husband is a farmer. I don't want to be a farmer's wife. I said, hey, wait a minute. What was he doing when you married? He's a farmer. What did he always tell you wanted to do? He said he wanted a farm. I said he ever disliked it, he adores it. I said, you get right back there and be a farmer's wife. She did. And afterwards she says, I'm glad you took me over that barrier because I realized I was just trying to find my way out.

The point is that you're going to do the same things with your life. And the second is like under the first, and that is you believe the same things about God. You believe the same things about God. You love him with all your heart. Find a man, my dear sister, who loves God with all his heart. And when you do, you'll go together and your family becomes beautiful because there is a third party there that even though you don't see him, grants to you a benediction beyond anything that any human being can ever do for you.

Number five, God's choice for your life's preparation. I can't imagine a better place to be than right here. We ask each of our four children to give us one year after high school. That's assuming they could finish high school in four years, nine, ten, eleven and twelve. And we simply said, now we want you to go to a Christian College. And these are the things we want you to do. First of all, make sure that the first semester and the next semester you got a good solid

course in the first semester in the Old Testament, or perhaps in the New and the opposite one the next semester.

I have been to five educational institutions above high school. And if anyone asked me, trace back over those marvelous courses and those great scholars of which have been in my life in the past. I'd go back to the first year when I took what we then called Old Testament Survey. Now it's Old Testament. What? Introduction, Old Testament literature, something that's very sophisticated. I hope it's still a survey. And there you get the Warp and the Woof of the Bible in your being. Thank God that happened to me when I was 18 years old. And I can take that with me, that resource with me partly in my mind and partly between the covers of that book. And it just provides everything that I really need to keep going and you get it into your being.

We already know how we goof around in Sunday school. We have tests that show that after going to Sunday school for five years, many of the youngsters still do not know that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the first four books of the New Testament. We actually tested Collegians after Christmas and found out in another College you wouldn't know the name of it.

We found out that when we gave him a whole list of names that might have been used over Christmas time and asked them to define them. One of them was messianic. Do you know that even though 100% of those young people said they were Church related, only 5% could tell us what messianic meant? They had just come from the time of the great messianic preaching of the birth of Jesus, and they didn't know what messianic meant. I rather think by the time you graduate from Biola, you know what messianic means.

Dear friends, I wanted my children to have the Warp and the Wolf of the scripture in their being. And they do. The second thing that I wanted was that they would go to Chapel instead of grousing about it like so many Christian young people do in College. I asked them to go and sit down, and then they were to pray the prayer that Paul prayed, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And here people will come from one country and another. They will tell you that you can go into radio and television in Taiwan. They'll tell you you can be a civil engineer and go to Afghanistan.

They'll give you all kinds of opportunities, perhaps even in agriculture. In Peru, they'll tell you about all of these marvelous opportunities. You want to be a civil engineer, why not go to Afghanistan? Be a civil engineer by day and a Christian witness by night. And when you get to the end of that, your life will be full. And this is exactly what happened to our children. If they come home and say, dad, I want to be a Secretary to the doctor down the corner, I say, Fine, you just hop right to it. And then they can report for duty at Church. Because every Church I know, every pastor I know, needs layman to help to teach a Sunday school class, lead the young people, direct the choir.

All kinds of work needs to be done, but there are too few recruits, too few people willing to do it. Put your life together, dear friends, and you'll come to the end of your life's book with those five great chapters committed to Jesus Christ, surrendered to Jesus Christ. God's choice for your life's work, God's choice for your life's partner, if indeed you choose to be married. And then finally, God's choice for your life's preparation. And when you put that all together, you will know not only how to honor God, but to receive the joy of your Salvation. Shall we pray?

Bless this place, our Father, all of the students whose lives are ahead of them, and those of us who seem to have seen the years speed by so rapidly see the gift of youth because of its potential, because of what can be done, not merely for worship, but for service, not merely for the service of others, but for the gratification that comes when we have done what we ought to have done because when we have done what we ought to have done we'll discover in the end we've done what we wanted to do and so we pray that you will bless all of these for the glory of God and for the joy of your people in your name we pray Amen.